

2020 Annual Report



NRWA Mission

The Norwalk River Watershed Association, incorporated in 1996, is a not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to improve the water quality and fish and wildlife habitats of the 40,000-acre Norwalk River watershed; to restore the riverbanks, meadows and forests through invasive plant abatement and promotion of native species; to encourage recreational use of the river, the surrounding open space and its trails; and to promote research, legislative advocacy, education, cooperation, and action on the part of the stakeholders in the seven watershed towns in CT



Greetings!

This year many of us have taken to casting about for silver linings amid the glowering clouds of pandemic, political division, and social unrest. Thankfully, because of supporters like you, we have plenty of good news to report, both accomplishments and new projects underway – our own “silver linings playbook.”

One thing we can all be thankful for is the beauty and solace offered by the natural world.

Our watershed has truly been here for us, with peaceful woods and shimmering streams, meadows and ponds, pathways and parks. And your ongoing support has helped preserve that beauty for generations to come.

Read on to discover some of the ways you have helped us advocate for and protect our watershed this year.

Thank you for your support!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Louise Washer'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

Louise Washer, President

“Protecting the Watershed through Education and Action!”



Challenging construction of “five football fields of berms and walls” along the Grupes Reservoir on the Silvermine River in New Canaan:

After learning that the First Taxing District Water Department of Norwalk had failed to consider the environmental impacts of proposed dam-related construction at one of the most scenic and ecologically rich areas in New Canaan, we teamed up with the New Canaan Land Trust (NCLT) to become interveners in the hearing process. We hired dam engineering, wetland science, botany, and environmental law experts to study the potential impacts of the proposed plans and present their findings and our concerns at multiple hearings.



The NRWA and NCLT split the nearly \$40,000 in legal and expert consultant fees in our fight to protect the Grupes Reservoir and the adjacent Browne Wildlife Sanctuary. Your support ensures that we have the funding needed to finish this fight!

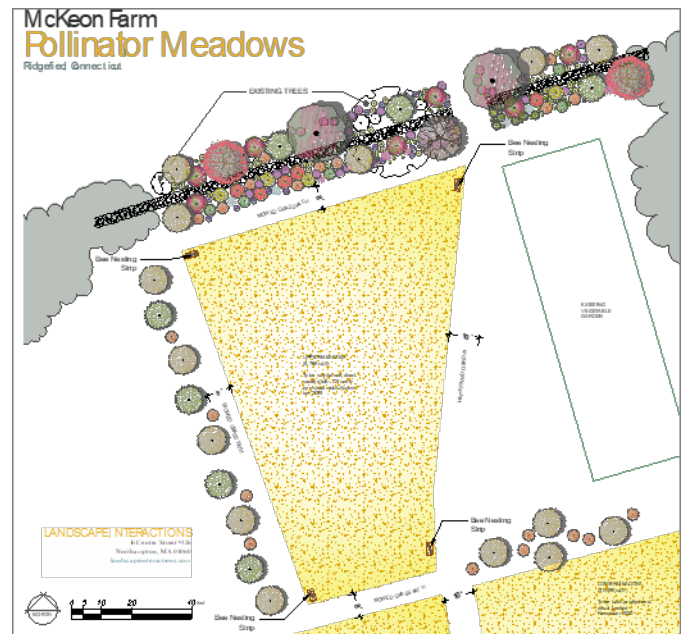
Fighting the impacts of development, dams and dewatering that are threatening Comstock Brook in Wilton.

Help us continue the fight to protect Comstock Brook, another Norwalk River tributary and one of the last best places for native brook trout in our watershed. We're waging this battle through action and education. We invite you to learn more by viewing our on-going Comstock Brook webinar series at norwalkriver.org. You can also help by conserving water, avoiding lawn pesticides, and spreading the word to your friends and neighbors.

Despite COVID, we continue to work actively to improve native habitat within the watershed, partnering with other groups and serving as a fiscal sponsor and lead coordinator of the Pollinator Pathway Northeast. Though COVID precautions have certainly reduced this activity and the numbers of people able to participate at one time, we nevertheless continue to press on. We'd like to highlight two important initiatives in particular:

Meadow Restoration at McKeon Farm in Ridgefield.

This year we began a multi-year project to plant for an increase in the numbers and diversity of pollinators. We hired a landscape designer and entomologist team to design and lead planting efforts and then undertake a three-year scientific study of insect populations to determine how much difference the restored habitat is making.



Tree Canopy Restoration & Native Garden Planting at Oyster Shell Park in Norwalk.

An amazing team of dedicated volunteers has continued to make progress to restore the natural inheritance that Norwalk residents deserve to enjoy. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we lost two major grants we count on to buy trees and shrubs. Despite this loss, we continue to push forward, removing invasive species, planting what native trees, shrubs and perennials we have the funds to buy, and also relying on donated plant material.



Thank you to our generous supporters!

The NRWA board extends our sincere thanks to you for your ongoing support throughout the past year. We hope that you have taken the opportunity to get out and enjoy our beautiful watershed through these challenging times and that you will continue to enjoy and support it for years to come.

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Alexia Anglade

Special thanks to our grant donors

Ambler Trust
Anne Richardson
CT Ornithological Association
Global Preservation Society
Hartford Audubon
One Tree Planted
Ridgefield Thrift Shop

2020 FINANCIALS

AT A GLANCE

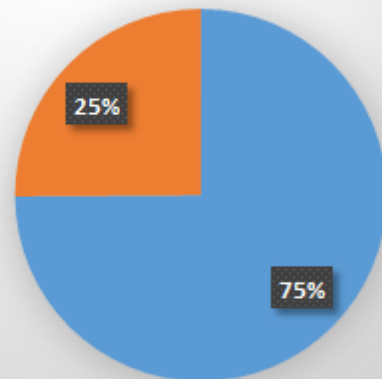
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REVENUE

\$50,139

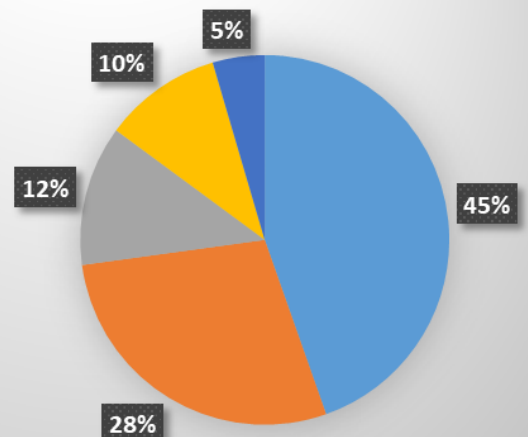
■ Individuals
■ Grants



\$49,789

EXPENSES

■ WETLAND PROTECTION /
ADVOCACY
■ HABITAT RESTORATION*
■ EDUCATION & OUTREACH
■ ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE
■ WATER QUALITY
MONITORING



Habitat Restoration included the following projects:
Norwalk—Oyster Shell Park, Woodward Avenue Park, NRVt at Broad River
Wilton—Allen's Meadows Park, NRVt at Sharp Hill
Ridgefield—McKeon Farm, Nod Hill Brewery meadow