

### Our Mission

Create positive environmental, social, and economic change by revitalizing the Woonasquatucket River, its Greenway, and its communities.

### Our Vision

We envision a clean Woonasquatucket River and thriving Greenway for all to lead healthy lives.



### **Our Commitment to Equity**

Since the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council's start, we have built the Woonasquatucket Greenway in collaboration with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) residents within our Woonasquatucket communities who want fundamental rights to safe green spaces, accessible transportation routes, fresh air, and clean water. Decades into our work, we continue to improve our corner of the smallest state. We can never be complacent about defending safe places to eniov nature. To find peace. And to breathe.

We support the fundamental right to protest and the exercise of free speech. We prioritize BIPOC voices and experiences. As a largely white-led organization, we know that it is our work to dismantle racism to achieve justice for all communities. We reaffirm our commitment to becoming an equitable organization, standing strong for racial justice, and acting to secure and maintain robust BIPOC representation in our leadership and staff.

We must continue to listen, learn, and act. We know we have a lot of work to do.

We are grateful to the emerging BIPOC community leaders from our Community Action programs for sharing their experiences and their commitment to transformative environmental change in Providence and beyond. We continue to educate our youth on ways to advocate for environmental justice, and we learn from them how we can grow and change to become more open, accepting, and inclusive in our work. We believe that our nation is at a turning point, led by the next generation that understands that we all need to breathe freely.

Since its very start, the United States has been and is still plagued by systemic racism. All of us at the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council recognize the injustices that impact communities of color. We are committed to be at the table to end injustices and disparities. We will continue to listen, collaborate, learn, and share our strength to achieve equity.

#### From Board President Laureen Ratti and Executive Director Alicia Lehrer

As the following pages demonstrate, 2022 was an action-packed year for the Woonasquatucket River Watershed. Our theme for the year, "Together Woonasquatucket," served as a reminder that all of us who live with the Woonasquatucket River watershed—more than 25 percent of Rhode Island's population—are united. Across geography, highways, and municipal boundaries, we know that we must work together to continue environmental restoration and climate resilience.

In 2022, we completed designs to expand the Woonasquatucket River Greenway and secured significant funding for expansion of our multi-use path for the first time into Smithfield and North Smithfield. Along with that, our educational, recreation, bicycle, and community action programs grew, involving more people than ever before throughout the watershed. We now serve over 1,500 students in Smithfield, Johnston, North Providence and Providence, and hundreds of urban residents are directly involved in our community action and recreation programs.

All of this is possible with your help and support. Thanks to you, our donors, volunteers, partners, and advocates, we face the future with confidence. And we need every bit of your investment and assistance, because that future brings a real threat of instability due

to climate impacts. Thanks to you, we are better prepared than ever before to defend our communities from the risks of flooding and pollution.

Accessible joy is one of our core values. Every day, we can see that joy in a child learning to ride a bike, in a graceful blue heron on the river's edge, in the camaraderie of families and friends enjoying a summer day on the Greenway. And thanks to you, our hearts are full because we know the joy that the Woonasquatucket River and Greenway bring to so many of our neighbors.

#### Thank you for being Together Woonasquatucket with us.

Sincerely,

Saureen

Laureen Ratti

Alicia J. Lehrer

alicia



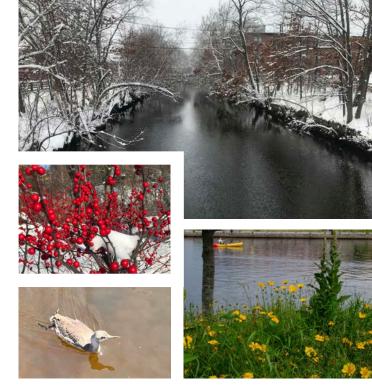


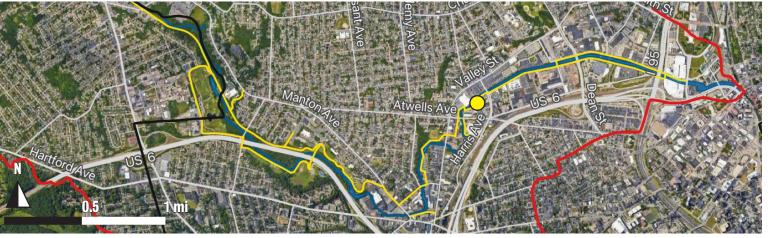


## **LEGEND** Watershed boundary Municipal boundaries Water bodies **Greenway segments** □□ Roads LINGOLN WRWC Office Site PROVIDENCE ROVIDENCE

### The Woonasquatucket River Watershed

The Woonasquatucket River watershed is the land area that channels rainfall and snowmelt to the creeks and streams that flow to the Woonasquatucket River. The 19-mile long Woonasquatucket River starts in North Smithfield and Glocester, and then continues south through Smithfield, Johnston, North Providence, and Providence. In Providence, until the first dam at Rising Sun Mill, the Woonasquatucket River is an estuary—that is, a location where a freshwater stream meets tidal ocean water. In the Algonquian language of native Narragansett people, Woonasquatucket means "where the salt water ends." At Waterplace Park in downtown Providence, the Woonasquatucket joins the Moshassuck River, forming the Providence River and joining upper Narragansett Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.





Woonasquatucket River Greenway in Providence and Johnston

### Who We Are

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TerraCorps YEC

Northern source of the Woonasquatucket What We Do Woonasquatucket **GREENWAY** Stillwater Reservoir **RESILIENCE** (Stump Pond) **STARTS** Leo Bouchard **COMMUNITY** THE Conservation Center **SOURCE...** Georgiaville Pond Southern source of the Woonasquatucket



**ACTION** 

**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION** 



**BICYCLE PROGRAMS** 



RECREATION

### Greenway

The Woonasquatucket River Greenway continues to grow and thrive. 2022's expansions included:

- ➤ Collaboration with the Providence Housing Authority to construct the Salmon Street Gateway, which offers hundreds of residents of the 330-unit Manton Heights development easy access to the Greenway and multi-use trail.
- ➤ Also in Providence, construction of the Gotham Greens multi-use trail. a Greenway spur that will become a critical connection point for Rhode Island's off-road trail system.
- > The development of **David Westcott** Park, a newly opened green space on the banks of the Woonasquatucket River in North Providence.
- In Smithfield, an agreement to begin planning the first mile of off-road trail starting at Esmond Village.
- > In Providence, designs for all new separated multi-use trails along Heath Street and Buttonhole Drive have begun.

2022 was also an incredible year for art on the Greenway. Local artist Agonza created a gorgeous mural on San Souci Drive in Providence. Agonza also infused the Greenway with dozens of painted Monarch butterflies. Abby Taylor, Ed Cabrera, and Peter Dear added murals to the Riverside and Manton Pond fish passages and also added more Woonasquatucket-themed art on Providence's river-adjacent electric boxes.







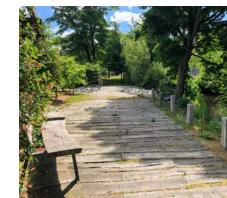
Aymar Ccopacatty created a Peruvian reed fishing boat from invasive plants and plastics that made a statement in the Black Locust Pocket Park in Providence. Behind the Groden Center, visible from the trail in Riverside Park in Providence. Nick Guilbert made a beautiful large mural celebrating the Greenway's vital pollinators.

And in November, Sprout CoWorking in Providence offered its gallery space to use for a river-themed show. "Vibrant Life in the Woonasquatucket River Watershed." More than 50 artists participated in this amazing show, which included a silent auction benefitting the Woonasquatucket River Greenway.



Greystone









# Climate Resilience & Restoration

Throughout the Woonasquatucket River Watershed, our whole team, and especially our River Rangers, do everything we can to improve the health of the river and the land around it. Our key climate resilience and restoration programs are:

➤ Native plant restoration and invasive removal, which re-establishes native habitats. This year, we increased the pollinator meadows throughout the Greenway and planted more than 1,500 native trees, bushes, and shrubs. These new additions offer urgently needed shade while preventing riverbank erosion.

➤ Green infrastructure, which is the use of plants, soil, and other natural resources to manage stormwater to prevent flooding and pollution. Green infrastructure installation is an ongoing effort. We calculated that our green infrastructure treats up to 80,000 gallons of stormwater with every one-inch storm.

➤ Fish passages, which allow native fish species to move from the Atlantic Ocean to the inland ponds where they spawn new generations. As part of our fish monitoring efforts, volunteers come out to count fish each spring, and this year they counted just 2,823 returning river herring. While a lower number than previous years, this amount was consistent with other

fish counts in southern New England. We are working with Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Fish and Wildlife division to understand what might be impacting the river herring population.

> Centredale Manor Superfund Site, a huge multi-year project in North Providence and Johnston devoted to removing dioxin and other harmful chemicals from the Woonasquatucket River. As of this year, our partner Loureiro Engineering has cleaned up five of the six main source areas. While work remains, the River Rangers are working with Loureiro engineers on environmental restoration, planting hundreds of native species and preparing for the day when this site is clean and open to the public.

We don't do any of this work alone. During 18 Clean Day events, hundreds of volunteers contributed more than 1,700 hours all around the Watershed. We are so grateful for the enthusiasm of so many who helped make the Greenway a safe and inviting space for all Rhode Islanders.



WITH A
COMMITMENT
TO THE
ENVIRONMENT...

Centredale Manor Superfund Cleanup Site

Allendale

Pond

### **Environmental Education**

2022 was an amazing year for the WRWC's environmental education programs. We partnered with 25 schools and organizations within the Woonasquatucket River watershed and brought our programs to 1,000+ elementary, middle, and high school students.

We also joined forces with the town of Smithfield to renovate the Leo Bouchard Conservation

Center as a place for learning and exploration for learners of all ages throughout the watershed.

And our talented staff members created Brookie, a much-larger-than life model of a brook trout, a native fish species in the Woonasquatucket River. Brookie helps us demonstrate fish anatomy, and she's become a celebrity throughout the watershed!





Manton Pond

**MAKING** 

ACCESSIBLE...

Bob's Skate Park

Buttonhole

Golf Course

Adventure

ON INSTAGRAM!

### **Community Action**

Our New Voices/Nuevas Voces community action program graduated its second cohort of Olneyville community leaders. These 15 adult community leaders completed an eight-month peer-led program, conducted primarily in Spanish, that builds leadership and advocacy for environmental justice among the residents of riverfront neighborhoods affected by acute public health, stormwater, flooding, transportation, toxic exposure, and heat challenges.

Nuevas Voces leaders work to ensure that their most affected neighbors have the greatest say in community development, resource allocation, and emergency preparedness at all levels, including in WRWC's work. Nuevas Voces participants are compensated financially for their participation and ongoing efforts, and provided with additional supports such as childcare, Chromebooks, and hotspots. This year, past Nuevas Voces participants María José Gutierrez and Jenny Mercado stepped up to

become the programs co-facilitators, bringing their expertise to a new group of community leaders.

In October, in collaboration with our friends at ONE Neighborhood Builders and the Central Providence Health Equity Zone, we held Día de Nuestro Rio in Riverside Park. Co-led by the Nuevas Voces cohort, this community event offered access to local health care and other agencies, canoe and kayak rides, arts and crafts, music, fabulous food, and more to over 500 neighbors.





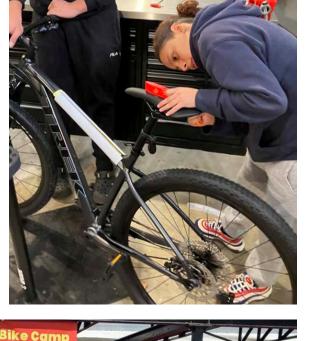
### **Red Shed Bicycle Programs**

We delivered our "Rhode to Bicycle Safety" program to 14 elementary schools within and beyond the Woonasquatucket River watershed. We brought bikes to more than 1.000 students in Johnston, Providence, North Providence, Smithfield, Pawtucket, and Barrington, teaching bicycle skills and safety and giving each of them a helmet.

We ran our Red Shed spring and summer bike camps. This summer, 84 campers attended the weeklong bike camp in Riverside Park in Providence. With three League of American Bicyclists Certified Instructors on staff for this year's camp, we had our strongest bike education team to date. All campers received a helmet, bike lock, patch kit and tire levers--and we were able to give bikes to all campers who needed one.

We dug in deep with the MET High School in Providence, offering an in-depth bicycle mechanics internship program. Through this program, students learned the hands-on skills and knowledge needed to work in the bicycle industry. These students also received assembly certification from Trek Bikes.



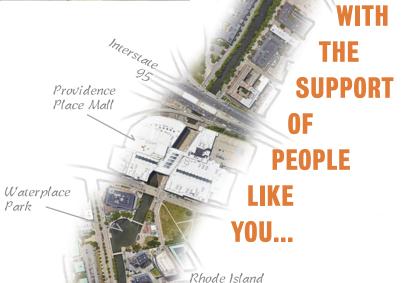












Bath Street

Pedestrian

Bridge

### **Recreation**

Nearly 100 people joined us for 24 explorations this year (many more than once), and we had such a great time hiking, paddling, and enjoying the watershed's beauty with YOU.



Narragansett

Launching from Riverside Park in Providence, more than 200 adults and children (and even a guinea pig!) experienced the river from a canoe—most for the first time. We saw birds and turtles and a family of deer crossing the river. Many participants were surprised by how peaceful it felt on the water, in the middle of an urban park.



**THANK** 





Downtown Providence





### **Corporate, Foundation & Institutional Supporters**

All of our funders and partners play a critical role supporting WRWC's work, and we appreciate each and every one of our supporters for making a real difference. We acknowledge program partners and those corporate and institutional donors who have contributed \$1,000 or more in 2022.

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Connection

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**Advisory Committee** 

#### 2022 Donors

We are grateful to each and every supporter! Together, we are creating a clean Woonasquatucket River and thriving Greenway for all to lead healthy lives.

Those donors with an asterisk (\*) are also part of our Returning River Herring Society of monthly donors.

Please accept our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions. To suggest changes, please contact Director of Development Jill Davidson at idavidson@wrwc.org.

#### **Great Blue Heron Society** \$10.000+

Betty Bourret and Tricia Harris\*

#### **Painted Turtle Society** \$5.000-\$9.999

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#### **River Otter Society** \$1.000-\$4.999

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The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council's audited financial statements are available at wrwc.org.

The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council is a nonprofit tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

