



GSWA Welcomes New Executive Director, Sally Rubin

Sally Rubin, an attorney committed to improving the quality of life in New Jersey through civic activity, has been named Executive Director of the GSWA, and will succeed Joan Fischer, who is relocating out of state.

Ms. Rubin, a lifelong resident of Somerset Hills, brings a wealth of community involvement and experience to the position. She is currently serving her first term as a member of the Bedminster Township Committee, and is also a member of the Bedminster Planning Board. Additionally, she serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center, where she has also been a volunteer. Ms. Rubin previously served on the Boards of Education for Bedminster and the Somerset Hills School District.



"The issues we face in safeguarding the environment and ensuring responsible land use are significant," notes GSWA Chairman, Anne Essner. "Sally's enthusiasm for the environment and experience in public office well qualify her to address these concerns and lead us into the future."

Ms. Rubin's legal experience includes associate and management positions with Ward & Associates, Simon, Sarver & Rosenberg, and Wilentz, Goldman and Spitzer. A graduate of Johns Hopkins

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GSWA's Water Quality Data Serves as Basis for State's Proposed New Phosphorus Discharge Limits

Permitted Monthly Averages to be Reduced by 60% for the Two Watershed Sewage Treatment Plants

by Kelley Curran

GSWA's stream sampling data has been used to bolster a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) proposal to reduce the phosphorus discharge limit of the two watershed sewage treatment plants by 60%. GSWA's Corporate Council provided the funding for the collection of this data, which the DEP's environmental engineering consultant deemed invaluable to the results of the study.

In May 2007, the DEP proposed water quality improvements for the non-tidal Passaic River Basin, an area that includes our Great Swamp Watershed. These improvements required a reduction in the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for phosphorus. Although an essential nutrient for the plants and animals that make up the aquatic food web, phosphorus can be a water pollutant if there is too much of it. Even a small increase in phosphorus levels can result in undesirable effects on our water quality, including accelerated plant growth, algae blooms, low dissolved oxygen, and the death of certain fish, invertebrates, and other aquatic animals.

Phosphorus in our water can have natural sources, such as soil and rocks. However, more common sources in our watershed are man-made: runoff from

(Continued on next page)

Innovative New GSWA Program: One River One Community

by Hazel England

Here's a brain teaser for those who think they know something about our Watershed region: What connects the residentially developed rural and suburban towns that comprise the Great Swamp watershed with the bustling urban hub of Newark? Give up? The Passaic River! Starting its path to the Atlantic as five small streams that flow through the countryside of Harding, Mendham, Chatham and the other GSWA municipalities, and ending as the

Passaic River as it cascades over Paterson falls and into Newark Bay, the mighty Passaic is the liquid link that joins its two ends into one community.

As the 2008 school year begins, something else will unite the two ends of this river. GSWA will initiate an innovative new educational program that will partner 4th and 5th grade students from schools at both ends of the river for a year-long, shared learning experience.

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Gala 2007 Raises Critical Funding Support While Honoring Top Environmental Advocates

Nearly 200 friends and supporters attended the Great Swamp Watershed Association's GALA 2007 on November 2 in Florham Park, raising more than \$60,000 to support GSWA's efforts to protect water and land throughout the watershed.

The festive evening, including an open bar, delicious hors d'oeuvres, an exciting silent auction and a fabulous dessert, spotlighted the work of Congressman Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, the 2007 Marcellus Hartley Dodge Memorial Award winner, and fellow honorees Elizabeth K. Parker of Recorder Community Newspapers; R. Edwin Selover of PSEG; and Benjamin Spinelli of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Office of Smart Growth.

Ed Rodgers, Environment Reporter for NJN New Jersey Public Television served as Master of Ceremonies.



Joan Fischer and Ed Rodgers, center, with honorees Frelinghuysen, Parker, Selover, and Spinelli.

"It meant so much to me to recognize and applaud the work of each of these terrific honorees," said Joan G. Fischer, outgoing executive director of GSWA. "Their commitment and dedication to

working on behalf of the environment has touched my own life in profound ways. It is an honor to be connected with each of them." 🌲

Water Quality Data *(continued from previous page)*

fertilized lawns and cropland, failing septic systems, runoff from animal manure storage areas, disturbed land areas, and drained wetlands. One of the more prominent sources of phosphorus in the Great Swamp watershed is the discharged water from the two watershed sewage treatment plants: the Woodland Pollution Control Utility located in Morris Township which discharges to Loantaka Brook, and the Chatham Township Water Pollution Control Plant, which discharges to Black Brook. Therefore, the reduction proposed by the new State regulations should cause a pronounced benefit for the quality of two of the major water sources for the Great Swamp.

Thanks to the funding from our Corporate Council, along with the hard work and dedication of our stream monitoring staff and volunteers, GSWA was able to promote the water quality and health of our local environment in a big way.



Algae bloom on Kitchell Pond. This pond is located approximately 0.6 mile downstream of the Woodland sewage treatment plant in Loantaka Brook Reservation.

Resources:

The press release about the proposed phosphorus TMDL can be found at: http://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2007/07_0028.htm.

Appendix D of the study, entitled "Export of Phosphorus from Great Swamp to Passaic River,"

and other supporting documents can be found at: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/watershedmgt/tmdl.htm>.

More information on phosphorus can be found on the EPA's website at: <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/criteria/nutrient/>.

ACROSS THE WATERSHED

is a publication of the Great Swamp Watershed Association. GSWA is a membership supported non-profit organization that protects the water you drink and the places you love. We preserve the natural beauty and promote the health of the local environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

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Joan G. Fischer Says Goodbye

If you paid any attention to the media coverage of the November election results, you'd think that the big news is that the narrow margin with which Question 3 passed indicated that tax-weary New Jersey citizens are closing our collective wallets on open space initiatives. But the media missed the point. The bigger story is that despite frustration and anger over paying the highest property taxes in the nation, Question 3 still passed. New Jerseyans appreciate the precious nature of green spaces, clean water, and open vistas and will continue to pay for them.

GSWA supported the open space bond issue, and will work to ensure that the dollars are well-spent state wide and here in our Watershed. Our organization will continue to monitor our water resources, advocate for responsible development practices and environmental legislation, and educate our communities about the importance of open spaces and clean water resources. On December 31, 2007, I passed the reins of the Great Swamp Watershed Association to our new Executive Director, Sally Rubin, who will continue to lead GSWA in its mission. I am confident that our organization is in very capable, professional hands as it continues to serve as guardian for all of the precious and threatened water and land resources of the Great Swamp region.

During my tenure as Executive Director, I had the pleasure of working with a fine staff, dedicated trustees, and wonderful volunteers. I had the honor of orchestrating the cooperation and input from all of these committed people in order to develop new educational programs, water quality projects, and land use advocacy strategies. I felt satisfaction in working to develop an effective strategic plan for the future of the organization. But now, this is my last newsletter column. Those of you who have heard me speak on behalf of GSWA may recall that I always end with saying that no matter how many pieces of new "green" legislation are enacted, no matter how many bond issues are passed, no matter how mainstream it now is to hear talk about global warming issues, Great Swamp Watershed Association's job is not done. And so I end here with that same statement: Your continued support enables us to act as watchdog for the watershed, to protect the water you drink and the places you love

It has been a privilege to work with and for you.

Joan G. Fischer



ACROSS THE WATERSHED

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Sally Rubin *(continued from page 1)*

University with a degree in psychology, she holds a J.D. from Fordham University School of Law.

"I look forward to energizing education and outreach programs throughout the communities we serve, and working with local and state officials to promote sound environmental regulations, and

making sure they are properly enforced," says Ms. Rubin. "I appreciate the positive impact the Great Swamp Watershed Association has had in our area, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to lead this invaluable local environmental organization." 🌱

Vernal Ponds: The Other Universe

by Blaine Rothauser

The Milky Way and Andromeda are names that invoke a sense of wonder for what might lie beyond our streaming blue sphere. Though realities of distance dictate that we are not visiting them anytime soon, don't dismay. You don't need to visit distant galaxies to find alien life forms! Just grab a pair of hip boots and a flashlight, head out to the woods some warm March evening, and follow the eerie calls of woodland sprites! If you know where there's a temporary pool of water in your woods that eventually dries up by summer, don't dismiss it as "just a puddle." Chances are it's what ecologists term a vernal pond (from Latin *vernus*, coming from spring), and far from insignificant. Walking from the woods' edge into one of these vernal ponds is like slipping quietly through a portal into another world. Like a flashback to the psychedelic sixties, you'll see spots move (spotted salamanders), sticks with legs (caddis fly larvae), and possibly even schools of dancing translucent bodies (fairy shrimp) beneath the water's surface.

GSWA's 50-acre Conservation Management Area (CMA) has vernal habitat aplenty. An informative sign points the way to an especially grand vernal pond directly off one of the CMA's marked trails. (See our website for a map and more information about the CMA).



Wood Frog, photo by Blaine Rothauser

Any warm late-winter day spent here will give the explorer hours of fun watching wood frogs perform their territorial dance across the still waters. This is a spectacle you should endeavor to view at least once in your natural events life list!

When temperatures rise above 40°F in March, find a favored vernal habitat to listen for the first Anuran love cries to grace the air! Usually the bird-like trills of spring peepers — (a thumbnail-sized tree



Spring Peeper, photo by Blaine Rothauser

frog) and the duck-like croaks of wood frogs will be the first to invite others of their kind to "do the swamp thing." Frogs may use lake edges, marshes, bottomland woods, and even tire ruts that fill with water to congregate, being generalists in their choice of breeding habitat. They may utilize vernal ponds, but can breed in other habitats.

The wood frog, on the other hand, is a true vernal species, a specialist breeder that prefers to mate in temporary water bodies. These vernal ponds are usually free of fish and eventually dry up. A wood frog must get to them early — usually just after the snow melts and late winter rains fill them to capacity — breed explosively, and pitch offspring development against pond diminishment! In a mere 90 days, the wood frog develops from egg to tadpole to land-roaming froglet.

Throughout the Garden State we have eight bizarrely unique species whose sole survival hinges precariously on the existence of these ponds. Vernal pond experts call these species obligate or indicator species that help in classifying a pond as truly vernal. Two of the eight, blue-spotted and tiger salamanders, are state-endangered. The remaining five won't be far behind in gaining this status

if we continue to lose their vernal habitats through development. The recipe for extinction of local vernal populations is a simple one: remove the pond, remove the breeding grounds, remove the species.

One problem is that these habitats are often overlooked, especially during summer and fall when they may appear as mere depressions in the landscape. It is therefore essential to monitor and record these vernal habitats where they occur. GSWA has worked hard to evaluate properties within the watershed to ensure that vernal habitats are on the radar screen if development is proposed. Developers have been known to hire consultants not conversant in vernal habitat indicators, which have led to the habitat's destruction.

One case involved the destruction of a whole population of spotted salamanders, a vernal pond breeder that relies on one large pond to breed. Their area was filled by a developer because at the time of site evaluation, the area was dry and mistaken for an ordinary-value isolated wetland. Under the Freshwater Protection Act Rules these isolated wetlands could be filled. The closest alternative vernal pond was beyond the species' ability to relocate. In one swipe of a backhoe, this population's breeding successes came to a halt.

In my role as ecologist and GSWA volunteer, and using minnow traps, nets and infrared equipment, I scour the CMA and surrounding habitat each spring for the holy grail of vernal species, the blue-spotted salamander, seeking out wriggling signs of males on the hunt for females. Though tireless searching the many ponds has yielded no blue spots before our eyes yet, we hold out hope for the ponds found on CMA and surrounding landscapes. Naturalists are a stubborn breed and need what amounts to a notarized letter from the president before we are prepared to write the species off. Plus it's just plain fun to be out in these natural wonderlands each spring wondering "could it be." 🌿

Winter-Spring Family Educational Programs

Join friends and members of GSWA for one or more of these educational programs to learn more about what's going on in and around the swamp! We ask that you pre-register for these programs to learn meeting locations and other information. Wear sturdy footwear and bring a snack for the walks. Bring binoculars or wildlife guides if you have them.

These programs are free for members. For non-members, the fee is \$10 per adult, \$5 for each child five and under, and \$30 per family. Pre-registration is required. Visit www.greatswamp.org and click on our secure Event Registration page. Or contact Hazel England, hazele@greatswamp.org.

Moonlight Hike

Thursday, February 21, 6 - 8 p.m.

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.
Call for meeting location.

Although we don't guarantee the moonlight, there will be plenty of nature to learn about on an exciting winter's night hike within the watershed. We may hear owls, foxes or other night noises, perhaps even coyotes calling! We'll play some games to learn more about night senses, and revel in being out after dark without a flashlight! When was the last time you walked in the woods after dark? Dress warmly and in layers, as the temperature goes down along with the sun! 1-1½ mile interpretive hike over easy ground.

Winter Nature Detective's Hike

Saturday, March 1, 10 a.m. - 12 noon.

Meet at Pleasant Plains Road "Friends of Great Swamp" gift store, Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

Winter is a great time to observe animals as they go about their search for food and live their daily lives. It is often easier to look for signs of wildlife than to see the animals themselves. Celebrate winter by playing Nature Detective as we search for tracks and scats, nibbles and nests of some of the denizens of the swamp. Event will take place snow or shine so dress warmly!

Watershed Family Fun Night

Friday, March 14, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

GSWA Headquarters, 568 Tempe Wick Road, Harding Township

Discover the thrills and spills of water at this family fun night, filled with hands-on activities and games designed to open your eyes to the marvel of water. Best suited for children ages 6-12 and their parents, this exciting educational event will surely inspire you to get involved in protecting the water and land for all inhabitants of the Great Swamp Watershed. Wear old clothes, as some activities may be messy! Refreshments will be served at the end of the program.

Secret Places of the Watershed - A Natural History Hike

Sunday, April 6, 10a.m. - 12 noon.

Meet at GSWA Conservation Management Area, Tiger Lily Lane, Harding Township.

The Great Swamp Watershed Association owns 50 acres in Harding Township that we manage for its diversity as the Conservation Management Area. This forested wetland contains vernal pools, streams and woodland with wildflowers and wildlife aplenty. We will take a morning stroll along the boardwalk trails, listening for birds and watching out for early spring peepers and other awakening wildlife. 1-1½ mile interpretive hike over easy ground. 🌿

One River One Community *(continued from page 1)*

Entitled One River One Community, the program will offer field- and classroom-learning experiences at sites on both ends of the Passaic, comparing water quality, wildlife, and biodiversity. The project will train high school students from schools within each community to teach the younger students, thereby fostering scientific knowledge and environmental awareness at many grade levels. Since no matter which end of the river we call home, we share the same responsibility for a shared resource, GSWA's goal for the One River One Community program is to

Coming Soon: GSWA's Citizen Advocacy Program

by Dorothea Stillinger

Want to learn how to make town officials listen to what you have to say? Plan to attend a 45-minute presentation, "Be Heard!," in April, part of GSWA's new Citizen Advocacy Program. Watch for an announcement of the date, time and place.

You can be an effective advocate for betterment in your community by learning a few simple procedures. To help you get started, here are some quick tips:

Tip: First of all, you have to attend the town council or board meeting when your concern is being discussed. These meetings can be long and boring but your presence alone, even if you don't say anything, makes a powerful statement.

Tip: If you do speak, DO NOT go over your allotted three minutes. Officials stop listening at the three-minute mark. Organize your thoughts ahead of time, and it's a good idea to have written notes to refer to while speaking.

Become one of the people described by Margaret Mead when she said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever does." 🌿

educate the next generation of stewards for the health of the entire length of the Passaic River.

Partial funding has already been obtained from PSEG, a company that serves both communities and has a long and deep history of support for GSWA's educational programs. Additional funding is still being sought. For more information or if you are interested in supporting the development of this program, please contact Hazel England, Director of Education and Outreach, at Hazele@greatswamp.org. 🌿

Watershed Watch – Environmental Hot Spots

As part of our mission to protect the water you drink and the places you love, GSWA advocates for responsible development practices and promotes intelligent land use. We work to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and legislation at all levels of the government. Here are some areas we are currently focusing on:

Great Swamp Watershed Region

On November 19, 2007, the **Highlands Council voted to release the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) for public comment**. During the 90-day comment period three public hearings will be held. The water and land resources of the ten towns of the Watershed will be affected by the provisions of the RMP, and GSWA will remain informed and actively advocating for successful implementation. The draft RMP and schedule of hearings are posted at <http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/>.

Bernardsville

Bernardsville High School's application for development of athletic fields with artificial turf raises stormwater runoff issues, about which GSWA will provide expert testimony in order to ensure that untreated, unhampered, stormwater does not negatively impact the Great Swamp.

Bernardsville Center's application for expansion of the King's shopping center has been withdrawn. GSWA will monitor and participate when it is re-submitted.

Chatham Township

Rolling Knolls Superfund Site test pit excavation and sampling was started by USEPA. Some results are expected Spring '08, at which time USEPA will hold a public meeting. GSWA will be participating in ongoing meetings of federal, state, and local stakeholders, with the goal of getting this parcel cleaned up and preserved as open space. Additional information about the site status may be found at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=0200542#CleanupProgr>.

Harding Township

Primrose Preserve, a proposed clustered, purportedly environmentally responsible residential development, has been withdrawn since Harding Township declined to enact a cluster ordinance.

Morris Township's request for Harding Township to re-zone Block 23.02, Lot 5 from residential to public land for the creation of active playing fields raises many environmental concerns for the Watershed in general and GSWA Conservation Management Area in particular. Increased contamination of already impaired and untreated runoff into our CMA, health and drainage issues resulting from use of artificial turf, and silting of drainage into Silver Brook are all likely effects if the site were to be inappropriately developed. At this time, Morris Township has provided very few details of its plans for the fields if Harding Township agrees to rezone the parcel. However, GSWA has been attending town meetings, working with residents, and corresponding with municipal officials about this matter, and will continue to monitor it as it develops.

Long Hill Township

Long Hill Township's application for county open space funds was granted for purchase of parcels along Meyersville Circle, and municipal efforts to examine and redefine Master Plan provisions for growth in the area of the Great Swamp, will continue. GSWA will continue to offer advice as requested by residents and town committees.

Morristown

Morristown's open space tax question was defeated in the November elections. GSWA will continue to work to educate residents about the importance of planning for and purchasing urban open space as city residential development expands.

Morris Township

GSWA's long history of involvement in preventing **Abby Woods at Delbarton's** attempt to develop a high density continuing care residential community continues: GSWA filed a motion to intervene in the Abby Woods administrative appeal of DEP permit denial. Despite the fact that our papers were filed nearly a year ago, the matter is still pending.

GSWA Experts Available to Speak to Area Groups

Do you wonder, "What is in my water?" or "What Can I Do to Ensure Clean Water for My Children?" These questions and dozens more about water quality, land preservation and local efforts to protect the environment can be answered by GSWA's Speakers' Bureau. Experts from the Great Swamp Watershed Association will present interesting, hands-on presentations that will educate and inspire members of your local club or group. Call today for more details: (973) 538-3500.

Troubled Waters: Sodium And Chloride Contamination in Loantaka Brook

by Roger Edwards

With the financial backing from our Corporate Council members, GSWA Stream Team staff and volunteers have been monitoring the water quality of Loantaka Brook, identifying several important chemical contaminants and measuring their concentrations. Loantaka Brook, the most impaired of the five streams that flow into the Swamp, originates near the southern outskirts of Morristown and flows generally southward until it joins Great Brook within the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Previous studies have shown that the stream suffers from excessive levels of phosphorus- and nitrogen-bearing nutrients, but one of the striking results of the current program has been our finding that it also contains alarmingly and unnaturally large amounts of dissolved salt constituents, specifically sodium and chloride. These high concentrations are seen year round, with surges to even higher levels sometimes being seen in winter months.

By analyzing samples taken quarterly, we have learned that the upper headwaters of the stream, extending from its sources to a point just upstream from the Woodland Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP), contain very high sodium and chloride levels. Indeed, the amount of chloride in the water consistently exceeds the “chronic toxicity” criterion of 230 milligrams per liter specified in NJDEP’s Surface Water Quality Standards. This means that prolonged exposure to this amount of chloride could have severe impact on the life of certain aquatic plants or animals. This portion of the brook is narrow, shallow and slow-flowing, with the result that contaminants entering the water are not readily flushed downstream; and high pollutant levels are thus allowed to develop.

A likely source of the biologically hazardous levels of the contaminants are the busy roads like Route 124 and South Street, and parking lots for apartment complexes, businesses and municipal

buildings, which are located in the region of the brook’s upper headwaters. These stretches of asphalt and other types of impervious coverage make the stream vulnerable to road-salt runoff. In two out of the last three winters, we have seen especially high amounts of chloride in the brook, as would be expected if road salt is the major source of this contamination. But because salt can be retained in soils, slowly leaching into shallow ground water and seeping into the stream, we measure high levels of sodium and chloride throughout the year.

Downstream from the Woodland WTP discharge, the contaminants are still present at unacceptable levels, but determining their source is a little more complex. In this “lower headwaters” region, road salt may be only one of several contributors of sodium and chloride. The discharge from the WTP is added to and mixes with the stream waters. Under most conditions, the amount of water flowing

(Continued on next page)

Workshops for Educators

Great Swamp Watershed Association is facilitating several interesting and useful workshops for K-12 formal and non-formal educators. Educators will experience activities they can use back in the classroom or Nature Center to teach across the educational curriculum. The workshops are hands on, led by Hazel England, an experienced naturalist educator, and provide participants with activity guides for each workshop. The 6-hour workshops are offered at little or minimal cost, and often include breakfast. They confer six NJDOE professional development credits too! For more information call Hazel, director of outreach and education, (973) 538-3500 ext 20, hazele@greatswamp.org, or contact workshop locations directly to register.

Friday, February 7, 2008, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Project Wet Workshop

GSWA Headquarters
568 Tempe Wick Road Morristown
(973) 538-3500 ext. 20

The workshop is an interdisciplinary, supplemental water education program for formal and non-formal educators, K-12. It is hands-on, action packed and informative! Educators will learn by doing, experiencing activities they can use to teach all kinds of water concepts from the water cycle, to water properties, aquatic ecosystems, and water pollution prevention. Participants will receive the curriculum and activity guide. The guide is a collection of innovative, water-related activities that are hands-on, easy to use and incorporate a variety of educational formats. Cost: \$25, including breakfast.

Wednesday, April 30, 2008

Wonders of Wetlands Workshop

Morris County Outdoor Education
Center, Chatham (973) 635-9391

WOW! is an instructional guide for educators that provides a resourceful and creative collection of wetland activities, information, and ideas. WOW! includes: over 50 hands-on multidisciplinary activities in lesson plan format, extensive background information on wetlands, ideas for student action projects, and a wetlands resource guide. WOW! has been called “The most comprehensive introduction to wetland issues and definitions.” Great for educators who have access to, or are considering creating their own wetland site. Cost: \$20, including breakfast.

GSWA Spotlight: Anne M. Essner, GSWA Member Since 1998

GSWA's chair-
man of the board
talks about her
personal journey
toward becoming
"green" and answers
questions about the strategic vision
and direction of the Great Swamp
Watershed Association.



How does a big-city publicist and pharmaceutical marketing professional find herself overseeing the nonprofit association for a rural-area swamp?

I had been living in Philadelphia and had worked previously in New York City and East Hanover, New Jersey, before moving back to this area. At the time, I had never heard of the Great Swamp Watershed nor of the Association that was formed to safeguard and preserve this fragile ecosystem. My good friend, Bonnie Gannon, was the Development Director for GSWA at the time and she thought my experience with other fundraising organizations might be useful to GSWA. I became a member in 1998 and volunteered on the Development Committee.

So, you would not call yourself a natural-born environmentalist?

I would not call myself "green" at the time I started volunteering at GSWA. And I certainly did not understand the impact of the environmental pressures that came from having so many people wanting to move into this area because of its natural beauty. It was only as I spent time here that I became more educated and more passionate about our mission to protect the land and water — all the "places we love" — in the Great Swamp Watershed.

Can you really "take the city out of the girl"...?

I grew up in the town of Plattsburgh, New York, which is on the banks of Lake Champlain, not far from the Adirondack mountains and Lake Placid. Before I received my MBA from Columbia University, I went to Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, so I have spent a great deal of time outdoors and am quite appreciative of it.

You became a GSWA trustee in 2003. What is your proudest moment?

One of the most exciting accomplishments, to me, was creating the Corporate Council. This keeps our Watershed top-of-mind with area companies and it provides us with valuable funding to do our important work, like monitoring

the health of area streams. I also enjoyed working closely with trustee Nancy Miller-Rich to create a formal strategic planning process. GSWA just marked its 25th anniversary last year and this plan will ensure another successful 25.

A lot has changed for this organization in 25 years. What's next?

GSWA enjoys a rich history. Its founding members, including Abby Fair and the late Helen Fenske, have left the 10 towns within the Watershed a beautiful legacy. We still have members who recall the great fight against the jetport of the '60s, but we have lots of newcomers to the region who don't, and who may take this open space and clean water for granted. Our board's mission is to change this and to get everyone who lives, works or plays here to understand how much effort it really takes to keep this area as desirable as it is. We welcome newcomers and understand that the transient nature of our area means people will always be moving in and out. But we're blessed with a team of long-term, dedicated trustees, staff and volunteers who toil endlessly to protect the Watershed. Our most important step: to keep spreading the word about GSWA, not just to raise funds, but to raise awareness to attract new members and educate them about this amazing area. 🌲

Sodium and Chloride Contamination *(continued from previous page)*

from the upper headwaters is significantly less than the amount that emerges from the WTP. Chloride concentrations in these "lower headwaters", extending from the WTP outlet to Kitchell Road, are typically about half of those in the upper headwaters, and usually less than the chronic toxicity level. In effect, the plant discharge dilutes the stream and reduces the level of its chloride content. This is not as good as it may seem, however, since the discharge itself contains significant amounts of chloride (and

sodium), possibly originating from brine flushed from water softeners, laundry detergent, bleaches, and other household cleansers passing through the plant. In addition, occasional winter surges of chloride, presumed to result from local road salt runoff, are also seen in the lower headwaters.

All in all, GSWA Stream Team data indicate that Loantaka Brook continues to exhibit unacceptably high levels of contaminants, which harm aquatic life and impair the quality of drinking water.

We need not sit by and let this continue, however. One of the ways we can all help to reduce the most common contaminants, sodium and chloride, in the surface and ground water in and around our streams is to use alternate winter de-icing materials and practices. For more information, see "Tips You Can Use: De-Icing Ideas for Homeowners" on the opposite page.

Visit www.greatswamp.org for the more in-depth study results from the GSWA Stream Team on Loantaka Brook sodium and chloride contamination. 🌲

Tips You Can Use: Limit Your Environmental Impact

by Arlene Klemow

Here is a great new easy way to limit your personal environmental impact without limiting your access to the information you want: www.catalogchoice.org.

In just a few minutes, you can remove yourself from dozens of snail-mail catalog lists and help save millions of trees in the process. You can still get all the info you need and want from these companies by email and the web.


Paper use has a huge impact on the environment — and catalog printing and mailing is a huge part of that. Each year, 19 billion catalogs are mailed to American

consumers. This uses 53 million trees (between 300,000 and 500,000 acres of land cleared or thinned) and comprises 7.2 billion pounds of paper. Processing and transporting this paper results in **5.2 billion pounds of carbon dioxide emissions** which equals the annual emissions of **two million cars**. It also requires 53 billion gallons of fresh water.

The National Wildlife Federation and NRDC have teamed up with the Ecology Center on a new on-line consumer service called **Catalog Choice**. It gives people who shop via catalogs the choice of which catalogs they will receive in the

mail (and which ones they wish to stop). Already tens of thousands of people have signed up to reduce their environmental impact by reducing the catalogs they receive via snail mail.

What would it mean if this new service can lower catalog printing even by just 20%? It would mean 10 million trees not cut, 100,000 acres of land not cleared or thinned, and a **billion** pounds of greenhouse gases not emitted.

Remember, it's easy and quick. Just go to www.catalogchoice.org and sign up now. It takes just a couple of minutes. 

Tips You Can Use: De-Icing Ideas for Homeowners

by Frank Stillingner

Human activity within our watershed often unintentionally affects water quality that the Great Swamp Watershed Association is firmly committed to protect. Of growing concern is the large quantity of salt from winter de-icing that is degrading surface water and ground water in the Great Swamp watershed. Our studies have proven that sodium chloride (common salt) contamination is a problem not only during snow and ice season, but persists year-round.


Common salt is traditionally spread on roads, parking lots, driveways, sidewalks, and elsewhere to eliminate winter snow and ice. Everyone agrees it is important to ensure safety to humans and their vehicles from accidents on icy surfaces. But there are other solutions to the usual de-icing routines that would help reduce degradation of our water with year-round benefits. These benefits include maintaining both the ecological health of the Great Swamp watershed and the quality of the Passaic River that drains the watershed and supplies drinking water for so many downstream.

Here are a few suggestions for homeowners to help the overall salt reduction effort:

- Alternatives to salt as a de-icing substance are available. Although the per-pound expense is somewhat higher, the modest amount of de-icer that the average homeowner would require makes this a minor issue. These alternatives include much more effective and environmentally preferable materials, such as calcium chloride, urea, and calcium magnesium acetate (CMA).
- Consider applying sand or wood chips in place of salt-based products to areas that are not steeply inclined. When using these alternatives, be mindful of them being tracking into the home or washed into storm sewers in quantities large enough to be a clogging problem.
- If possible, remove snow from sidewalks and driveways before it gets packed down by feet or by vehicle tires. Packed snow can turn into a thick ice deposit requiring considerably more de-icer for clearing.

- Attention devoted to de-icing materials and their sensible application can have a significant educational impact on children. Being conscious of the unseen effects of de-icing on our drinking water could serve to illustrate one of the ways we can all help to keep our watershed healthy. Making this connection can influence environmental awareness programs in our local schools.
- We can all become ambassadors for change by making discrete inquiries and recommending safer, non-traditional de-icing methods to the local businesses we frequent and work for.

The Internet provides a wealth of information on alternate de-icing materials, including commercially available products and pricing, as well as useful environmental resources on de-icing. One such site is: <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/1996/12-13-1996/deice.html>.

For more detailed information on sodium and chloride contamination studies in the Great Swamp watershed, visit our website at www.GreatSwamp.org. 

Foundations Contribute to GSWA Water and Land Protection Efforts

GSWA would like to thank the following foundations and corporations for grants given in 2007 to support the organization's programs and operating expenses:

Baker Street Trust	PSEG
F. M. Kirby Foundation	Schering-Plough
The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation	The Ralph M. Cestone Foundation
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These foundations also contributed generously to our mission in 2007. Thank you all for your support!

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to protect water and the
places you love.**

**For information on joining GSWA's
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Debra Dolan,
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Special thanks to the following people and organizations who became members of GSWA between September 1 and December 31, 2007:

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Warmest thanks, too, to those of you who have continued to support the efforts of GSWA over the years. We can't do the work that we do without you! If you are not yet a member, please join GSWA today!

GSWA Dedicates Bench to Environmental Advocate Helen Fenske

About two dozen friends, admirers and family members of the late environmental advocate Helen Fenske gathered at the Great Swamp Watershed Association's Conservation Management Area (CMA) recently as GSWA trustees and staff dedicated a park bench in her honor. Fenske, who later became Assistant Commissioner in the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, is credited with leading the charge to prevent the Great Swamp from being developed into a regional airport in the 1960s.

"Helen was really quite a gal," said her husband Art Fenske with a smile. "And our family appreciates the recognition she continues to receive. She would have been very pleased with the location of this bench," he added, referring to the fact that it is situated along a footpath within


GSWA's Conservation Management Area. The CMA, at the end of Tiger Lily Lane in Harding Township, is one of the state's most successful environmental restoration projects.

"At some point after the death of a loved one, it's important to take a walk to symbolically turn a corner—moving away from our grief and toward the future," said Joan G. Fischer, outgoing executive director of GSWA at the dedication ceremony. "Today, we will walk along a footpath in this glorious region of the Great Swamp watershed toward the bench. As we turn the path's corners, we will be thanking Helen for her hard work in preserving this region and we will be looking toward a future made greener by her efforts." 🌿



Art Fenske and Anne Essner at the dedication of the bench to Helen Fenske.

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