



PaddleRI 2008

*Celebrating Paddling
On RI's Rivers and Bay*

**Rhode Island Blueways
Alliance**
PO Box 1565
North Kingstown, RI 02852

Chair: Keith Gonsalves
Vice Chair: Bruce Hooke
Secretary: Terry Meyer
Treasurer: Meg Kerr

The PaddleRI 2008 celebration was a huge success with over 200 paddlers participating. PaddleRI was sponsored by the RI Blueways Alliance but the individual trips were organized and hosted by local organizations – watershed councils, Save the Bay and local conservation commissions. The celebration would not have been possible without their enthusiastic participation.

The RI Blueways Alliance mission is to develop a water trail network linking Rhode Island's rivers, lakes and ponds to Narragansett Bay and to use the trail to promote safety, conservation, recreation and economic development. PaddleRI 2008 celebrated the network of paddling opportunities that make up our water trail network. We would like to thank our sponsors -- **the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, the RI Resource Conservation & Development Area Council and the Rhode Island Foundation.**

Salt Ponds Spring Paddle - Ninigret Pond Saturday, May 31:

The Salt Ponds Coalition's trip was planned for May 31, but the paddle was postponed due to weather. On June 1, about 30 paddlers arrived at the US Fish & Wildlife kayak launch accessed through Ninigret Park at 8:30am with plans to get underway by 9:00am. But Mother Nature had other plans....



The fog was so thick that you couldn't see where to paddle. Paddlers waited, listening to presentations by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Salt Pond's Coalition's Art Ganz, hoping for better conditions. The Salt Ponds Coalition wisely canceled the trip when the fog refused to go away.

Rescheduled for June 7

A week later, a smaller group gathered and enjoyed what should have been the first PaddleRI trip – starting out with some fog, but with clearing during the morning.



Paddlers left from Ninigret Wildlife Refuge and proceeded east towards Ocean House Marina, where Pam Lyons gave an informative talk about the history of Fort Ninigret and the Cross Mills area. Across the pond, Art Ganz, a retired marine biologist, president of Salt Ponds Coalition, and founder of the SPC kayak trips, led a short beach walk and discussed the dynamics of the barrier beach.

Wood River Source to Sea Paddle, Saturday June 7: This 7-mile voyage on the Wood River gave paddlers a chance to experience one of the most wild and scenic rivers in RI. It was also the start of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association's Annual Source to Sea. Eighteen participants joined five WPWA staff and volunteers near the head of the river at the Arcadia Management Wood River Access off Rt. 165 in Exeter. Other volunteers provided shuttle service to the take out at Wyoming Dam in Richmond. Participants saw mountain laurel and swamp azalea in full bloom along the banks of the river, as well as osprey, great blue herons, red-winged blackbirds, thrushes and warblers overhead. Lunch was at the WPWA headquarters, after which everyone helped move boats across Arcadia Road for the only portage of the trip. As many as 45 people paddled the rest of the Wood River and ended in the Pawcatuck Estuary in Westerly over the following three Saturdays.

Paddle the Pawtuxet, Sunday June 8:

Sponsored by the Pawtuxet River Authority, this trip launched from Pontiac Mill off Rt. 5 and paddled just over seven miles to Rhodes on the Pawtuxet where the Pawtuxet River Authority provided food and refreshments.



Ten Mile River Fathers Day Family Paddle, Sunday June 15: Rain did not deter the 23 paddlers who enjoyed this two hour down river trip. The paddlers lucked out, as the weather cleared and all enjoyed the surprising urban wilderness of Pawtucket. The trip ended with refreshments at the Kimberly Rock Sports Complex. The Ten Mile River Watershed Council sponsored this trip.



Rivers Day Celebration, Saturday June 21:

The third Saturday in June is RI Rivers Day. The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Blackstone River Watershed Council, Blackstone Valley Outfitters and other partners celebrated RI Rivers Day with speakers, awards, organizational displays, free 1-hour guided kayak tours into the Valley Falls Pond and wetlands complex and free guided tours on the Explorer. Bruce Hooke spoke on behalf of the Blueways Alliance and distributed program information. Many people stopped by and left with information and free neck totes imprinted with the new Blueways logo.



Summer Solstice Paddle, Saturday June 21: Paddlers celebrated the first day of summer on the beautiful upper Pawtuxet River with a late afternoon paddle from Hope Pond up to the Gainer Dam and back. Participants were invited to bring a picnic dinner and enjoy the sunset from the Hope Pond beach during the paddle. Sponsored by the Scituate Conservation Commission.

Ride the Tide on Buckeye Brook,

Saturday June 21: This trip explored one of Warwick’s hidden treasures – Buckeye Brook. This 2-hour paddling event was open to all levels of experience and included discussions of Buckeye Brook’s over 300 years of history. 40 Paddlers met at Conimicut Point parking lot. Refreshments & food were served and sponsored by the Buckeye Brook Coalition.



Pettaquamscutt Paddle, Sunday June 22: This two hour tour of the lower Narrow River left from Narrow River Kayaks, just east of Middle Bridge Road, for a roundtrip to Narragansett Beach and back. The Narrow River Preservation Association sponsored the trip.

Afternoon Paddle on the Lower Woonasquatucket, Saturday June 28:

Twenty-five people came along to paddle on the lower Woonasquatucket River (and Providence River) in downtown Providence led by Bruce Hooke and Lisa Aurecchia of the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council. We had great views of a bicycle race in downtown Providence that afternoon (which also caused us to move the put-in) and we also watched the Waterfire teams getting ready for a Waterfire scheduled for that evening. After passing under the mall, the Foundry Complex and the 903 building we headed into a stretch of the river from Acorn Street to Eagle Street overhung with trees that reach almost all the way across the river. Above Eagle Street we ran out of water about where we usually do and as planned we turned around and headed back to the starting point.



Big River Paddle, Sunday June 29: This three hour tour provided paddlers with an enjoyable up and back on a little explored river in RI, the Big River. Paddlers started at Zeke's Bridge in Coventry, and traveled through a wide variety of freshwater wetland habitats. RI Department of Environmental Management sponsored this trip.



Save The Bay Summer Paddle, Saturday July 12: Paddlers joined Save the Bay for this saltwater paddle around Pawtuxet Cove and upper Narragansett Bay. Accompanied by Save the Bay marine educators, canoe guides, and other enthusiastic paddlers, paddlers met at the Aspray Boathouse for an enjoyable trip.



Roger Williams Paddle Trail Celebration, Saturday July 19. This inaugural paddle of the Roger Williams Paddle Trail took selected members of the Ten Mile River Watershed Council and invited dignitaries on a trip that followed the route taken by Roger Williams in 1636 as he fled Massachusetts seeking religious freedom and landed in what is now Providence. With funding from REI, the RI Blueways Alliance will document and launch this trail in 2009.



Narragansett Bay Day

Saturday July 27: Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay Day was hot, humid and rainy. Despite the unfavorable weather conditions, the RI Blueways had an informational booth set up from 10 am to 2 pm at the RI DEM Bay Day Family Picnic at Goddard State Park in Warwick. DEM provided a free picnic lunch. Sponsored by the RI Blueways Alliance.



Aquidneck Island Planning Commission Blue Trail Launch, Monday July

28. The Aquidneck Island Planning Commission's ribbon cutting for the new Blueways passage and signage was postponed due to funeral services for fishing Captain Phillip Ruhle Sr. who was lost at sea Wednesday July 23. The following invitation has been sent out announcing the ceremony on August 22.

You are cordially invited to celebrate the first West Side Master Plan project on Friday, August 22, 2008 (rain or shine) at 10 a.m. at the Weaver Cove Boat Launch Parking Lot, off Burma Road (Defense Highway) in Portsmouth. Help dedicate the first two launch sites for the eventual 10 mile Blue Trail for kayaks and canoes in Narragansett Bay from Portsmouth to Newport. Join your elected officials and enjoy watching colorful kayaks launching into the Bay! The public is welcome, especially kayakers and canoeists! (byok...bring your own kayak)

Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse, Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy, RI Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Paiva Weed and many others will conduct the ribbon-cutting ceremony to dedicate the Blue Trail in Narragansett Bay. The Blue Trail encourages public use and enjoyment of the bay, and is one of many recreational elements of the Master Plan. The Town of Portsmouth has generously provided space for the first two kayak put-ins at Cory's Lane and our celebration site at Weaver's Cove.

