



SewerWorks

E A R T H D A Y 2 0 1 6

From the Executive Director

Of all the questions which can come before this nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us. —Theodore Roosevelt



President Theodore Roosevelt lived and led our country before the first Earth Day but his statement could have been its tag line. First celebrated in 1970 Earth Day marked the beginning of the modern environmental era. It was time when we recognized as a nation that our natural resources were finite.

As citizens we were enjoying the benefits of healthy growth and development through industrial and technologic progress. We were however in some instances using our air and water as free dumping grounds for the wastes that were byproducts of that development and progress. The first Earth Day was conceived as a nationwide "teach in" – a day for all of us to learn about the environment and the impacts we have upon it.

With ever increasing knowledge we came to realize that our waters could not simply absorb all of the wastes we were discharging into them and our air would not simply blow away the pollution we sent out our smokestacks. With that knowledge and realization we began to take action as a Nation, through government, private enterprise, public interest groups and as citizens.

In Connecticut we already had laws protecting our public health and natural resources when we celebrated the first Earth Day. As years passed laws protecting our land, air and water were enacted at the federal level. With the implementation of those laws our air and water became significantly cleaner, our lands better protected. Long Island Sound, once called an urban sewer, is now recognized as an estuary of national importance.

In the beginning of the environmental movement bigger issues were easier to address—any environmental controls were an improvement. Today we are faced with more difficult issues: each additional improvement is harder and more expensive.

So the continuing importance of Earth Day is this: we need to keep teaching and learning about the impacts our everyday activities have on the environment. We need to keep finding new ways to limit our footprints on our natural resources as we enjoy their benefits.

Our mission dictates that every day at the GNHWPCA is Earth Day. Follow our website to see what we're doing to make that your reality.

Sidney J. Holbrook, Executive Director
Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority

GNHWPCA CORE VALUES: Health, Safety, & Environmental Protection

The GNHWPCA is committed to providing a safe, secure, and environmentally responsible workplace for all employees, and fostering a culture focused on continual improvements to our safety program. On a daily basis, all of our employees who work in the field are required to wear personal protective equipment, which is outlined for all tasks our employees may encounter in our job hazard analyses (JSA's). In order to keep safety in the forefront of everyone's mind, weekly "safety tailgate" talks are given to emphasize a specific safety topic and to help prevent accidents.

The GNHWPCA has a safety committee which meets monthly, and includes a representative from each department. Here, we are able to identify opportunities for health and safety improvements, review any accidents or near misses for the month, and plan on upcoming training sessions. We also have an Executive Safety Committee that meets quarterly. This group includes our safety consultant and insurance representatives. This is a venue to discuss loss control, and most recently review our safety manual, a dynamic document we are always trying to improve.

Working at a wastewater treatment plant can be a dangerous job. The GNHWPCA has always shown a commitment to safety for its employees and customers, and will continue to provide a working environment that remains in compliance in regard to all safety rules and regulations.

GNHWPCA Partners with the Community to Protect the Environment

The West River Watershed Coalition recently applied for a greenway designation for the West River watershed and has been accepted as a designated greenway by the Connecticut Greenways Council. The West River Watershed Coalition was formed two years ago and is made up of individuals from many different organizations who envision safe, clean water with enhanced public access and recreation opportunities for the West River. See below for the list of organizations.

Once a site is designated as a greenway, the area will receive special signs to post at trailheads and road crossings and be included in future plans for greenway development. The greenway designation was supported by municipalities and organizations which have control in the watershed. They are New Haven, Hamden, Woodbridge, Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority and the South Central Regional Water Authority.

Along with the Greenway designation for the West River, a watershed management plan has also been developed by the coalition.

The document is a watershed-based plan for the West River to guide future uses and protections. The watershed plan provides a blueprint to help groups within the watershed work across municipal boundaries to better protect and restore water resource conditions throughout the watershed.

Objectives of the watershed plan include identifying specific actions to protect and improve water quality, facilitate capacity-building and engage the watershed municipalities and other stakeholder groups in the watershed planning process and future plan implementation, create a plan that satisfies EPA and CTDEEP requirements for watershed-based plans. This will better position the West River for future grant funding from State and Federal sources.

These important accomplishments show the value of everyone working together to protect the environment and make it a better community to live in. To learn more about the West River watershed management plan visit our website at www.gnhwpc.com/index.php/community-outreach

WEST RIVER WATERSHED COALITION PARTICIPANTS: Barnard Environmental Studies Magnet School, CARE (Community Alliance for Research and Engagement), Columbus House, Common Ground/New Haven Ecology Project, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Elm City Cycling, Friends of Beaver Pond Park, Friends of Edgewood Park, Greater New Haven BioRegional Group, Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority, Greater New Haven Water Works Coalition, Lehigh University, Menunkatuck Audubon Society, Mill River Watershed Association, NAACP, Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven, New Haven Department of Parks and Recreation and Trees, New Haven Environmental Justice Network, New Haven Land Trust, New Haven Health Department, Save the Sound/ CT Fund for the Environment, Solar Youth, South Central Regional Water Authority, Southwest Conservation District, Urban Resources Initiative, West River Neighborhood Services Corporation, West River Restoration & Flood Mitigation Committee (Woodbridge), West River Watershed Partnership, Westville Village Renaissance Alliance

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