



"A Dock at Dusk," Copyright © Irwin Block

NRWA NEWS

The 2008 Photo Exhibit. The show traveled to all seven of the Norwalk River Watershed towns from January through September and featured 39 photographs from 19 photographers in six area towns. The purpose of these exhibitions has been to publicize beautiful and interesting features within the river system, as well as problems that come from ignorance or intense development, so people will want to take action and cooperate with others to correct abuses and protect the essential resources of the Norwalk, Comstock, and Silvermine rivers and Long Island Sound. While NRWA is not planning an exhibit for 2009, it welcomes inspiring or documentary photographs which might be included on the website or in a newsletter. Send photos in the highest resolution possible to info@Norwalkriver.org.

Norwalk River Watershed Trail System. A new leg of the trail system was added via open spaces on the east side of Route 7 in Wilton. The NRWA watershed blaze (white square with vertical blue line down the middle) was added to connecting trails within the Gregg Preserve, owned by the Wilton Land Conservation Trust, and the Belknap Preserve, owned by the Town of Wilton. The next linking section for which NRWA has approval is through the Aspetuck Land Trust's Honey Hill Preserve. A celebratory hike of the connecting system will be scheduled for spring 2009.

Grants. NRWA fulfilled its obligations from a **CT DEP Long Island Sound License Plate Program** grant that enabled the Association to complete two important projects. A 2008 version of the brochure "How to Manage and Landcape Your Property" was updated, printed, and distributed to all Norwalk and Wilton residents through *The Hour* and *Villager* newspapers and circulars. That action meant that the brochure finally had been made available to residents in all seven of the watershed towns. In addition, NRWA created a "Four-Season Yard Worker Tip Sheet," available in both English and Spanish. The hope is that professionals and homeowners will give the informaiton to their workers and, thereby, effect some changes in property management, invasive plant removal, native plant landscaping, decreased runoff, and improved water quality. Property owners can follow best-management practices themselves or distribute the information to their yard workers to make sure the landscapers are handling maintenance in a responsible way. These publications are available at local Town Halls and libraries and are also able to be downloaded from the NRWA website www.norwalkriver.org. Please spread the word about their existence and availability and distribute them to people you feel might be interested.

The Sounds Conservancy program of small grants through the Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment (QLF) provided another small grant to help NRWA update and redesign its website to make access to specific information easier for browsers. NRWA has a strong reference section that is regularly used by the public. The latest organizations that asked for permission to use NRWA material were a Girl Scout council that consulted the site for information on buffers that could be included on trail signs and a Florida lake preservation society that wanted to print in its newsletter NRWA's article "Ten Easy Steps to a

2008 ANNUAL MEETING

Two new Board Members were elected to two-year terms: Sara da Silva and Richard Weisberg, both of Norwalk.

Sara da Silva, an environmental scientist with a New York-based environmental planning and consulting firm, holds a Bachelor's degree in Marine Biology and a Master's in Environmental Science. She has worked with EPA and the State of Rhode Island. An expert in watershed assessment and stream health, she volunteers for the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England, the New England Wild Flower Society, and NRWA. She actively promotes environmental education, awareness, and restoration.

Richard Weisberg holds an undergraduate degree in Geology, a Master's in International Relations, and a Law Degree. A member of the NY State bar and now in private practice, he also worked for the EPA. His legal expertise includes commercial and corporate litigation. He is a member of several fishery commissions and advisory panels/councils, and does pro bono counsel work for various environmental organizations. He is working on a septic pump-out ordinance and reviewing TMDL initiatives and other criteria and regulations.

Following the elections, NRWA President Lillian Willis thanked retiring Board Member and NRWA Secretary Flora Kueppers of Ridgefield for serving loyally since 2001. Willis then gave an update on the year's accomplishments before introducing Landscape Architect Jane Didona, principal and founder of Didona Associates in Danbury, who spoke on goals and methods of effective stormwater control.

During her 30 years in practice, Didona has dedicated her talents to sustainable site design. Stormwater management is a critical factor in any site plan because good practices provide opportunities for infiltration and removal of pollutants. Didona's philosophy is that correctly managed stormwater will nurture a site and the humans who visit it. She believes that aesthetics and beauty, which are often considered secondary factors, can become an asset to the community beyond their original purpose and result in a preferred water landscape. Her slides illustrated how beauty and function combine to help the environment while increasing people's enjoyment of each site and their intent to maintain it.

Peter Fraboni, Assoc. Director and Sr. Naturalist at Earthplace in Westport, then gave Harbor Watch/River Watch's annual report on the state of the Norwalk River system. He discussed testing locations along the Norwalk and Silvermine rivers and areas of concern, especially from nonpoint pollution, and the difficulty in tracking the sources of the problems. HW/RW's water-testing reports are posted in PDF format on the NRWA website so more people may learn the state of the river and the need for greater individual responsibility and action.