

CONSUMER NEWS FROM THE REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY

An Experiment in Environmentalism, History & Memory in a Digital Age

Roaming the Mill River, 20 fourth grade students from New Haven's Cold Spring School collected the stories and legends of everyday New Haven. They turned videotaped interviews and data they collected from water samples, plants and wildlife into seven 15-minute "River Stories" of the Mill River.

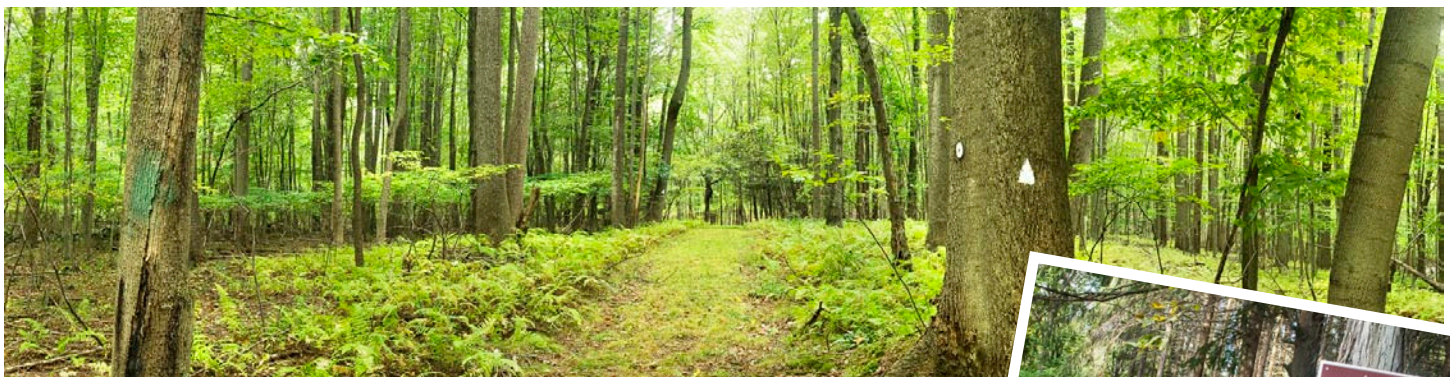
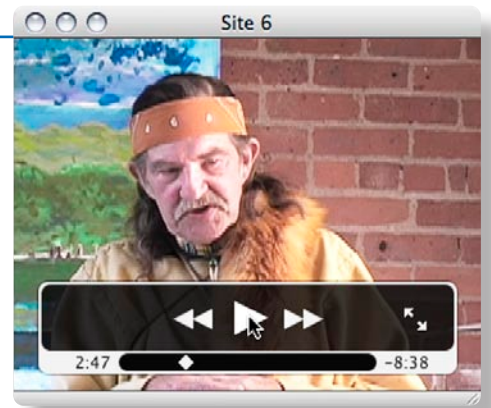
Originally produced for the school's website, the stories "morphed into podcasts," said Karen Zwick, the fourth/fifth grade teacher and technology coordinator at the school, who managed the program for the students. Morphed indeed. Apple iTunes, the on-line digital music store, recently made the kids' podcasts part of their library collection, downloadable from the Apple site. Some of the interviewees include Lauren Brown of the New Haven Land Trust, New Haven Riverkeeper Peter Davis, Oysterman Jeff Bloom, and Jim Bussman of Seaboard Fuel. This year, the students are transcribing the podcast tapes into Spanish.

With tremendous pride in her students, Zwick explains, "It was a great experience. The kids learned a lot and there is an important lesson in environmental stewardship for those who listen to the stories. The 20 students did the work as

journalists. They researched, asked smart questions during interviews, put together video, audio and transcriptions, and with the help of the music teacher, created and selected the music."

A \$4,800 grant from The Watershed Fund, a separate non-profit organization established by the Regional Water Authority, purchased the equipment to make the segments.

To learn about The Watershed Fund, or to apply for a grant, go to www.thewatershedfund.org



Seymour-Pine Hill Trail System Now Open

Our newest recreation area, the Pine Hill Trail System, consists of four trails located in the towns of Woodbridge and Seymour where you can hike, jog or cross-country ski. We obtained this area when we acquired Birmingham Utilities in January.

Here you will find varied terrain and features: from seasonally wet to rocky and steep to relatively flat. You will traverse through mixed-age forests ranging from wetland species to dry ridge species, and see evidence of past agricultural use as well as timber and fuel harvesting. An interpretive trail guide is available with descriptions corresponding to the numbered disks posted on the trees along the trail.



The longest trail in the system is the Peat Swamp Loop, offering an opportunity to explore previous land use and a variety of forest types along

the two-mile stretch of trail.

Dating back to the early 1900s when the land was cleared for agriculture, the trail includes streams as well as stone walls that might have designated one-time farmland. In the winter and early spring, you can catch a glimpse of the Peat Swamp Reservoir.

Don't have a permit? Go to www.rwater.com/recreation to purchase one on-line.



Fire Hydrants

When people think of a fire, the first thing that usually comes to mind is the fire truck with its sirens blaring, but inevitably their thoughts turn to water and fire hydrants. Nearly everyone has seen images of firemen fighting a fire with large, long hoses connected to a fire hydrant. These hydrants allow firefighters to tap directly into the public water mains in the street to extinguish a fire.

While most of us never think about fires until they occur, there is a vast network of water infrastructure in place to protect us when they do. Whether flowing to your kitchen sink or to a fire hydrant on the street, water moves through a system of mains, pumps and storage tanks. Simply stated, the water is available on demand.

In the United States alone, over 1.5 million fires occur each year. Like a fire department, we know that an ample, reliable supply of water at a high pressure means the difference between a manageable fire and an inferno.

Therefore, at the Authority, our creed on fire protection is clear: "Take firefighting seriously. A hydrant should never be out of service." In our region, there are over 9,900 fire hydrants and we own and maintain 3,400 of them in the communities of Ansonia, Branford, Derby, Milford, North Branford, Orange and Seymour. We conduct inspections twice a year to insure proper operation in time of need.



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A Word About Water Main Breaks

Extreme cold weather can force frost deeper into the soil causing the ground to shift and triggering a water main break. Sometimes it's the combination of the extreme cold along with the age of the water pipe that causes the fracture. Either way, a break in the street disrupts customers.

Water main breaks are serious and receive our immediate attention. When they occur, crews respond quickly to make the repair and restore water service. Depending on the type of break, the water may be turned off. The Authority makes every effort to notify residents before this happens. A water main break usually takes four to six hours to repair.

When the naturally formed scale on the interior of the piping system is disturbed, some water discoloration may occur immediately after the water is turned back on. Our crews work to clear this condition quickly. After a severe water main break, this discoloration may last for several hours. During this time, reduce your water usage, especially hot water. This will limit the storage of discolored water in your water heater and help prevent staining of fixtures or any clothing in your washer.

If you notice water bubbling up through the ground, a wet area appearing during dry weather, or a sudden loss of water pressure within a service area, please call 562-4020.

Need More Information Fast?

RWA's Customer Relations Center handles calls from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, you can get account information 24 hours a day, seven days a week with our touch-tone automated action line.

Dial 562-4020. This account line is also available in Spanish. To use the following options, you will need to provide your ten-digit account number and your four-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN):



PRESS #1 for a complete listing of the **Self-Service Features** available.



PRESS #2 for **Billing and Payment Options**: Check your account balance, verify your last payment, request a duplicate bill or make a credit card payment.



PRESS #3 to **Schedule Service Work Orders** (like changing water meters): Here the options include making an appointment on a specific date, an appointment during the week, or an appointment on a Saturday.



PRESS #4 to **Enter a Meter Reading**. Remember to enter the first six digits from your water meter.

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