



# French River Log

Volume 4, Number 3

September 1, 2009

Welcome to the September 1, 2009 edition of the French River Log, the Newsletter of the French River Connection. You are receiving this newsletter because at some point you gave us your email address and we have been sending you meeting announcements, minutes, and other information. At the bottom of this newsletter there is information about how to unsubscribe if you wish.

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## Dam Trail Race Sets Record for Participation



At left, some of the 117 race finishers head off into the woods during the Dam Trail Race held August 8 at Hodges Village in Oxford. There were runners from every New England state and New York. Farthest from home: Alyssa Godesky of Baltimore. With a record number of runners, and many donations of food and prizes, the French River Connection cleared approximately \$1500 on the event.

Donations of food, prizes, and services were received from those listed below; many thanks to them.

Shaws Market Webster

Big Bunny Market Sturbridge

Park n Shop Dudley

Delray Doc's Webster

Wal-Mart Oxford

Central Mass Striders

Great Canadian Kayak Company

Mike Robers, Central Mass Physical Therapy

Shaws Market Auburn

Big Y Market

Price Chopper Webster

Isadore's Oxford

Polar Beverages

Pine Ridge Golf Course

Dr. Neil Feldman

The overall winner was Ben Nephew of Mansfield MA with a time of 1:12:06 for the 11-mile course. Other winners:

Men	Name	Hometown	Women	Name	Hometown
0-19	Ross Mongean	Douglas MA	0-19	Libby White	Bedford NH
20-39	Ben Nephew	Mansfield MA	20-39	Stephanie Crawford	Portsmouth NH
40-49	Peter Keeney	Bar Harbor ME	40-49	Shelley Rodier	Taunton MA
50-59	Bob Sharkey	Newport RI	50-59	Lisa Doucett	Andover MA
60-69	Bill Howard	Winchester MA	60-69	Karen Oleski	Ashland MA
70+	Richard Busa	Marlboro MA			

A complete list of finishers can be found [here](#).

Other winners include our many volunteers:

Joe Alfano, Cheryl Cleary, Kevin Fallon, Marylu Garrow, Jim Grady, John Grenier, Steve Hebenstreit, Stu Kravitz, Jo LaChapelle, Annette Lemerise, Karen Lemerise, Megan McMahon, Jan McNamara, Evan Perron, Laurie Perron, Nick Popiak, Sue Swenson, Megan Therriault, Kim Wamback

Eliot Lucil, Marianne Grenier, Amanda Grenier, Pam Brunett, David Borelli, Nick Monopoly, Eric Thibault

Ken Parker, Elaine Parker, Jeff Baker, Jay Wade, Tom Ayau, Ed Bazinet, John Mrazik, Mike Branniff, Charles Perzanoski, Alan Dabrowski

Many thanks to all, and especially to Race Director John Grenier who made this event such a rousing success!



### Leovich Landing Dedication Set



A dedication event is scheduled for October 24 at 3pm at the site (52 Dudley Road) to honor all who contributed to purchasing the four acre parcel to be known as Leovich Landing, and to bring the acquisition phase to a close.

Our plan is to leave most of the site in its present state, offering protection to the plants and animals living there, but to develop the already degraded portion for recreation with an unpaved parking lot and a boat launch. The property has been used that way for many years, without proper attention to storm water management, invasive plant control, or safety issues. There is much design and permitting work to do to accomplish this. We have already started work by removing a dilapidated building, tires, and other junk from the site. In the longer term, the property will serve as a trailhead for the [French River Greenway](#), which would follow the bordering railroad.

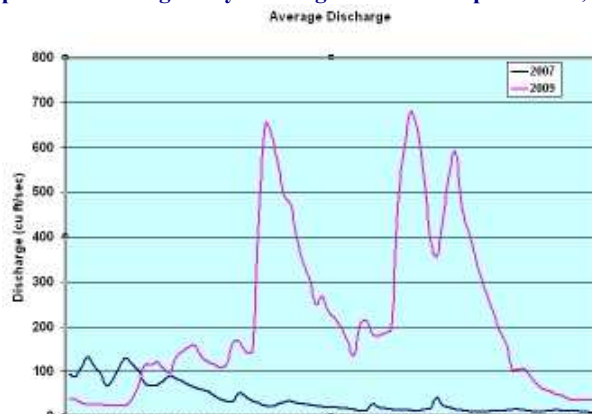
The land was acquired through a combination of grant-writing and fundraising, accomplished by a team of volunteers from the Dudley Conservation Land Trust, the French River Connection, and an Oxford citizens' group. Approximately \$70,000 was raised against the \$63,000 sales price, leaving money for closing costs and stewardship. Grantors included the Commonwealth under its Conservation Partnership Program, the Fields Pond Foundation, and the Bafflin Foundation. The Town of Oxford, who also holds the conservation restriction on the property, contributed as well. And \$15000 was raised from 67 individuals, businesses, and organizations, which was absolutely critical to the success of this project.

### How's the Water?

How's the water? Well, for one thing, it's been HIGH! The chart at right compares the average daily discharge in cubic feet per second, measured at the USGS gage in Webster, for the years 2007 and 2009, from June 1 to August 24. Water levels in 2007 were extraordinarily low, sometimes with discharges in single digits, while in 2009, the discharge for many summer days set a record for the day, higher by a factor of 20 than in 2007. That's a lot of water!

One might expect our water quality testing results to be different under these conditions, but for the most part, no such effect is evident. The locations that tend to deteriorate over the summer have done so. The only difference is in conductivity, which has tended toward lower (better) values than usual. This makes sense; there is the same amount of salts in the water but much more water, so concentrations are lower. We have also seen fewer fish; this may just be a matter of less visibility in deeper water.

It was a pleasure to have two Shepard Hill students on our monitoring team in June. We certainly hope to see more student participation for the rest of this year and into 2010.



## Perryville Trace Gets Longer

On June 20, a work party extended the Perryville Trace approximately 100 yards north across Webster town property, and performed other maintenance, including installation of pipe and fill to address stormwater issues, and addition of gravel to the parking lot. There is still more work to do in some locations. In particular, the town has been asked to address the stormwater runoff from Brookside Avenue, which would be a problem whether there was a trail there or not. The Trace was flooded for periods this summer due to the very heavy rain; we're not seeking to prevent any water from getting on the trail under such extreme conditions, but we would like to keep it dry most of the time. The Trace appears to have weathered these rain events well. Thanks to Alan Dabrowski, Scott Benoit, Tom Ayau, Nick Buehler, John Mrazik, Tom Ryzewski, and Ken Pickren for helping.

Unfortunately, ATV and dirt bike riders have found the Trace, and some of them are oblivious to signs and are willing to tear down barricades. A number of riders who were found in the area, but not on the Trace, have been confronted and perhaps the word will get around. The Trace is private property and our usage agreement requires that we exclude motorized vehicles.

## Water Chestnut Getting Close



Invasive water chestnut, shown at left, is getting close to our waterways. At present, the USDA does not show any in Worcester County, but that doesn't mean it isn't here, and it is in a pond in Thompson CT. It grows in nutrient-rich slow moving water with dense mats of floating leaves anchored on stems that may be as much as sixteen feet long. Water chestnut chokes out native plants and is of little use to waterfowl. There is no good way to control it other than to pull it by hand. Any plant parts left behind will simply create more plants. It can be spread from one water body to another on boats or fishing equipment, and grows explosively once introduced.

If you spot this stuff, please report it to DEP immediately. If you're not sure of the identification, [Tom Ryzewski](#) has agreed to evaluate sightings.

## French River Day Scheduled

French River Day, our annual picnic, is scheduled for September 12, 3-6pm, at Hodges Village in Oxford. We'll furnish hamburgers and hot dogs, you bring a dessert or other dish to share. We'll have kayaks for a paddle on Aggutback Pond. Bring chairs. If you're planning on attending, please notify [Elaine](#) and let her know what you'll be bringing. Enjoy a relaxing few hours, no river cleanups, brush cutting, or other arduous duty!

## Join us

Not a member yet? Did your membership expire? We need you! Family memberships start at \$20 a year. These unrestricted funds are what keeps us going day-to-day. A membership form can be found [here](#).

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