

Eightmile River Wild And Scenic Coordinating Committee Report

In our last annual update to Lyme we noted that Congressman Courtney had introduced H. R. Bill #986 to designate sections of the Eightmile River as Wild & Scenic. We are happy to report that after a year and two months time, the last major hurdle for Wild & Scenic designation for the Eightmile River was crossed with House passage on April 29th. The Senate previously passed legislation on April 10, both bills being part of a larger natural resource bill package.

“This has been a good month for the Eightmile,” noted Eightmile Wild & Scenic Committee Chair Anthony Irving. “While we await the final signature from the President, we are fully enjoying our ‘watershed moment’. The efforts of our local volunteer organization and the support from the towns and citizens of the Eightmile have really paid off,” said Irving.

Unrelated political issues in both the Senate and the House fed unfounded concerns that threatened to waylay our progress. In the end, and after much effort and work, Congressman Courtney and Senator Dodd were successful in shepherding the bill through the House and the Senate. The Eightmile Committee wishes to particularly recognize Congressman Courtney for the key role he played throughout the drawn-out process.

Perhaps our highlight moment in the last year was the Eightmile RiverFest held in October at Devil’s Hopyard State Park. On a beautiful fall day over 400 people stopped by to take in the live bluegrass music, fishing demonstrations, 40 gallons of chili and chowder, award winning photography displays and scintillating speeches. It was a great day and we are deeply appreciative to all who helped and contributed to the event.

In other news, the Eightmile Coordinating Committee continues to work diligently to implement the Watershed Management Plan. After adoption of a riparian overlay protection zone in East Haddam, Salem passed its own version and the Lyme Zoning commission is considering the issue as well. Our Outreach & Education committee has developed a riparian habitat education campaign that will launch this summer (look for our brochures in your mailbox) and a Land Conservation Summit is also in the works.

Please visit our website at www.eightmileriver.org or call 860-345-8700 if you have any questions or suggestions. We also have copies of the Watershed Management Plan available to the public at our office or in the Town Hall as available.