

## Celebrate WEC's 40th Anniversary in 2011

### MISSION

The Council is dedicated to advocating and providing leadership in maintaining, protecting, and enhancing the environmental quality of the Town of Washington and the surrounding region.

### WEC PROGRAMS

Earth Day  
Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day  
Recycling Challenge "40% by 2014"  
The Harwood Environmental Lecture Series  
Climate Change Awareness Day  
Student Environmental Programs  
College Scholarships for Environmental Studies  
Local Schools Plow to Plate Initiative  
Shepaug Water Quality Testing Program

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**Washington  
Environmental  
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### POSTAL PATRON



**Washington  
Environmental  
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FALL 2010

## WEC Initiates Recycling Challenge to Town Residents

"INCREASE RECYCLING FROM 20% to 40% by 2014"

The Washington Environmental Council announced their "40% by 2014" challenge to Town residents earlier this year and will officially "kick it off" on **National Recycling Day, Monday, November 15, 2010**. By increasing our recycling, we will not only help the environment but we will also save tax dollars. Currently the average amount recycled by the Town is 20% of total waste hauled. By increasing recycling to 40% by 2014 more than \$150,000. will be saved over the five year period of the challenge. The math is simple. Hauling waste is almost twice as expensive as hauling recyclables. Any reduction of waste hauled when replaced by an increase in recyclables hauled produces a reduction in the cost of total waste disposal.

WEC CHALLENGES  
EACH OF US TO MAKE  
"40% by 2014" HAPPEN

The State of Connecticut and the Town of Washington require residents to recycle. "It's the law" and has been for some time now. A key action to help residents meet the "40% by 2014" challenge:

**Effective October 1 - Plastics 1 - 7 are accepted for curbside recycling and recycling at the Transfer Station**

**WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE SIGN AND NUMBER 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 ON PLASTIC MATERIAL?**



The sign designates that the plastic is recyclable and the number designates the material composition of the plastic. Here is an example of each:

- 1** – Soft drink, water & beer bottles, mouthwash, peanut butter containers, salad dressing bottles
- 2** – Milk & juice jugs, detergent & bleach jugs, shampoo bottles
- 3** – Cooking oil bottles, window cleaner containers & detergent bottles
- 4** – Squeeze jelly, mustard & relish bottles
- 5** - Yogurt, butter & margarine containers, medicine bottles
- 6** – Disposable plates & cups, egg cartons, aspirin containers
- 7** – Large (3 & 5 gallon) water bottles, certain food containers

### PLEASE RECYCLE:

Plastics 1-7, Glass Bottles of Any Color, Tin Cans, Aluminum Foil, Aluminum Food Containers, Polycoated Milk and Juice Containers. All may be Co-Mingled in your Curbside Recycle Bin or Taken to the Transfer Station.

Newspapers, Magazines, Catalogs, Phone Books, Office Paper, Stationary & Solid Envelopes (No Plastic Address Window Envelopes), Direct Mail Pieces (Including Shiny Coated Paper) may be Co-Mingled and Placed in a Brown Paper Bag Next to the Curbside Recycle Bin or Taken to the Transfer Station.

Flattened Corrugated Cardboard (Maximum Size 2' X 3') Placed Next to the Recycle Bin or Taken to the Transfer Station.

In addition to these examples, it is important to look at the number on the bottom of the container for additional items that can be recycled. We can also recycle cereal boxes (remove the plastic lining before recycling), cake mix boxes, instant potato boxes, and rice boxes (these are known as paperboard boxes).

### DO NOT RECYCLE:

Containers that housed Prescription Drugs, Containers that had Toxins (Lysol, 409, Windex Etc.), Paint, Motor Oil, Anti-Freeze or Other Hazardous Materials. Bottle Caps, Light Bulbs, Ceramics, Cookware, Window/ Mirror Glass, Crystal, Drinking Glasses, Batteries or Yellow Tinted Cardboard.

(See Town Website [www.washingtonct.org](http://www.washingtonct.org))

**"Reduce, Reuse, Recycle"**

Rethink Your Recycling Options

Help us Make a Difference

Join the Challenge for "40% by 2014"

## WEC Sponsors Town Wide Discussion of Climate Change



The Washington Environmental Council, supported by a grant of \$5,000. from an anonymous donor, partnered with local schools, organizations and companies to heighten awareness of the global issue of climate change.

Kicking off the month long series was James Serach, a science teacher and the Aldo Leopold Chair for Distinguished Teaching in Environmental Science and Ethics at the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey. He told the Gunnery school faculty and teachers from other area schools about new ways to engage students' interest in environmental science. His methods have produced a willingness on the part of students to learn about the environment and to be involved in protecting it. The key is that teachers have to be willing to change the method and content of their educational approach to further stimulate the students' interest in environmental matters.

In a lecture, co-sponsored by the Gunnery and WEC, Bill McKibben, a climate change activist and founder of

350.org addressed a standing room only gathering in the First Congregational Church on Oct 5th. He discussed the reasons for climate change, what detrimental changes have already taken place, what could potentially happen if nothing is done, and what our options are. "One thing's become clear: This problem, this crisis, is coming a lot faster than we thought," noted Mr. McKibben. His local appearance was also to promote 10.10.10, the worldwide event his group designed to have thousands of communities around the globe, Washington included, raising awareness of and developing a proactive stance in dealing with the climate change crisis.

On October 10th, as part of the month long series of events, a symposium on "Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Perspectives on Stewardship of the Earth" led by Rabbi Natan Margalit, the Reverend Cheryl Anderson and Islam Educator Aida Mansoor took place at the First Congregational Church of Washington. It highlighted ways in which the scriptures address the treatment of the earth and how we are all stewards of the land.

## Free & Easy Winter Energy Saving Tips

**Turn down your thermostat to 68 degrees.** – For every degree you lower your thermostat you'll save up to 5 percent on heating costs.

**Reduce hot water temperature.** – Set your water heater to "normal" or 120-degrees Fahrenheit. Savings are 7-11 percent of water heating costs.

**Let the sunshine in.** – Open drapes and let the sun heat your home for free (get them closed again at sundown so they help insulate).

**Keep fireplaces shut.** – when not in use. Make absolutely sure the damper is closed...up to 8 percent of your furnace-heated air goes up the chimney.

**Shorten showers.** – Cutting your showers in half will reduce your water heating costs by 33 percent.

**Cold Water Laundry.** – Using cold water reduces your clothes washer's energy use by 75 percent.

**Insulate the hot water heater.** – Insulate the first 5 feet of pipe coming out of the top of your water heater. This will make for a further reduction of water heating costs. Pipe insulation is available from your hardware store.

## Washington Student Poster Art Sent to President Obama and the First Lady



On October 10th, WEC also sponsored a Climate Change Awareness Day (10.10.10), outside Bryan Memorial Town Hall. The theme was to Recycle, Reuse and Rethink. People were asked to bring old sneakers for the first, donate old clothes for the second, and learn of new energy and recycling options for the third. We also asked our local schools to have their students in the music and art departments join us for the event. The music ensembles from all the schools, both choral and instrumental, were superb; the student poster art on climate change was exhibited at the Washington Art Association. There were also activities for children as well as local cider, donuts and apples, courtesy of the Averill Farm. With the many colorful banners and signs, music, poster art, exhibits and products related to climate change, it proved to be a festive time for the large and enthusiastic group in attendance.

The poster art produced by the students was exceptional. It consisted of over 50 posters designed by individual students ranging from 11 to 17 years of age. Each poster makes a strong statement on climate change. Collectively, the posters make a very powerful statement conveying the anxiety, concerns and fears that these young students have about the world they may have to live in if something is not done now to address the climate crisis. The students' poster art speaks volumes on the need to address the climate crisis today. The poster art was so good that we made a CD of it and decided to send it to President and Mrs. Obama. Our idea was to suggest that they consider a nationwide program, perhaps under the auspices of the First Lady, where students in our schools are asked to express their views through poster art on how their futures and the world they live in will be affected by climate change. This nationwide effort could become a powerful tool in convincing those who are disbelievers of the need to act now on climate change.

## WEC GOES WITH THE FLOW

### Early Water Quality Testing Shows the Shepaug is Healthy

Is Waterbury complying with the court mandated agreement to increase water flow in the Shepaug? And is it improving the natural health of the River? WEC, as a member of the Shepaug River Association is helping to answer these questions.

Trout are a temperature sensitive species. They require relatively cool, well oxygenated, water to flourish. In low river flow conditions during the hot summer months on the Shepaug River trout become stressed. In the past, diversion of water from the Shepaug watershed to the Waterbury drinking water system aggravated these seasonal low flow conditions.

Funded by the Connecticut Community Foundation, a coalition of local environmental groups was formed to monitor the water quality of the Shepaug River. The coalition merged with the Shepaug River Association in April 2010. Coalition members represent all the major Shepaug River stakeholders including the Roxbury Conservation Commission, Steep Rock Association, Housatonic Valley Association, Bantam River Watershed Association, WEC and Rivers Alliance. Support is provided by the Washington Rod & Gun Club, the Laurel Bank Fishing Club and DEP.

Monitoring is conducted by trained volunteers using the CT DEP provided RBV - Rapid Bioassessment in Wadeable Streams & Rivers by Volunteer Monitors - ([www.ct.gov/dep/rbv](http://www.ct.gov/dep/rbv)). The volunteers observe what type of aquatic insects (or 'macroinvertebrates') are present. If the water is polluted or too low certain macroinvertebrates will not be able to survive.

Eight monitoring sites, from the Shepaug Dam to the confluence with Lake Lillinonah in Roxbury are tested in May and October of each year. The 2009 results indicate the Shepaug River is healthy with 4 to 6 of the "most wanted" macros present at all of the tested sites.

