

Eel River News

Eel River Watershed Association, Ltd.

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It has been just over a year since the watershed association appealed the Town's permit to pump up to almost a million gallons a day from the Eel River watershed to irrigate

Will Eel River be pumped dry to water Crosswinds?

Crosswinds Golf Course and the Forges Fields recreation area.

The permit allows the pumping to continue even when the river is at its lowest levels in the hot dry summer months. In dry years, this volume of pumping can threaten the

survival of many of the 31 listed endangered wildlife species who live in the waters and wetland areas of the Eel River watershed.

Low water levels threaten wildlife

And it is not just the watershed's rare species that are at risk. Trout are especially vulnerable to the higher water temperatures and reduced water quality that result from over pumping.

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Let's protect \$1 million taxpayer investment in Eel River headwaters

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A second water withdrawal permit for Pinehills will safeguard streamflow levels

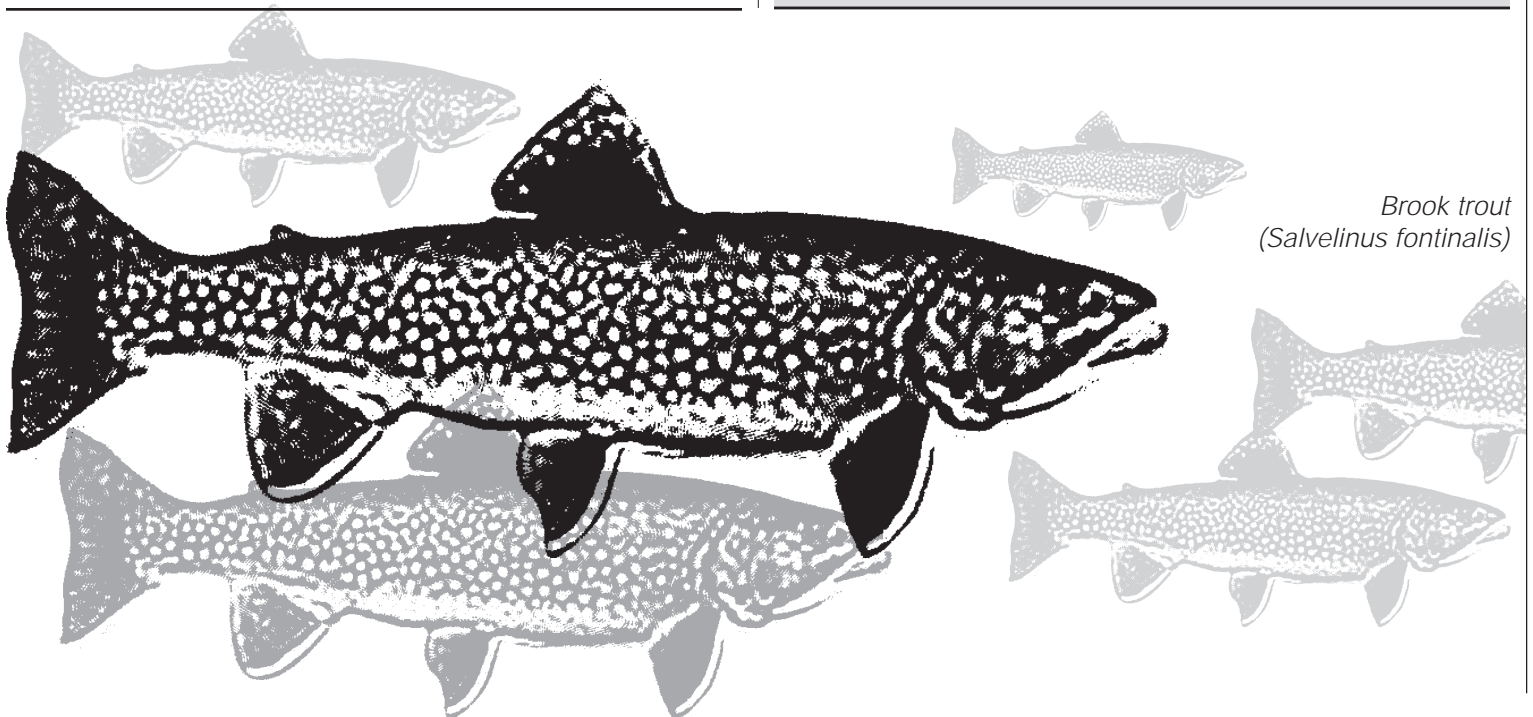
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Atlantic White Cedar
(*Chamaecyparis thyoides*)

Polluted water at oldest trout hatchery in US

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Brook trout
(*Salvelinus fontinalis*)

Will Eel River be pumped dry to irrigate Crosswinds and Forges Fields?

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The permit is illegal

The Watershed Association appealed the permit because it violates state law. The permit lacks the "Safe-Yield Determination" required under the State's Water Management Act. "Safe Yield" is the maximum volume of water that can be safely pumped from a watershed without environmental damage.

Mass DEP and the Town of Plymouth both are responsible for this illegal permit

Mass DEP issued the illegal permit at the request of the Town. As the State agency most responsible for protecting our environment, this action is unacceptable. If the State will not enforce its own laws and protect our rivers and wildlife, who will?

Other rivers run dry from over pumping

The Ipswich River has run dry for years because of over pumping in the summer time. Because of this, the Ipswich no longer has the diverse wildlife that characterizes the Eel River. The Eel River Watershed Association is fighting to ensure that the same fate does not befall the Eel River and its ecosystem.

Stream-flow trigger levels would protect wildlife


In preliminary negotiations, the Watershed Association offered to settle the dispute if the Town agreed to a drought-management plan based on stream-flow levels. We asked that irrigation water not be pumped when the river fell to dangerously low drought levels.

The Town refused our offer and continues to insist that they need to pump water for irrigation even if water levels in the river are very low.

Pinehills agreed to protective streamflow levels in their new permit

In contrast to Crosswinds and Forges Fields, Pinehills has agreed to a drought management plan in their new pumping permit, which will protect the wildlife in the watershed. The Pinehills' permit includes appropriate streamflow triggers for the Eel River. The water will be used for irrigating Common Areas within the development. The Pinehills permit was issued October 3, 2007.

Next steps in the legal battle over the Forges Field permit

All parties, including the Watershed Association, have filed legal briefs with the administrative law judge. Initially, the Town's main argument was that the Association does not have the standing that would allow us to protect the river. We have answered that charge, and presented our case. We await a ruling from the judge. 



The Eel River in winter

\$1 million grant to restore headwaters

The Town of Plymouth has received a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to preserve and restore the Eel River Headwaters to its natural state. Forty acres of bogs will be restored as an endangered Atlantic White Cedar wetlands, and a new, meandering stream channel will be constructed.

Wetlands threatened by over-pumping

Wetlands are dependent on sufficient groundwater supplies. Over-pumping from the Eel River watershed will result in lower groundwater levels in the Eel River Preserve, and threaten the survival of its wildlife.

Headwaters Preserve close to pumping wells

The Preserve is only about a mile and a half away from the pumping wells for the Town-owned Forges Field Recreation Area and Crosswinds Golf Course. The Town presently insists on the need to pump water from the groundwater even when water levels are dangerously low (See story on page one). Over-pumping by the Town would destroy wildlife habitat in the Preserve.

**Let's Protect
\$1 Million
Investment
in Eel River**

Last October Pinehills was granted a water withdrawal permit to irrigate Common Areas in the development. At the request of Pinehills working with the Eel River Watershed Association, this permit included a drought management

plan which will protect the Eel River from over-pumping when streamflow levels are low.

New permit will include stream-flow triggers

This year Pinehills will

be renewing another water withdrawal permit — the permit for irrigating the Old Sandwich Golf Course.

The new permit will also include stream-flow triggers as part of a drought management plan. This means that water will not be pumped from the groundwater of the Eel River watershed to water the golf course when the river's water levels are low. We are pleased that Pinehills is helping protect the Eel River and the many wildlife species whose survival depends on it.

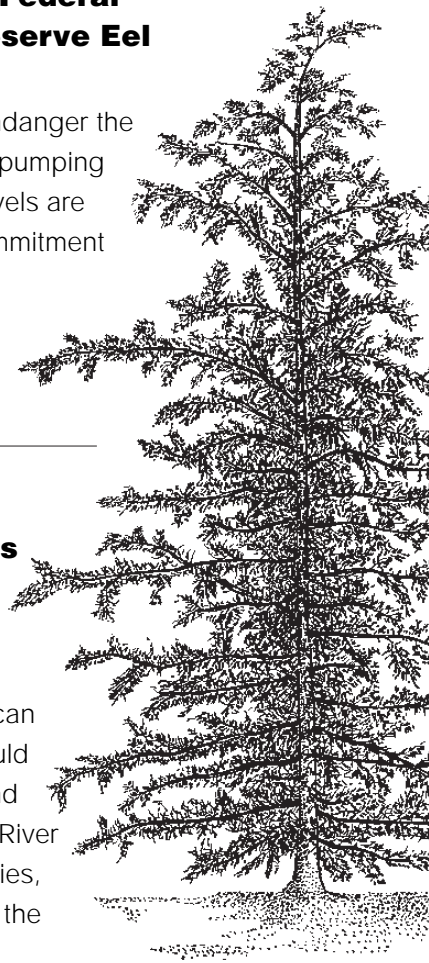


Town at odds with Federal commitment to preserve Eel River headwaters

The Town's decision to endanger the Headwaters Preserve by pumping when the groundwater levels are low, is contrary to the commitment made by the US Fish and Wildlife Service to restore and preserve Eel River's headwaters and wildlife.

Town at odds with interests of American taxpayers

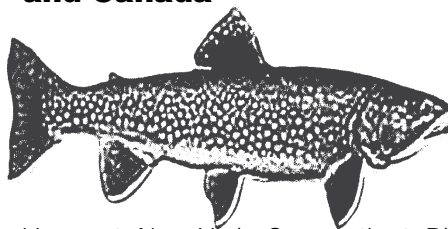
The Town's action is also at odds with the investment of \$1 million made on behalf of American taxpayers. The Town should re-examine its position and decide to protect the Eel River Preserve, its wildlife species, as well as the interests of the American people.



Second Pinehills Permit Will Also Protect Eel River Water Levels

Founded in 1869 and located on Warren Wells Brook, a tributary of the Eel River, the Gilbert Trout Hatchery is the oldest continually operating trout hatchery in America.

Gilbert Strain brook trout found throughout New England and Canada



Over the years the Gilbert Hatchery shipped trout eggs and fish to state hatcheries in New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Maine as well as Canada. No matter where you fish in the northeast or eastern Canada, you will probably be catching descendents of trout from the Gilbert Hatchery in Plymouth.

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Polluted Water at Nation's Oldest Trout Hatchery

Polluted water at nation's oldest trout hatchery

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In 2005 dirty water killed fish worth \$20,000

In recent years Warren Wells Brook has become increasingly polluted. Camelot park was developed on adjacent land and just next door the massive *Shops at Five* was built.

By the summer of 2005 a plume of dirty rainwater was flowing out of Camelot park into Warren Wells Brook. Large numbers of trout died. The trout were being suffocated as the silt clogged their gills.

Filled wetlands in Camelot Park

The dirty rain was running out of wetland areas that had been filled during the construction of Camelot Park. The US Army Corps of Engineers issued a permit in 1999 instructing the owners of Camelot Park to mitigate the filled wetlands.

Better plan presented by Camelot Park

After the fish died at the hatchery, Camelot Park hired an engineering firm to evaluate the problem. In February of 2007 they presented an improved plan to the Army Corps to

clean up the rainwater runoff. The Corps is expected to issue an amended permit authorizing the work.

Fry and eggs are dying now too

At the hatchery, young trout are hatched in a special building fed only by groundwater, not the surface waters of Warren Wells Brook. This protects them from stormwater runoff going into the brook. Unfortunately, this year polluted groundwater has killed thousands of eggs. The source of the pollution remains to be determined.

Shops at Five may be adding to the problem

The deep settling basins at *Shops at Five* may be contributing to the problem by causing groundwater "mounding" (a localized elevation in groundwater levels and pressure). They may also be adding pollutants to the groundwater. The basins collect large volumes of stormwater which contain hydrocarbons and other chemicals, from the many acres of parking lots. Then the stormwater is recharged into the groundwater.

We hope that *Shops at Five* will work with all parties to identify the source of the pollution and help find a solution.



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