

Local events at ninth annual RiverFest celebration



Judith Cauty Graves

The historic Old Town Bridge in Wayland on the Sudbury River will be the site for a new event this year, "The River Comes Out of Your Faucet."

By Susan L. Wagner

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WAYLAND —

Mark your calendars for next weekend, June 12 and 13, with the ninth annual RiverFest, a weekend of celebration of the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord (SuAsCo) Rivers.

Sections of these three waterways, totaling 29 miles in length, have been federally designated as part of the 11,000-mile-long National Wild and Scenic River System under the Wild and Scenic River Act, created in 1968 to permanently preserve the nation's free-flowing rivers.

Those rivers deemed to possess outstanding and remarkable scenic, geological, recreational, ecological, historical or cultural value are included in the Wild and Scenic River System. The Sudbury, Assabet and Concord are three of only eight New England rivers in the system. Although the RiverFest involves many communities, some of the Wayland highlights are:

A history paddle on Saturday morning with Brian Donahue, professor of history at Brandeis, who probably knows more about the Sudbury River than anyone alive. Among the questions he will answer are: when was the Wayland Sewer Commission attacked by an armed protest mob in Billerica; and why was the river "dammed at both ends and cursed in the middle?"

Participants should meet at 9 a.m. at the Sherman's Bridge launch site (on Sherman Bridge Road). The group will paddle through wide meadows with frequent stops to hear Donahue's stories about a fascinating – and sometimes lurid – past. Cars will be available to ferry you back to the launch site.

If you plan to come and have space in your boat or if you need space, call 508-358-2980.

If you prefer to continue paddling down to Greenways, a riverside picnic will take place there between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Bring a lunch of your choice. Ron McAdow, executive director of the Sudbury Valley Trustees, will be on hand to provide some local history. You can also come by car if you like.

And, for the first time, a family-friendly program, "The River Comes Out of Your Faucet," will be presented by the Wellhead Protection Committee, sponsored in part by a grant from the Wayland Cultural Council.

The Wellhead Protection Committee is also partnering with the Massachusetts Audubon at Drumlin Farm, which shares a focus on protecting the area's water resources.

The event has something for every age group. The youngest will have fun with the animals (live turtles and/or frogs), older children will enjoy learning about the water cycle, and adults will learn something about hydrology.

The event takes place from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday at the Old Town Bridge. This is the site of the first bridge ever over the Sudbury River, built nearly 400 years ago and site of the last Indian attack on Wayland. Especially for this event, the committee cleaned up the area with the help of Water Superintendent Don Millette. There will be signs and balloons on Route 27 directing participants to the site. In case of rain, the event will take place at Russell's Garden Center.

These are only some of the more than 30 programs, most of them free, some with nominal admission, planned for this family-friendly weekend of outdoor celebration.

For a full listing of events, which are taking place in Billerica, Bedford, Carlisle, Concord, Framingham, Lincoln, Lowell, Southborough, Wayland and Sudbury, visit "www.sudbury-assabet-concord.org/RiverFest"

Susan L. Wagner can be reached at "susanwgnr@gmail.com"