

Volunteers Haul Out River Trash

By BETH BAZLER

TURNERS FALLS – It was a chilly fall morning, but that didn't stop more than 80 hardy volunteers from turning up, togged out in warm layers, to the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls for the 20th Annual Source-to-Sea Connecticut River Clean-up last Saturday. Twenty years have brought lots of change – volunteers now navigate to clean-up sites via smart phone directions rather than large, folded maps.

However, the best change is that local natural areas are much cleaner as a result of the consistent hard work of committed community volunteers.

As in the 19 previous years, spirits were



GRACE JILLSON PHOTO

A group from the Young Southeast Asian Leadership Initiative joined the local community to clean up the river's banks.

high and everyone seemed to be having a good time talking, laughing, and enjoying donated breakfast treats to fuel up for the hard

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TFHS: The Week in Sports

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – With about a month left in the regular season, the Turners Falls Fall sports teams began to jostle for position in their respective leagues and classes. This last week, three teams in particular fought to stay competitive with other excellent teams, hoping to make it into the playoffs while facing one of life's biggest milestones.

The Turners Falls Field Hockey team got nudged out of first place, the Volleyball team reversed their fortunes by going 2-0, the Turn-

DAVID HOITT PHOTO



ers Falls Football Indians remained undefeated, and the students and faculty said goodbye to a beloved school administrator.

Football

TFHS 30 – Amherst 24

In the first cold weather game of the year, Powertown overtook the Amherst Maroon Hurricanes by a score of 30-24. Before the game began, Bill Roberts, the voice of the Turners Falls Football Indians, announced that Earl McGraw had passed away. This was followed by a solemn moment of silence before the marching band played the National Anthem.

Turners elected to receive the opening kickoff after winning the toss and Ricky

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Board Awards Riverfront Park Bid Dismisses Longevity Pay For Treasurer

By KANE NOLAN

The apparent low bidder for construction of Riverfront Park at the former Usher Plant on Arch Street is Mountain View Landscapes and Lawn Care of Chicopee. Mountain View bid \$491,650 for the basic construction package, which includes roadways, parking areas, wooded trails, a "Great Lawn" with a band shell, and a patio area with a pavilion and environmentally-themed play structures.

Mountain View bid \$25,500 for the alternate add-ons of water tower signage and an additional sidewalk. "This fits into our budget," said selectboard chair Jacob Smith. "We have a good potential to advance the alternates."

After reviewing the documentation sup-

plied by Mountain View and other bidders, the selectboard will formally award the bid on Tuesday. Usher Plant re-use committee chair Robert Schermesser asked how soon construction would start. Mark Arigoni, project manager for landscape design consultants J. MacBroom, noted that Mountain View is a representative to both the site and the town. The bid opening, and they would be ready to start soon after the bid award.

Treasurer Denied Longevity, Assistant Training Hours

Town treasurer Margaret Sullivan asked the board to include an article or resolution at the next town meeting warrant requesting

see ERVING

SOLD!



About sixty members of the public joined the school committee for its meeting Tuesday.

JACKS

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work ahead. By the end of the day, the Montague Transfer Station had acquired a living-room-style couch, loveseat, an upholstered chair, five televisions, two mattresses, and 125 tires pulled from the greater Gill-Montague-Erving area.

If that wasn't enough, loads of scrap metal, building materials, cans, bottles, and a small amount of hazardous materials (mostly propane canisters and oil) were also carted away from the river banks and nearby wooded areas.

In total, more than 50 cubic yards of debris were removed from 20 sites spread throughout eight local towns and villages. The efforts of local volunteers are a part of the Connecticut River Watershed Council's annual event in which over 2,500 volunteers in four states clean the Connecticut River Watershed from its "Source" in New Hampshire to the "Sea" where the river meets the Long Island Sound in Connecticut.

Some volunteers came from as far away as Southeast Asia to help clean up the area. Participants in the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI), a month-long, government-sponsored, University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute-facilitated program focusing on civic engagement, worked on two sites in Turners Falls.

While some pulled plastic bottles

from the rocky riverbanks, others tackled a large illegal dump next to historic mill buildings. This group netted the largest haul of the day with a couch, loveseat, truck cap and many, many bags of debris.

Local cleanup volunteers included seven- to ten-year-old students from the Deer Paths Nature Program in Wendell. These students focused their positive energy on making Unity Park in Turners Falls cleaner.

Volunteers from The Millers River Watershed Association removed two pickup-truck loads of debris from the steep slopes of the French King Gorge including eight tires, a desk, a television and a golf bag.

The Franklin County Trial Court Community Service Program also removed debris along North Leverett Road, preventing it from migrating into the nearby Sawmill River.

The "hauler team" who truck debris collected by morning volunteers to the Montague Transfer Station for sorting, recycling and disposal was joined by six students from a University of Massachusetts River Geographies class.

Student Laurie Simmons "pondered the reasons a mattress ends up at the end of a dead end dirt road in the woods" while collecting debris.

Hauler team members get extra training on how to recycle as much waste as possible, while keeping

hazardous or special wastes out of dumpsters destined for the landfill or Covanta Energy's waste to energy facility in Springfield.

Sherifa Fofanah appreciated her newfound knowledge: "Finding a syringe and learning how to dispose of it correctly was definitely the highlight of my day."

Ultimately, the River Geographies students, like Chris Mahoney, shared the feeling of most Cleanup volunteers that "coming to the community of Turners Falls and doing what we can to help connect with fellow western Massachusetts volunteers proved to be a worthwhile experience."

The Cleanup is more than a one-day event. Students from Northfield Mount Hermon School's Outdoor Team worked on Friday, September 23 to harvest hundreds of yards of plastic sheeting, a mattress, and a television, wrestle the debris into canoes, and paddle back to the campus boat house against a stiff breeze.

In early October, Franklin County Technical School Landscape and Horticulture students will also be scaling steep slopes to remove old garden store debris and invasive species in Turners Falls.

A beautiful fall day, lots of fun, and a cleaner watershed in Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Montague, Northfield and Sunderland made for a very successful event.



BETH PELTON PHOTO

Deer Paths Nature Program to the rescue!

Hats off to all who participated; thank you for all your work!

Thanks also to long-time donors FirstLight Power Resources, Alternative Recycling Systems, Wagon Wheel Restaurant, the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, 2nd Street Baking Co., Bridgestone Tire's Tires4ward program, Northfield Mount Hermon Dining Services, Covanta Energy, the Friends of Great Falls Discovery Center, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Connecticut River Watershed Council for their gener-

ous donations and assistance.

For more information about the cleanup, check out facebook.com/SourceToSeaCleanUpGillMontague/ and ctriver.org/projects/source-to-sea-cleanup/.

Beth Bazler works as a land manager at FirstLight Power Resources, and helps coordinate the cleanup. This year, she was given an award by the Watershed Council for her 20 years of contribution to the cleanup effort. Thanks, Beth from the Montague Reporter!

