



2017-2018

Chairman's Column:

My mom was born in a rural southwestern CT town in 1918. Its population was around 1,500. I was born there as well around 1950 and the population had risen to 4,500. When my mom died at home in 2005 in the house I grew up in, the population had jumped to around 18,000. So literally, within a single generation this small town had increased by tenfold. It is still lovely, but it's a place centered around people. There is nothing wrong with this as long as there are other places where the land supports the tens of thousands of our native species.

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- Bird-friendly Backyards
- Trail Award
- Small Grant Opportunities
- Mapping Stream Temperatures

Celebrating Ten Years of Wild & Scenic Designation



Members of the original Eightmile Wild & Scenic Study Committee: Back Row: John Rozum, Walter Smith, David Tiffany and Bill Koch. Middle Row: Kevin Case, Eric Belt and Linda Krause. Front Row: Anthony Irving, Nathan Frohling, Sue Merrow and David Bingham

Below: Findings by Congress to enact the study process that led to Wild & Scenic Designation in 2008

A Wild And Scenic Study

In January 2001, the Congress of the United States of America amended the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the Eightmile River for study for possible addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

Findings:

- (1) the Eightmile River in the State of Connecticut possesses important resource values, including wildlife, ecological, and scenic values, and historical sites and a cultural past important to America's heritage;
- (2) there is strong support among State and local officials, area residents, and river users for a cooperative wild and scenic river study of the area; and
- (3) there is a longstanding interest among State and local officials, area residents, and river users in undertaking a concerted cooperative effort to manage the river in a productive and meaningful way.

Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating

Committee Members

Anthony Irving, Chair

Town of Lyme

Bernie Gillis

Town of East Haddam

David B. Bingham

Salem Land Trust

Anthony Griggs

Town of Salem

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Other Contributors

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Colchester Land Trust

Sarah Daggett

Franklin Academy

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Patricia Young

No Family Left Indoors

Three Great Ways to Enjoy the Eightmile this year!

Programs in the Park

1. ERWSCC will once again offer Free Summer Family Programs at Devil's Hopyard on Saturdays in July 2018



2.

EIGHTMILE RiverFest

Watch for upcoming announcements for RiverFest 2018, Saturday, October 13 at Devil's Hopyard State Park, 1-4pm

3. 14-Mile Richard H. Goodwin Trail



The 14 mile trail is marked and open!

Trail maps can be downloaded from our website at www.eightmileriver.org

Trail maps also have links to other local organizations with other preserves to enjoy.

2016-2017 Financial Report

Income

NPS Federal Funds	
Annual Funds:	\$56,000
Cost-Share Grant	\$5,800
(carry over)	
Reserve/Projects	\$29,388
Total:	\$91,188

Expenditures

Operating Costs	\$47,010
Subcommittees	
-Education	\$2,857
-Project Review	0
-Monitoring & Science	\$2,002
-Protection & Mgt.	\$502
-Executive	\$4,475
Cost Share Project	\$5,800
Total	\$62,645



Exploring the Eightmile River Watershed – Family-style

The Eightmile River Watershed provides an abundance of publicly accessible open spaces allowing for recreational and educational opportunities for families of all ages. In an age where outdoor activities are essential to connecting our youth with their environment, my family would like to highlight some of our favorite locations for outings, and the range of activities you and your children can enjoy.

Devil's Hopyard State Park: One of the top family adventure locations within the Eightmile River Watershed is Devil's Hopyard State Park. This park is well known for Chapman Falls, which is a short but enjoyable hike from the main parking areas. A beautiful covered bridge leads from the park to a well-maintained trail system.

Hiking: Families with small children can take a walk along the flat section of the white trail running along the river, keeping a look out for birds and wildlife along the way. Older children will enjoy the yellow loop, leading through wooded uplands, up to the vista, to catch a view of the river valley. Beautiful in any season!

Fishing: CTDEEP actively stocks this section of the river with trout in the spring, making it a premiere fishing spot in the area.

Programs in the Park: ERWSCC offers free summer "Programs in the Park" at Devil's Hopyard every July, helping families learn more about the natural resources and wildlife within the watershed, and encouraging children of all ages to intimately explore the organisms living within the river and surrounding habitats.

RiverFest: The park is also the location of RiverFest, held biannually in October (RiverFest 2018 is October 13). RiverFest brings together conservation organizations from throughout the area, and celebrates our beautiful watershed with music, food, and all kinds of outdoor activities.

Patrell Preserve: Many lesser known properties throughout the watershed provide excellent opportunities for family hikes and exploration. The Patrell Preserve in East Haddam, is one of our family's favorite places to visit. A parking lot for the preserve is located off of Baker's Lane in East Haddam.

Easy Hiking: The Preserve provides easy access to any family. A paved loop allows physically impaired, toddlers just getting their "hiking legs," or even strollers, direct access to a restored pedestrian bridge across the West Branch of the Eightmile River.

Swallows and Grasshoppers: The Esker trail, identified by red trail markers, is a favorite of my four year old (and me)! Travelling toward the southern loop of the trail, you will cross meadow habitat where we often pause to watch the grasshoppers and nesting swallows.

Frogs and Fish: The trail continues over logs and stone walls alongside a wooded wetland area, where you often hear choruses of wood frog and peepers in the spring. The trail loops up the esker ridge and back down along the river to the bridge, with several nice fishing or wading locations along the way. Our family loves watching the trout dart between the rocks beneath the bridge, and the nearby picnic table provides a spot to enjoy our snacks or lunch.

Goodwin Trail: The Patrell Preserve also marks the northern portion of the Goodwin Trail, an approximately 14 mile trail through eight different parcels in East Lyme, Salem, Lyme, and East Haddam. Families with older children may enjoy the challenge of the full hike in one day!

These are just two select locations your family can visit within the Eightmile Watershed. We can easily add the beautiful hiking at **Walden Preserve in Salem**, swimming or paddleboarding in **Uncas Lake in the Nehantic State Forest in Lyme**, or bird watching in **Hartman Park in Lyme**. There is no question that there are many opportunities for your family to "Go Wild on the Eightmile!" Stay in touch with the Eightmile River Watershed website and Facebook pages, and the Salem and East Haddam Land Trusts, and Lyme Land Conservation Trust for upcoming fun family events.

By Kimberly Barber-Bradley



A Bird-friendly Backyard

One of the great advantages of the Eightmile River region for bird-watchers is the enormous diversity of habitats that provide support for a wide variety of birds all year round. Taking a 10-minute hike from your home, it is possible to see as many as 100 different bird species in a year, and perhaps over 200 in a lifetime of local birding in Salem.



Some birds, like Bluebirds, Tufted Titmice, Turkeys and Black-capped Chickadees are here in all seasons. Others arrive in spring to nest, then head back south: Bobolinks, and some Sandpipers, going as far south as Argentina. Still others, like our northern warblers and thrushes, are only seen on migration in spring or fall.

And winter has its own special visitors, like the White-throated Sparrows and Slate-colored Juncos that are found in small flocks feeding on seeds and berries on our roadsides.

Having them nearby, it takes only a little coaxing to see them even closer at hand in your backyard. What they need is food, water and shelter. Provide it, and they will come! My backyard is living proof, and yours can be, too. My monthly sightings, reported regularly to Cornell University's remarkable Ornithology Laboratory via a website found at www.ebird.org, add up to 20-60 different species of birds seen in my garden every month. (At that website, you can find the location of every bird reported by hundreds of citizen-scientists in CT, and many more world-wide. It is a fun site to browse and learn from what your neighbors are seeing on any given day.)

Food

For food, I offer millet seed in a hanging feeder that closes its door to bigger birds and squirrels; niger (thistle) seed in a narrow tube feeder (squirrels don't generally bother with these tiny seeds while goldfinches and Pine Siskins love them); shelled sunflower seeds ("meaties"), from a wire-



caged hanging feeder that squirrels can get to, but it's hard enough work for them that the birds still get most of the seeds; suet feeders for the 5 kinds of woodpeckers found in our yards; and I scatter mixed seed on the

ground for birds that prefer feeding on the ground like Wild Turkeys and Fox Sparrows.

When there is ice on my walkway, or driveway I scatter seeds there for great traction. The seeds (and shells left after feeding) warm in the sunlight, helping melt the ice. It works as well as salt, minimizing salt burn, and provides the satisfaction of seeing happy birds in my yard.

Since we have not yet had bears in my neighborhood, I personally use feeders year-round, and keep the seed-bags in metal trash cans in a shed with tight covers (to prevent raccoon, squirrel and possum pillage). But because of the possibility of attracting bears, some neighborhoods should avoid feeders except in winter.

Plantings for food are also important. Red Cedar produces berries that are an important food source for many kinds of birds in mid-winter with the added benefit of wind protection during extreme cold, and Winterberry is a favorite native plant that provides great fall color and brings flocks of American Robins and Cedar Waxwings to feed. In the summer, Red Mulberry trees attract orioles, finches and Rose-Breasted Grosbeaks for weeks.

Water

My roof gutters drain into rain-barrels that then drain into a small shallow pool dug in the yard. The pool has a tiny aquarium pump under a rock at the bottom of the pool, which circulates just enough water onto a hollowed flat rock to provide a perfect bird-bath with running water, and enough drip off the rock into the pool to make a slight sound of running water. A stronger pump tends to get easily clogged, by sucking debris into it, but this pool set-up rarely needs to be refilled or unclogged. The rain-barrels provide a regular source of water to drink.

Shelter

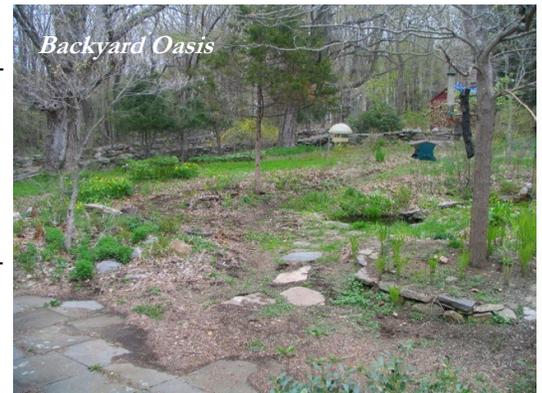
Trees and shrubs in the yard are very important in attracting the shyer birds coming to feed in your yard. Predators (hawks) are regularly scouting the area, and birds out in the open are at risk. So when I scatter seeds on the ground I do so near and under shrubs for protection. Dense foliage, like cedars and laurel, is great not only as a refuge in daytime, but also as a night-time roost. Small hanging reed baskets can be hung under the eaves. My Carolina Wrens predictably retire at dusk in a nest hung where I sit to watch the last evening visitors to the feeding station (in winter, usually these are Fox Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows and, last of all each evening, Northern Cardinals).

The top edge of the pool is also sheltered by shrubs (native blueberry and swamp azalea). As many as 30 Yellow-

Rumped Warblers have settled into the shrubs and taken turns at taking drinks and baths at this quiet, sheltered pool, and last fall a Hermit Thrush came just at 5 o'clock each evening for a bed-time drink of water, staying in the area for weeks but visible just briefly each day.

Originally, mine was a traditional yard that was all grass and a chore to mow, with little visual interest. Now it provides an ever-changing collage of colors and wildlife that has been restored to reflect the amazing creatures and wildflowers of our remarkable Wild and Scenic Watershed. And for those neighbors that have done the same, it has been better for wildlife, for the birds, for air and water, and has restored and enriched our lives as well.

By David Bingham



Committee Receives an Award



The Goodwin Trail Committee was honored to receive a Connecticut Land Conservation Council's Excellence in Conservation Award in 2017 --Pictured are members of the Trail Committee and representatives of CLCC.

.....Announcing.....

TWO Eightmile River Grant Programs

∞

Community Small Grant Program for Outreach and Education

Got an idea for a great Program or Project that supports education and outreach to the local community about our amazing watershed? Would \$50 to \$300 help make your idea happen? Then we want to hear from you.

∞

Watershed Grant Program

In early 2018, ERWSCC will be offering grant funds towards projects and programs that address Watershed Management Plan Tier One Tools.

∞

For more information on priorities, eligibility, and process please our website at www.eightmileriver.org or call us at 860.345.8700

This experience of watching my childhood woodlands slowly and permanently disappear was a strong motivation for teaming up with others to ensure that some portion of our wildlands and the resources they provide be recognized and respected. This is what drove the process to seek federal Wild and Scenic recognition for the Eightmile River watershed. Watersheds, when large enough offer the best chance for incorporating the suite of habitat types needed for a balanced and natural landscape. That's because a watershed like the Eightmile at 40,000 acres, grades from river lowlands to dry ridgeline uplands with a myriad of habitats in-between.

But Wild and Scenic designation is not just about habitat protection. It's also about people and how they work, recreate and live here. It takes all of us, whether living within or in proximity to the Eightmile Watershed, to keep this most wonderful place healthy and alive. For most of us, the beauty, spiritual connections, recreation opportunities and the diversity of experiences and sense of place we find here are what make the Eightmile River Watershed something to treasure.

This year is a special milestone for all lovers of this outstanding watershed as we celebrate 10 years of inclusion of the Eightmile as one of the nation's Wild and Scenic River systems. Over this period the Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Coordinating Committee (ERWSCC) has put in thousands of hours toward outreach and education, scientific study and working with watershed towns and like-minded groups and organizations to conserve the suite of high-value natural resources and systems found here. As your watchdog group, the ERWSCC pledges to continue to advocate for the health and enjoyment of one of our nation's premier river systems. We want future generations to enjoy the wildness of this place and not experience, its slow disappearance as my mom did in her town.

Anthony Irving



Cold-Cool-Warm Mapping Stream Temperatures

By Elizabeth Robinson and Patricia Young

Ask any fisherman, and he will tell you that there are cold streams and there are warm streams, and that tells you what kind of fish you can expect to find there. Brook trout can be found in our colder, usually headwater, streams, while warmer water supports species like smallmouth bass. However, relying on anecdotal “data” (aka fish stories) is not the best way to manage our local rivers and streams. Therefore we turn to a simple device, the HOBO® temperature logger, to record accurate and copious data for us to assign stream temperature ratings of “cold”, “cool” and “warm”. Building on previous CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection data collection, ERWSCC has embarked on a multi-year project to categorize as many of the Eightmile River Watershed’s perennial streams as possible.

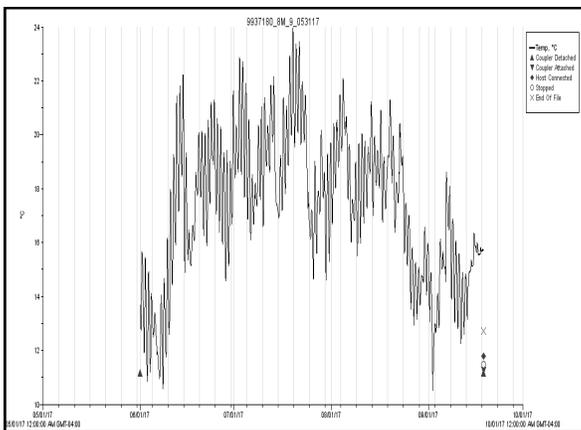
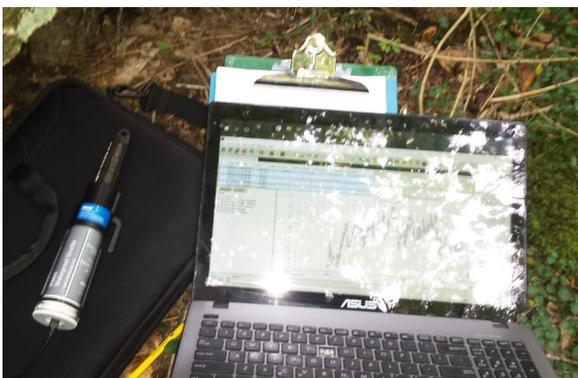
In May of 2017, with the help of 5 ERWSCC board members, we launched 10 HOBO® temperature loggers throughout the watershed. These loggers are set to record water temperature once every hour, and are then downloaded using a specialized HOBO® software. The software lets us graph the results and also export data to an excel format to select time periods for temperature averaging, allowing us to calculate and assign a “cold”, “cool” and “warm” category.

The logger set-up consists of a small waterproof thermometer unit, housed in a PVC pipe and attached to a metal base to keep the whole unit weighed down at the bottom of the stream. It is tied off to a nearby tree, further ensuring it does not get washed away. Throughout the summer, 5 board members checked their assigned sites to ensure that the loggers were still intact and covered with water. As stream levels dropped. Independent temperature readings were conducted as a field check.

Water temperature affects oxygen content. As water temperature increases, the oxygen content decreases. Temperature also affects the rate of photosynthesis of aquatic plants and the metabolic rate of aquatic organisms. It can also influence how sensitive organisms are impacted by environmental toxins, diseases and parasites.

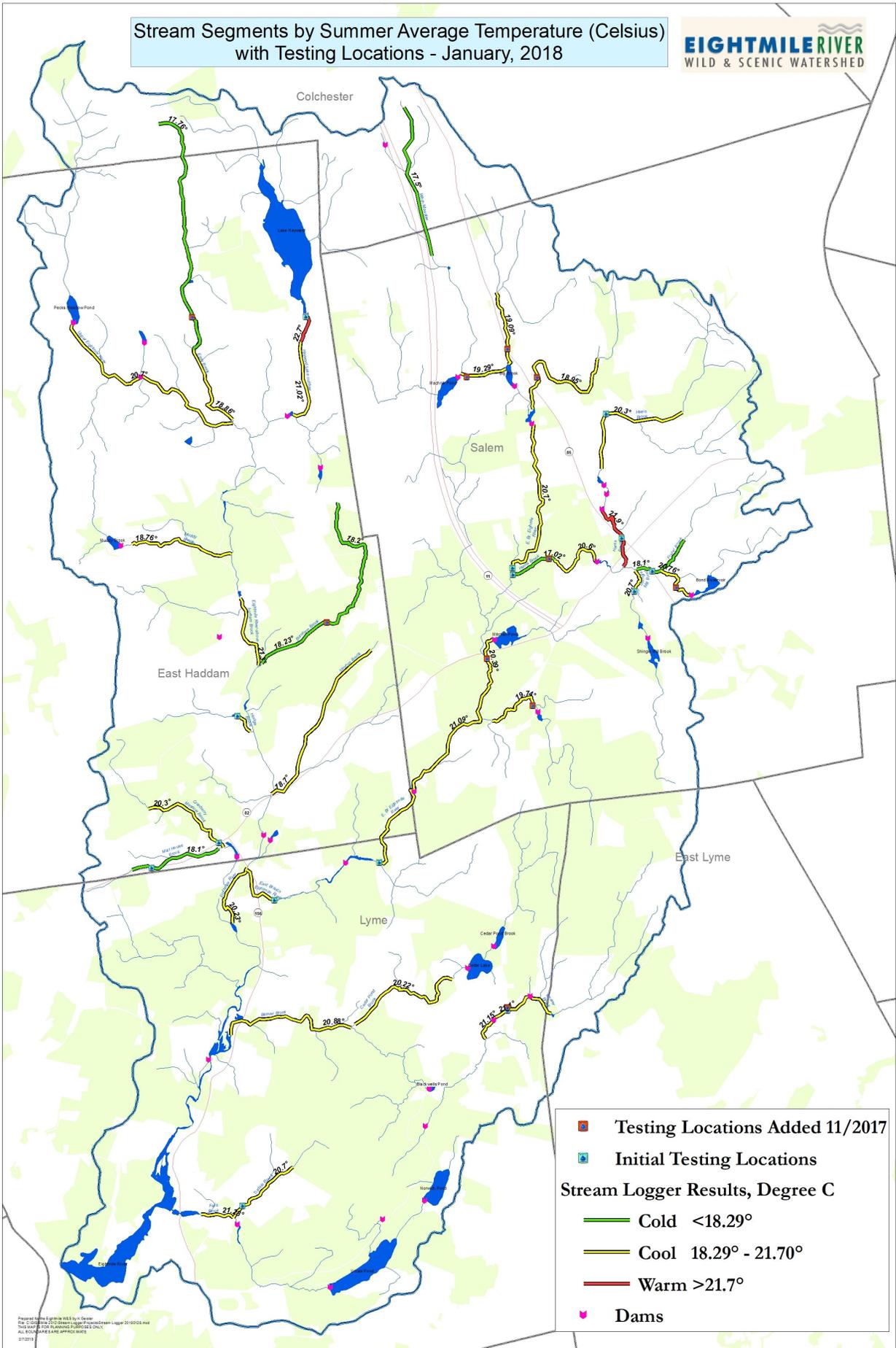
Many factors can influence water temperature including; increasingly warmer air temperatures, ponds (both natural and manmade) which discharge warmed-up water during summer months, clearing along stream banks and developed areas that send stormwater to drainage systems that empty into nearby streams. Some of these factors can be corrected by measures such as disconnecting stormwater systems, replanting trees along river banks and removal of old dams. For instance, the Eightmile River Baseline Water Quality Report showed that the removal of the Ed Bills Dam from the East Branch had an immediate impact to lowering 2016 summer river temperatures below the former dam.

The map to the right shows segments of the watershed that have been assigned “cold”, “cool” and “warm” designations. If you live in the watershed and have a perennial stream on your property and would be willing to let us conduct summer monitoring, please contact us at pyoung@eightmileriver.org or 860.345.8700.



Top to Bottom: 1. HOBO® waterproof temperature logger, 2. Board member Bernie Gillis setting the logger in place at Burnham Brook, 3. Downloading and relaunching the logger in the field and 4. Graphing out summer data - average temperature for Early Brook 17.77°C--cold headwaters!

Stream Segments by Summer Average Temperature (Celsius)
with Testing Locations - January, 2018



■ Testing Locations Added 11/2017
■ Initial Testing Locations
Stream Logger Results, Degree C
— Cold <18.29°
— Cool 18.29° - 21.70°
— Warm >21.7°
◆ Dams

Prepared for Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Watershed
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≈Celebrating 10 Years ≈
Go WILD on the Eightmile

- Visit our Website at www.EightmileRiver.org
- Call us at 860-345-8700
- “Like” us on Facebook
@ Eightmile Wild & Scenic River Watershed

