

photo: Bluff Point State Park (Monica Doherty, 2024)

Creation of the Watershed Family Album

project and presentation by Monica Doherty

My Role: the Watershed Family Album

- Write about key components of the Mystic River watershed: animals, plants, ecosystems, and people
- Highlight relationships between each member of the watershed family
- Prove that humans and nature are inextricably linked to each other and that each depends on the other to remain healthy and intact
- Present info gathered in an engaging and easily understood format
- Ultimate goal: inspire people to think about their own personal connection to the environment that surrounds them

photo: Fishtown Brook (Monica Doherty,
2025)

My Goals

Photographs of the Watershed Area

- Spend time across Mystic Watershed photographing wildlife, landscape
 - Encompass different parts of watershed
- Some will include human-environment interactions - exemplify interconnectivity
- Additional photos of different plants and animals will be taken from online sources to augment writing
- Plan: include 20-30 photos in final product; one labeled and used to demonstrate ecosystem interactions
 - Also may include photos of interviewees

Info About Each Watershed Family Member

- Research different plants, animals, people that make up Mystic River Watershed ecosystem
- Write short pieces about them to put on the website
 - Each writeup should give a brief, but informative, overview of the family member
- Plan: 20-30 write-ups on plants, animals, and people of the watershed
 - Each will have a corresponding picture, and some may include videos

Interviews

- Interview 5-10 people that have lived in the Mystic Watershed area and/or have specific experiences/memories associated with watershed
 - Diverse group of people across different ages, backgrounds, and physical location across watershed
 - Interviews conducted in-person on Fridays in Groton/Mystic area, or online via video chat/email
 - Want a 1-2 to have experienced flood impacts and share how it affected them
 - Work together with Maggie to find individuals to speak with and to reach out to them
- Attend meetings on a couple of Fridays at the Mystic River Magnet School
- Plan: include quotations from each interviewee and their picture, if they would like
 - Use insights to inform way rest of the project comes together as a cohesive piece
 - If permitted, also record audio and/or video of interviewees to add to website
 - Will also include videos of children that attend the Mystic River Magnet School who interviewed each other on what they enjoyed about and learned from Alliance members

(potential) Info on Flooding, Flood Solutions

- Focus on ways in which those near Mystic River can adapt to flooding, especially as extreme precipitation events are predicted to increase in frequency with climate change
 - Increased flood potential
 - Increased frequency of 100-year flood events
- Plan: include section on website with first-hand experiences, ways people can stay safe, potential “green” stormwater and flooding solutions

Main Goal:

The complete final product will include all of the components together in a cohesive and aesthetically pleasing way that matches the design of the rest of the Alliance for the Mystic River Watershed website.

The Process

February

- Got to know Maggie, the values of the Alliance, specifics of project
- Attended Mystic River Magnet School meetings with Alliance members
 - Helped out as Alliance members taught children grades 4-5 about alewife (species of river herring, which are known as Seeqanamâhs in Pequot)
 - Role in the ecosystem
 - Life history
 - Population history and significance to Pequot
 - Program served to inspire interest in science
 - Helped kids in the program ‘interview’ each other on what they liked and learned from the Mystic River Scientists meetings
- Attended “All in for Alewife” as hosted by AMRW
 - Learned about history of alewife and importance to Pequot
 - Learned current state of populations and what is being done to help
 - Learned about AMRW volunteers who count alewife each spring
 - Was inspired by dedication of attendees who stayed to listen after we were forced to leave the building and stand outside in cold, rainy weather

March and April

- Began write-ups of different animals and ecosystems in the Mystic Watershed
 - Began with Seeqanamâhs after learning about how important they are
 - Completed 14 animal/plant write-ups
 - Completed 5 ecosystem writeups
 - Created an infographic for the salt marsh ecosystem
 - Conducted 3 interviews and wrote 5 write-ups on people from the Mystic Watershed area
 - Contacted 7 people total for interviews, but only 3 came to fruition
 - The interviews were all recorded - I edited each to be posted on the website
 - Put all write-ups, videos, and photo/video release forms in a shared Google Drive
- Took some photos in the area to add to the final product
- Created a Google Site with how the layout of each write-up might look once posted to the website

photo: Long Island Sound
from Avery Point Campus
(Monica Doherty, 2024)

Google Site

photo: Long Island Sound
from Avery Point Campus
(Monica Doherty, 2025)

Evolution of the Project Over Time

Goals:

Completed:

- **Photographs:** I included 32 photos in the final product, over my goal of 20-30.
 - Created an infographic on salt marshes, which demonstrates ecosystem interactions and interconnectivity
- **Write-ups:** I produced 24 write-ups, which was within my goal of 20-30.
 - There are 25 on the website, but one was written by Maggie
 - Most have images except for Brenda Geer and Maggie Favretti, who have photos elsewhere on the website

Altered:

- **Flooding:** because this was a potential section, I eventually opted to focus on the write-ups for Watershed Family members and did not write a flood section
 - Flooding is mentioned in some interviews
- **Interviews:** I tried to interview 7 people, but only 3 were realized; however, I was able to create write-ups on 5 people, which was within my scope of 5-10.
 - For the 3 interviewees, I also included quotations and recorded videos
 - I opted to do write-ups of each person instead of just using the interviews to gain insights
- **Mystic River Magnet School kids' interviews:** I did not include these in my final project because I did not get access to all of them, and I also did not know which kids had signed release forms
 - The Alliance has access to the videos that were taken on my personal device

Thank you!

Questions/Comments?