

Marc Taylor Memorial Service

June 24, 2012

Comments by: James Belden, Executive Director, Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition

“How can I help you,” that is how most conversations began with Marc. Not in a trivial way, how you may hear it from the other side of a desk, but in an uncanny sincere manner that always made you confident that you would be better off after speaking with him. I experienced that, as I know others did, nearly every time I reached out to Marc. And yes, even if the problem wasn’t solved, I always had a better perspective and frame of mind after speaking with him, and this was on a professional and personal level. As a Board member of the Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition, after years of leading the organization in a more direct manner, he was always a voice of reason and guidance.

Marc’s indelible imprint on our organization as a Founder and Director is undeniable, but it goes deeper than that. He was in fact our compass. His calm but passionate demeanor guided the group, as well as many of us as individuals. What has become one of the nation’s most recognized watershed organizations through the use of science, education and collaboration only exists because of Marc’s efforts and vision. Largely through his efforts, aided by his fostering of relationships, this is one of the most studied watersheds with a truly unique coalition of stakeholders.

He was surely not the only person responsible for this success, Larry Pond and Dick Leavenworth were there from the beginning, but, as was the case in every facet of his life, Marc was the glue, the driving force and a relentless coalition builder. From the heartfelt words of fellow Board member and friend Joe Eisenberg, when it comes to our group there is only one succinct way to put it, ..we simply would not be here without him and his incredible contributions. That statement is certainly true for me as it was Marc that brought me to the PRWC.

As he pondered the health of the river in his back yard Marc became a devotee of watershed science. But through his skill at fostering collaboration, Marc willed his way to success when pursuing his objectives, whether it was recruiting a new Board member or developing a scientific research project, his sincerity and skillful approach was irresistible. I’ll bet no one here today could say they were able to say no to Marc. This was amazing to experience in itself however what was more impressive is that his efforts always benefitted others, not himself. His gage of being useful was in his impact on the overall effort. It was Marc that was most instrumental in nearly all of the original funding sources, partnerships and organizational structuring for the PRWC. Through this we have developed into a successful regional non-profit that is a model on a national level in the effort to understand, protect and repair the resources that he loved so dearly; our precious rivers and their watersheds. And he understood the connection between

healthy rivers and the health of the people in the community he cared about so much. We often joked about his transition from being a “liver Dr. to a river Dr.” but that both endeavors were so critical to society, and he was proud to play a part in his characteristic humble manner.

I would be remiss to not mention today his impact on other organizations such as the Pootatuck Watershed Association. As President and co-founder there was one person from whom I sought advice in 2005 during the formation of that organization. With his advice we successfully modeled it after the Pomperaug example and are still going strong today.

So on this day of memorial, I know that Marc’s spirit would rejoice in the fact, that not only will his memory live on in our hearts and minds, but in the success of the very organizations that his graciousness and expertise helped to mold. As we move forward there will hardly be a day that most of us will not ask “how would Marc handle this?” I know I speak for all of us at the PRWC.....Thank *you* Marc Taylor.

And lastly to Jan and the rest of Marc’s family, I know that you were the support system that allowed him to give so much to the rest of us. I want to let you know that our community is still here for you and ready to help in any way we can.