



**Update on *Didymosphenia geminata* (didymo),
West Branch Farmington River, Barkhamsted, CT.
March 19, 2013**

Greetings fellow Farmington River enthusiast. With the traditional opening day of trout season rapidly approaching on April 20th, 2013 we wanted to pass along the current status of *Didymosphenia geminata* (didymo) in the West Branch Farmington River and to ask you to remind your membership and others to exercise appropriate disinfection techniques to prevent potential spread upstream and to other waters.

Didymo was first observed and confirmed in the West Branch Farmington River in March of 2011. At that time it was uncertain as to how or if there would be an impact to the ecology of the river. With the historic flows following the rainfall from storms Irene and Lee (August and September 2011) it was hypothesized that the bloom of didymo for the upcoming winter would be disrupted. As it turns out, the first major bloom following the initial discovery did not happen and may have lead to a perception that didymo is not a significant cause for concern.

As of December 2012, a bloom of didymo has created a thick layer on much of the stream bottom in the West Branch of the Farmington River between the Route 20 bridge, near the former Hitchcock Chair Factory, and the confluence with the Still River (approximately 1 km downstream) in Riverton as indicated on the map to the right. At this time, while didymo can be transported downstream via stream current, we have not identified any downstream areas with significant didymo growth, except for along the eastern bank of the Farmington River for approximately 200 meters below the confluence.

With the expansion of the trout management area through this section of the river fishing is open year round. However, with the upcoming annual opening day fishing derby in Riverton, we expect lots of people-many from outside of the area and who may not be familiar with didymo at all, and many regulars who may not realize it is present at this location, to be fishing directly in and on the



The area in Barkhamsted with well established growth of didymo during winter 2012-2013. Note the majority of the didymo growth is in the West Branch Farmington River above the confluence with the Still River although some didymo is established along the eastern bank below the confluence.

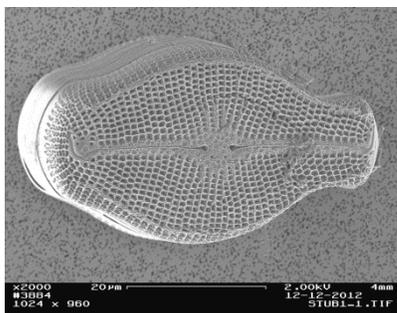
didymo mats. Please take this opportunity to review and remind your members and the general public of appropriate **CHECK, CLEAN, DRY** procedures to prevent transport of didymo either upstream or to other waters.

- **CHECK:** Before leaving a river, stream or lake, remove all obvious clumps of algae and plant material from fishing gear, waders, clothing & footwear, canoes & kayaks, and anything else that has been in the water and look for hidden clumps. Leave them at the site. If you find any later, clean your gear and dispose of all material in the trash.
- **CLEAN:** Soak/spray & scrub boats and all other "hard" items for at least one minute in very hot (140°F) water, a 2% bleach solution, or a 5% dishwashing detergent solution. Absorbent materials such as clothes and felt soles on waders should be soaked for at least 40 minutes in very hot water (140°F), or 30 minutes in hot water (115°F) with 5% dishwashing detergent. Freezing thoroughly will also kill didymo.
- **DRY:** If cleaning is not practical, after the item is completely dry to touch, wait an additional 48 hours before contact or use in any other waterway.



Didymo growth on a small boulder from the West Branch Farmington River on 2/5/2013.

Ongoing monitoring effort: Since July of 2012, Diba Kahn-Bureau (Ph D candidate at UConn and Three Rivers Community College Environmental Science Department Chair) has been focusing her efforts on identification of didymo and other closely related diatoms in the West Branch Farmington River. Anyone who suspects that they have found didymo outside of the known area in Riverton can send a sample to her for verification. Please visit www.threerivers.edu/didymo for additional information including the sample submittal form (electronic) and sample mailing instructions.



A didymo cell at 2000 times magnification through a scanning electron microscope. The image is courtesy of Diba Kahn-Bureau..



Didymo growth on a branch that was submerged in the West Branch Farmington River on 2/5/2013.

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