

Boston Harbor Watersheds South

Common Action Plan Summary 2004-2009

This is a highly summarized version of the actions recommended in the “Boston Harbor Watersheds South: 2004-2009 Action Plan.” This summary includes only those actions that were recommended for all the watersheds covered in the report—the Boston Inner Harbor Watershed, the Neponset River Watershed, the Fore River Watershed, the Back River Watershed and the Weir River Watershed. Please refer to the full report for important further details and additional specific action priorities for each individual watershed. Recommendations are grouped by problem area, though many recommendations apply to more than one area. The parties responsible for implementing each recommendation are listed with the recommendation, from greatest to least degree of responsibility. *The full plan and related information can be obtained at www.mass.gov/envir or www.neponset.org or by calling 781-575-0354.*

Responsible Party Abbreviations: F=Federal Agency, S=State Agency, M=Municipal Agency, C=Citizen, NGO or Private Interests

Sewer Systems: Illicit Connections to Storm Drains

F/S/M Fully implement Stormwater Phase II requirements
C/M/S Conduct shoreline surveys and volunteer monitoring

Sewer Systems: Inflow and Infiltration (I/I)

MWRA Expand the I/I Grant/Loan Program
MWRA Establish “use or lose” rule for MWRA I/I Grant/Loan Program
S/M/C Conduct public education campaign on I/I problems
S Complete improved Sewer System Operation & Maintenance Guidelines
S/M Require 4:1 remediation of I/I for new development and redevelopment
S/C Develop model bylaws/guidance for municipal 4:1 I/I mitigation programs
S/C Prepare statewide triennial report on I/I remediation progress
S/C Study mandatory inspection/remediation of I/I on private property at time of sale
S Further emphasize sewer maintenance in SRF Criteria
M Implement MWRA I/I Task Force recommended best management practices
M Maximize use of MWRA and town funds to remediate I/I sources
M Inspect new sewer lines before granting occupancy

Sewer Systems: Exfiltration

S Complete improved Sewer System Operation & Maintenance Guidelines
S/F Restore funding for volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Grants Program
M Locate and remediate exfiltration during Phase II stormwater work
C/M/S/F Conduct shoreline surveys and water quality monitoring with assistance of towns, state and fed

Sewer Systems: Sewer Extensions and Capacity Expansion

S/F Deny sewer extensions that will exacerbate SSOs, surcharging or low streamflows until underlying I/I problems are addressed
S/M Require 4:1 I/I mitigation for development and redevelopment
S/M Regard sewer capacity expansion as last resort to on site systems and I/I reduction

Stormwater Management and Groundwater Recharge

S/M/C Identify sites that are conducive to stormwater retrofits
S Update Stormwater Policy to further emphasize recharge, bacteria and nutrients
S/F/M/C Mandate/adopt town-wide bylaws as stringent as MA Stormwater Policy
S/F Provide financial assistance to municipalities for implementation of Phase II
S/F Strictly enforce Stormwater Phase II requirements
S/F Increase technical assistance to municipalities on stormwater
S/F Provide additional matching funds for implementing stormwater retrofits
M Implement all Stormwater Phase II requirements
M/C Adopt zoning bylaws encouraging “low impact development” (LID) techniques
M/S/C Require 2:1 mitigation of stormwater impacts in highly impervious watersheds
M/C Establish fee-based revenue sources to support stormwater work
M/S/C Identify, prioritize and implement stormwater retrofit projects
M/C Maximize use of available grant funds for retrofit projects
M/C/S/F Conduct public education/participation on stormwater issues
M/C Adopt and enforce pet waste bylaws
S/C Analyze the potential for stormwater utilities

Septic Management

S/M Mandate regular tank pumpouts by septic owners
S Increase financial / technical assistance for septic system maintenance
M/S/C Conduct public education on septic maintenance
S/M/C Develop model database to facilitate “pump out reminders” by Boards of Health
M/S Increase enforcement of annual septic hauler licensing
M/S Increase local enforcement against failed systems
M/C Establish fee based revenue sources to fund basic septic management programs
M/S/C Explore the potential of “Septic Utilities” to reduce costs and increase maintenance

Management of Landscaped Areas

M/S/F/C Educate public against excess use of fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation water
M/S Use public properties as demonstration sites for responsible landscape practices
S Better educate state licensed pesticide professionals, with enforcement as needed
M/S/F/C Educate property owners to preserve/restore naturally vegetated riparian buffers
S/M/C Identify bufferless riverfront areas for restoration
M/S/F Use state and local wetland rules more aggressively to protect riparian buffers
M Prohibit subdivision covenants that require unsound landscapes
M/S/C Create municipal bylaws or other incentives to limit lawn sizes, prevent site preparation prior to permitting and limit removal of topsoil
C/S/M Recognize lawn care businesses, golf courses, etc. that manage turf responsibly

Water Supply and Streamflows

F/S Develop a ground and surface water model for each watershed
F/S Install more stream gauges in the Fore, Weir and Back watersheds
S/F/C Establish “stress” classification in unassessed areas
S/F/C Issue habitat-based, site-specific, seasonal stream flow thresholds
S Set stricter water conservation standards for low stressed and unassessed basins
S Annually audit water supply statistical reports
S/M Ensure that permitting decisions help restore natural watershed hydrology

Water Supply and Streamflows, continued

S Consider cumulative effects of unutilized withdrawals in permitting decisions
S Provide technical/financial assistance to water suppliers on water conservation
S/M/C Coordinate mutual municipal assistance during water emergencies
S/C Convene dam owners to coordinate water releases
M/C Adopt and enforce performance standards for irrigation systems
M Voluntarily implement “high stress” water conservation requirements
M Adopt bylaws extending watering restrictions to private irrigation wells and prohibiting private surface water diversions
M/S/C Establish meaningful conservation programs that include: toilet replacement, rain barrels, landscaping, no discounts for second water meters, frequent billing
M Fund conservation programs through aggressively increasing block water rates
M/S/C Help educate the public, landowners, and municipal boards
C/M/S Advocate for funding at federal, state and municipal levels

Riverine Habitat

S/F/C Assess all dams for removal or fish passage potential
S/F/C Prepare an inventory and ranking of potential riparian restoration sites
S/F/C Assess contaminated sediments and develop action plan
S/F/M/C Develop watershed based open space plans
S/F/C Conduct invasive species inventories and prepare action plan
S/F/C Conduct regular fish and bug sampling
S Designate appropriate stream segments as Cold Water Fisheries
S Allow offsite riverine habitat mitigation for redevelopment along waterways
S Expend existing open space bond funds for habitat preservation and restoration
M/S/C Restore vegetated riverine buffers and armored stream banks
M/C Maximize use of available grant funds for restoration projects
M/S/F Use wetland rules to minimize stream armoring
M/S/F Encourage removal of existing riprap or adding appropriate vegetation to it
M/S/F Require riverine habitat mitigation for development along waterways
S/C Monitor flow and temperature to support cold water fishery designations
M/C/S Certify potential vernal pools, especially in protected wetland areas
M/S/C Coordinate volunteers for nuisance aquatic vegetation and litter control

Public Access to Waterways

S/M/C Expand shore access through Chapter 91 licensing and other incentives
S/M/C Develop shoreline access plans at a parcel level of detail
S/M/C Expand amenities, handicap access, and programming at waterfront areas
S/M/C Connect waterfront walkways to transit and other public lands
S/M/C Inventory potential boat ramp/canoe launch sites and develop an action plan
S/M/C Expand the number of boat ramps, canoe launches, water shuttles and the like
S/M/C Restore amenities and water quality at public beaches
C Advocate for public access under Chapter 91
C Advocate for waterfront open space acquisition

Watershed Assessment

S/F Provide more funding and staffing for volunteer/agency water quality assessment
C/S/F Organize/fund volunteer-based monitoring programs throughout the study area

Boating Initiatives

S/M/C Assess current and potential boat pump out facilities and develop an action plan
S/M/C Conduct ongoing boater education campaigns
F/S Empower the U.S. Coast Guard to enforce ballast water requirements
S/F/M Ensure safe practices at marinas through education and enforcement

Financing

F/S/M Establish user fee based revenue streams to assist municipalities with water, wastewater and stormwater maintenance
S/F Restore agency budgets and staffing to MA FY 2002 levels
M Set water and sewer fees to reflect the real costs of these services
M/S Broaden the “conventional” view of water and wastewater infrastructure to include “watershed infrastructure” in addition to built infrastructure
M/S Emphasize demand-side management and source reduction to control long term water, wastewater and stormwater costs
M/S Require effective mitigation for the impacts on water, wastewater and stormwater
M/C Establish town citizen/advocate committees to strengthen the constituency for sound watershed management

Regional Collaboration

M/S/C Collaborate across town boundaries to reduce the cost of: water quality monitoring, public education (e.g., stormwater, septic and water conservation), pilot projects (e.g., development of a “septic utility”), joint purchases of equipment and bidding for services (e.g., vacuum trucks, sewer leak detection equipment), training of town boards (e.g., NPDES Stormwater Phase II), development of model bylaws, “Fine tune” regional outreach materials to reflect local conditions
S/M/C Improve interagency/public coordination of state watershed-related activities
M/S/C Institutionalize communication between towns, water suppliers and citizens
C/M/S Implement coordinated lobbying effort for increased state and federal funding