

Explore the Neponset!

SPRING IS HERE, AND IT IS TIME TO EXPLORE YOUR WATERSHED!
With 27 miles of river, over 50 lakes and ponds, and 1,000s of acres of open space, there's lots to do.
Enjoy canoe trips, hikes, nature walks, bike trips, and more!

All dates rain or shine and subject to change. Please call sponsoring organization to confirm. Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear for weather and event. Unless noted, bring your own food and drink. Programs are free unless otherwise noted. See you on the river!

Events sponsored by NepRWA, Arnold Arboretum, Blue Hills Trailside Museum, Boston Natural Areas Network, Friends of the Blue Hills, Metropolitan District Commission, Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, Norwood Recreation Department, Norwood Sportsmen's Association, Sharon Friends of Conservation, Westwood Recreation Department

PRE = preregistration required
 NOVICE = beginner
 INTER = intermediate

April 12 Migratory Bird Walk

Boston Natural Areas Network
 An expert birder will lead the group. Bring binoculars if you own them and dress for walking through the muddy marshes of the Neponset Estuary. Saturday, 10:00 AM. PRE to 617-542-7696

April 13 Neponset Reservoir Canoe Trip

Sharon Friends of Conservation
 Lunch, easy launch, mini-beach. Sunday, 11 AM. PRE to Mike at msberman@peregrinegroup.com, 781-784-9558

April 15 What's Fish Got to do with it?

NepRWA, Norwood Sportsmen's Assoc.
 A presentation by NepRWA on the history of development within the Neponset River Valley and the restoration of the Neponset River focusing on current efforts to return anadromous fish runs to the Neponset. Tuesday, 7:00 PM, Norwood Sportsmen's Assoc., 550 Nichols Street, Norwood

April 19 Annual Blue Hills Clean-Up

Friends of the Blue Hills
 Saturday, 9 AM - 2 PM. Meet at the Houghton's Pond main parking lot on Hillside Street, Milton. 781-828-1805

April 24 Sediments along the Neponset

NepRWA
 MA Riverways Program and the US Geological Survey will present scientific data looking at sediments along the Lower Neponset River from Pauls Bridge in Milton to the Baker Dam in Lower Mills. Thursday, 7 PM, Hyde Park Municipal Building, 1179 River Street, Hyde Park.

April 26 Rain Barrel Pickup Event

Pick up your New England Rain Barrels and some information about how you can improve your lawn care this summer. Saturday, 9 AM - 12 PM, NepRWA Office

April 26 South Norwood Fishing Derby

Norwood Recreation Department
 Registration fee \$3 - 8 AM to 11 AM. Includes hotdog and soda. Ages up to 15 years. 15 and over to fish on Sunday. An adult must accompany children under 10. 781-762-0466

May 3 Paul's Bridge Paddle

Boston Natural Areas Network
 Paul's Bridge is a great paddle for beginner canoeists to learn techniques while exploring the Neponset River. Saturday, 10 AM. Start Paul's Bridge, Milton, NOVICE, PRE to 617-542-7696

May 3 Bird Walk for Beginners

Blue Hills Trailside Museum
 Enjoy a casual walk through Fowl Meadow as you familiarize yourself with the diversity of our local birds. Saturday, 7 AM - 10 AM (also occurring at same times on Sunday, May 4). PRE to 617-333-0690

May 10 Lower Neponset Canoe Trip

NepRWA
 See first hand the area where NepRWA hopes to restore fish habitat. Trip includes 1/4 mile portage. Trip Leaders: Ian Cooke, Tom Palmer. Saturday, 10 AM. Start Paul's Bridge Milton - End Lower Mills, INTER, PRE to 781-575-0354

May 10 Fishing Derby

Norwood Sportsmen's Association
 Registration from 8 to 9 AM, fee \$2. Includes lunch. Ages 1-15. Must provide personal fishing equipment. Worms only. Saturday, 9 AM to 11 AM, 550 Nichols Street, Norwood. 781-769-6700

May 11 Mother's Day Maze

Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary
 Celebrate Mother's Day in a whole new way! Learn about mothers in nature while enjoying a hike with your family. Start your journey at the Nature Center and then let our special "trail coin" direct you along the way-heads means go left, tails means stay the course. At the designated trail intersections find an interesting tidbit about mothers in nature. A Mass Audubon gift will be waiting for each family. Sunday, 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM, Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, Sharon, PRE to 781-784-5691

May 17 Bike the Gardens of Blue Hill Avenue

Boston Natural Areas Network
 Visit six beautiful and bountiful community gardens along Blue Hill Ave from Mattapan to Roxbury. Each garden has its own special features and personality. Saturday, 10:00 AM. Meet at City Natives Nursery, Edgewater Drive, Mattapan.

May 28 Water Quality Sampling

Citizen Water Monitoring Network: Mark your Calendars!

May 31 Westwood Fishing Derby

Westwood Recreation Department
 Youth: ages 15 and under, Free. Adults: ages 16+, \$10. Saturday, 7 AM, Buckmaster Pond, Westwood. 781-461-0070

June 14 Non-native Plants: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

FBH, Arnold Arboretum
 A tour through the Fowl Meadow. Learn about the history of non-native plants in the region and witness the link between human disturbance and the presence of invasive plants. Hear about the effects of non-native plants on wetlands and efforts to remediate habitats. Saturday, 10 AM - 1 PM, Fee: \$22, PRE to 781-828-1805

June 20 Neponset Estuary Canoe Trip

NepRWA, Friends of the Neponset Estuary
 Friday, 5 PM. Start Milton Landing - End Squantum Point, NOVICE, INTER, PRE

June 21 Summer Solstice Sunset Ride

Boston Natural Areas Network
 Enjoy the sunset with other cyclists on the longest day of the year. Meet at Castle Island and tour Boston Harbor, Dorchester Bay waterfront and nearby green spaces. This ride will include some hills and helmets are required. Saturday, 7:00 PM, Castle Island, South Boston. 617-542-7696

June 28 Art & Nature on the River

Boston Natural Areas Network
 In this kick-off to the Neponset River Greenway Festival, participants can enjoy canoe trips, kid's crafts, folk music, "A Taste of Dorchester", Greenway tours, kite flying, and pony rides to name just a few. Saturday, 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM, Pope John Paul II Park, Gallivan Blvd., Dorchester. 617-542-7696

July 5 Second Annual Blueberry Sweep

Friends of the Blue Hills
 Enjoy some of nature's candy on a hike with naturalist Tom Palmer to some of the Blue Hills wild blueberry reserves. Bring coffee cans and an appetite. Saturday, 10 AM, meet at the visitor's parking lot at the Hillside St. police station. 781-828-1805

July 23 Water Quality Sampling

Citizen Water Monitoring Network: Mark your Calendars!

Questions? Call NepRWA at 781-575-0354.

Saturday, May 31 — Blue Hills Bioblitz

Sponsored by: NepRWA/781-575-0354, Friends of the Blue Hills/781-828-1805, MDC/617-727-4573

8 AM - 11 AM

Beginner Bird Walk through Fowl Meadow
 A 3-mile beginner's bird walk. Learn to bird by listening for and identifying late migrant and nesting species in the best birding area in the Blue Hills. Bring binoculars and bird book. Meet at Paul's Bridge, Milton.

9:30 AM - 11 AM

Southern Fowl Meadow Tour
 Tour this rarely visited area of the Fowl Meadow. Witness the link between human disturbances and the presence of invasive plant species. Dress appropriately and bring a snack and water. Meet near the commuter rail access at the end of Green Lodge St. in Canton.

10 AM - 12 PM

Pitcher Plants and Witches'-brooms: A Bog Ecology Walk
 The Ponkapoag Bog is a biological treasure—the home of pitcher plants and sundews, cotton grass and water willow, sphagnum moss and "witches'-brooms." Walk through the bog from dry land to floating edge on a boardwalk and learn about the unique ecology that provides a habitat for such unusual plants. There are no guarantees of totally dry walking. Space is limited; please call 781-828-1805 to reserve a spot. Meet at Ponkapoag exit off of Rt. 128.

11 AM - 1 PM

Hilltop Hopping
 Explore the varying upland habitats within the Blue Hills. Witness the landscape change around you as you make your way up Houghton Hill and hop over to Wolcott Hill. This walk will include some steep trails. Meet at Houghtons Pond main parking lot on Hillside St. in Milton.

12 PM - 3 PM

Aquatic Plant tour of Ponkapoag Pond
 Join us in canoes as we tour the Ponkapoag Pond and its various aquatic plants. Meet at Fisherman's beach, Randolph. Space is limited, call 781-828-1805 to reserve a spot.

1 PM - 3 PM

Herp Tour
 Tour the vernal pools around Houghton's Pond. Trip will involve some bushwhacking. Wear sturdy boots, pants and long sleeve shirts. Meet at Houghtons Pond main parking lot on Hillside St. in Milton.

1 PM - 3 PM

Kids Bioblitz Bonanza
 Are you fascinated by nature? Want to learn more about the plants and animals that call the Blue Hills home? Join an MDC Ranger for this scientific exploration and put your Junior Naturalist skills to the test. For kids ages 6-12. Meet at Houghtons Pond main parking lot on Hillside St. in Milton.

Save water...Save money...Enjoy your garden!

The Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA) is working with the New England Rain Barrel Company to offer watershed residents a \$14 discount off their rain barrel for a special price of \$80. Place your order by April 11, 2003 and you can pick up your rain barrel and attend an ecological lawn care information session on Saturday, April 26 from 9 AM to 12 PM at the NepRWA office.

For product details, check out www.neprainbarrel.com. To order, email sales@neprainbarrel.com or call 978-927-0711 - don't forget to mention the NepRWA discount!



wat • er • shed (n): 1. the area draining into a particular body of water

Neponset River Watershed Association
 NepRWA is a nonprofit conservation group founded in 1967 to protect and restore the Neponset River, its tributaries and their watershed lands. *News from the Neponset* is published six times a year. Printing by Blue Hill Press, Canton

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News From the Neponset

A Publication of the Neponset River Watershed Association

March - April 2003

Budget Proposal Hits Rivers Hard

Recently Governor Romney unveiled his plan to reorganize the state's environmental agencies and dismantle or severely reduce the budgets for several important environmental programs. With the state in a financial crisis, budget cuts are unavoidable, but the Governor's budget has a disproportionately large impact on the environmental programs which make up a minuscule portion of the state budget. Of even greater concern, several of the state's most effective programs have been cut all together, further magnifying the impact to services, and in some cases forfeiting substantial matching funds. The time is NOW to tell your state legislators that you want clean, safe and abundant natural resources that we can enjoy and rely on for generations to come!

There are several items within the proposed 2004 budget that are of particular concern. For example, The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program will lose \$200,000 of its budget and will be forced to transfer the endangered species permitting operations to the new Division of Environmental Protection, effectively removing wildlife biologists from permitting decisions. Likewise, the fees and revenues generated from funds like the Inland Fisheries and Game Fund will be diverted into the state's "Rainy Day Reserve", thus making them available for any government use, not just those that would serve to benefit inland fisheries and forest reserves.

Perhaps the most devastating cut recommended in the 2004 budget is the proposal by Governor Romney to completely eliminate the Massachusetts Riverways program. Eliminating the Riverways program would severely inhibit the progress of river restoration and protection within the Neponset River Watershed and across the state. Action needs to be taken to protect this vital program in order to ensure that rivers continue to be protected and people continue to have the opportunities to utilize and enjoy these wonderful fresh water resources.

Please see the letter of support, written on behalf of several concerned watershed associations, and take action to protect the Riverways program. For more information on other proposed actions to the state's environmental agencies and programs, please contact Jessica Stephens at the NepRWA office, 781-575-0354, or stephens@neponset.org. To be included in email updates on actions that you can take to protect the Neponset River, email estlinbaum@neponset.org to sign up. Thank you in advance for your support and your action on this issue!

MA RIVERWAYS PROGRAM NEEDS YOUR HELP

The Massachusetts Riverways Program, that small and user-friendly state program that brings us Adopt-A-Stream, River Restore, the Urban Rivers program, technical assistance, and small grants, has been eliminated in the Governor's proposed budget for FY04 - starting July 1, 2003. We are asking for your help in restoring it.

As watershed associations working in partnership with citizens to protect local rivers and their watersheds, we all rely heavily on Riverways staff, train stream teams, work with us on dam issues, serve on our technical and advisory committees, give us "heads up" on issues we should pay attention to in our watershed, award small grants for our projects, and serve as a useful resource on all kinds of river issues.

Riverways is unique in state government: there is no other program like it. By encouraging local stewardship, Riverways leverages a very small state investment into a tremendous benefit for communities and employers statewide - producing more "bang per buck" than most other government programs. Ironically cutting this uniquely productive program only saves the Commonwealth \$360,000, but costs the state more than \$580,000 in services, because Riverways staff save so much of their budget through non-state grants. When choosing necessary budget cuts, it's critical that we preserve those programs that get the most done, with the fewest resources, through the Riverways.

Only your action can put this important program back in the state budget.

1. CALL OR WRITE (don't email) your state representative and senator and ask them to ask Representative Rogers (House Chair of Ways and Means) and Senator Thersa (Senate Chair of Ways and Means) to put Riverways back in the budget. You can find your legislator at www.whereitovotema.com/legsearch.php. To save Riverways requires only a \$360,000 line item, 10% less than was allocated last year. Last year (FY03) it was the item number 2300-0101.

2. Pass this information on to everyone that you know who cares about rivers - your neighbors, friends, and colleagues.

Be assured that this works! Legislators do listen to their constituents, and if they hear from enough of us, they'll act. Together we can make a difference for rivers and the environment!

A Julia Blatt - Exec. Dir., Organization for the Assabet River
 Ian Cooke - Exec. Dir., Neponset River Watershed Assoc.
 Kerry Mackin - Exec. Dir., Ipswich River Watershed Assoc.
 Dennis Beggs - Berkshire Coordinator, Housatonic Valley Assoc.
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