



Of Note

Wetland Restoration Volunteers Sought!

NepRWA is seeking volunteers to help with a Purple loosestrife biocontrol project in the Blue Hills Reservation.

Volunteers may participate in any of the following activities: raising beetles at home, school or work; releasing beetles at field sites; and/or surveying plant species and beetles in the field. Beetle-farming is a great project for students or a classroom to undertake.

To learn more, visit www.neponset.org/WetlandRestor-PLBiocontrol.htm, or contact Carly at 781-575-0354 x303 or rocklen@neponset.org.

wat • er • shed (n): 1. the area of land 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 each year. Printing by Blue Hill Press, Canton.

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2. a crucial turning point, 3. communities connected by water

July - August 2008

Tom Wessels Addresses Annual Meeting



Wellesley College Professor Dan Brabander with Wellesley College students he advises on a Neponset River Watershed project.

On the evening of Tuesday, June 24th, featured speaker Tom Wessels led an audience of over 100 in an exploration of economic success, its future and impact on the planet. This presentation at NepRWA's 41st Annual Meeting offered a first-hand look into Wessels' book *The Myth of Progress: Toward a Sustainable Future*.

Within the spacious accommodations of the Best Western Adams Inn (into which we moved to escape the downpour), Wessels offered the audience intriguing food for thought—from the “entropy” that occurs around us, to frugality in the context of the lives and beliefs of early Americans vs. those of Americans today, to an examination of a “sense of community”—of being tied to and holding oneself at least partly responsible for the well-being of the people of the USA as a whole—and how the lack thereof might be partly responsible for the high rates of depression diagnosed today. Tom Wessels is a professor of ecology and the founding director of the masters degree program in conservation biology at Antioch University New England. He also conducts workshops on the natural history of the landscape. He has written the highly acclaimed and debated book *The Myth of Progress: Toward a Sustainable Future*, and the much beloved and referenced *Reading the Forested Landscape: A Natural History of New England*, among other titles.

NepRWA Executive Director Ian Cooke described NepRWA's current programs for the audience, and this presentation was followed by an awards ceremony for both Cathy Garnett, Neponset Planner for the MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, and Julia O'Brien, DCR Director of Planning, who received recognition for their decades of hard work improving the health of the Neponset River and developing riverside amenities for the public. A rowdy Water Conservation Quiz followed, MC'd by NepRWA Intern Emily Tran and Water Conservation Coordinator Nancy Fyler, who distributed an array of prizes donated to NepRWA by Metro Boston businesses.

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\$1.7 Billion Environmental Bond Bill Passes Legislature: \$12 Million Earmarked for Neponset Restoration!

The Environmental Bond bill was enacted on July 31, 2008. It contains \$40 million for water monitoring and much more that may be utilized for protection of all of the state's watersheds. Thanks to the initiative of three state representatives and two state senators, \$12 million dollars was earmarked for “restoration, remediation and other necessary environmental improvements to the Lower Neponset River Watershed.”

NepRWA urges constituents of the following legislators to let them know how much you appreciate their leadership on this critical issue:

- Rep. Galvin (Canton and parts of Stoughton): Rep.williamgalvin@hou.state.ma.us; 617-722-2230; Room 167**
- Rep. Kafka (Sharon, parts of Stoughton and Walpole): Rep.louiskafka@hou.state.ma.us; 617-722-2305; Room 237**
- Rep. Martin Walsh (Dorchester): Rep.martinwalsh@hou.state.ma.us; 617-722-2090; Room 540**
- Sen. Bryan Joyce (Canton, Milton, Randolph, Stoughton and parts of Sharon): Brian.A.Joyce@state.ma.us; 617-722-1643; Room 413-A**

All addresses are: State House, Boston, MA 02133.

The \$12 million for Lower Neponset restoration will be available for the next five years and, if the Governor decides to spend it, the money can be used for cleaning up PCBs in river sediments in Boston and Milton, and for removal of two dams that block passage of herring, shad, and smelt for 17 miles up the river (or for an alternative means of providing fish passage over or around the dams).

Visit our website www.neponset.org for information about the Environmental Bond and the Lower Neponset River Restoration Project.

NepRWA 2008 Annual Meeting, from page 1



Julia O'Brien and Cathy Garnett of DCR are acknowledged for their efforts on behalf of the Neponset River.

NepRWA Member Liz MacNeil went home with a PERCEPTION Prodigy 10 Kayak from Eastern Mountain Sports-Canton, in addition to a Gift Certificate for a life vest, and a coupon toward purchasing a paddle, upon winning the kayak raffle.

View event pictures at www.neponset.org.

The 2008 Annual Meeting was made possible through the generous support of the following businesses and individuals:

Silver Corporate Sponsor:

Poirier Sales & Service Corp. of Norwood and Newton

Supporting Corporate Sponsors:

Americad Technology Corporation of Norwood, Bass Pro Shops of Foxborough, Charles River Canoe & Kayak of Newton, The Children's Museum in Easton, Davis' Farmland & Mega Maze of Sterling, Eastern Mountain Sports of Canton, ETC Development Corp. of Boston.

Silver Individual Donor:

Anonymous

Supporting Individual Donors :

Robert R. Forsberg, Anne Herbst, Marc and Susan Maynard, and Ethel Stafford

Restoring Wetland Wildlife Habitat, One Bucket of Bugs at a Time



Volunteer Nathan Palmer and DCR Assistant Forester Ale Echandi on a timed search for *Galerucella* beetles.

This summer, NepRWA has begun to implement a five-year, collaborative wetland restoration project at Fowl Meadow and at Brookwood Farm, two MA Dept. of

Conservation and Recreation (DCR) properties located in the Blue Hills Reservation. Partnering with NepRWA is the DCR-South Region. The Wetland Restoration Program of the MA Office of Coastal Zone Management is serving as project advisor.

We are using a biological control method to improve the ecological function of the wetlands by reducing the Purple loosestrife infestations there. The biocontrol beetles we are releasing consist of two *Galerucella* species that feed primarily on Purple loosestrife plants and very little if at all on other plant species.

As of this newsletter, we have set-up study plots in the wetlands and surveyed the presence of Purple loosestrife and other wetland plants in addition to *Galerucella* beetles in those plots. Interestingly, we found that *Galerucella* beetles have migrated to our sites from other Purple loosestrife treatment areas. They, in combination with the *Galerucella* beetles we will be releasing at the sites over the summer, are working to control Purple loosestrife.

Over the course of this project, we will establish a self-sustaining population of *Galerucella* in the treatment areas to control the Purple loosestrife, even after the end of the project. These beetle populations will rise and fall on site according to the availability of Purple loosestrife, the weather and the presence of predators. If Purple loosestrife is sufficiently reduced by the beetles, *Galerucella* will migrate from the site to search for more Purple loosestrife.

Through site-monitoring both prior to and after each year's beetle releases, we will assess whether this biocontrol method has been effective.

Get involved! NepRWA seeks the help of groups, schools and individuals for beetle-farming and site-monitoring. Contact Carly to learn more: rocklen@neponset.org or 781-575-0354, or visit www.neponset.org.

This wetland restoration project is supported by funding from the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership and the DCR Partnerships Matching Funds program.



A *Galerucella* beetle perches on a Purple loosestrife leaf.



l-r: Back row: Beth McGregor, Dr. Janet Limke, Rob Scott, eldest Limke-Scott son; Front row: youngest Limke-Scott son, NepRWA Intern Emily Tran, Ignacio Alvarez

River Cleanup by the Bend in the Road

Just moments before the river cleanup began, volunteer Ignacio Alvarez found a European starling entangled in fishing line. Donning work gloves, and with some careful maneuvering, Ignacio freed the bird. The rescue provided a solid reminder of the importance of active stewardship of our local ecosystems to make them safe for both wildlife and humans.

Saturday morning, July 19th, dawned hot and humid, but despite the weather, over 20 watershed residents showed-up to remove trash from the Neponset River and its environs by the Plimpton St. overpass in Walpole.

Most river cleanup volunteers arrived at ten o'clock, and by noon had filled many large trash bags with litter, including paper goods, plastic items (*i.e.*, plastic bags and drink bottles), and metal trash (*i.e.*, beer and soda cans). In fact, volunteers filled at least four large trashbags with recyclables alone. They also removed two rusty bicycles and a bent and rusting bed frame (including springs!) from the river corridor, and recovered an old car muffler, unidentifiable car parts, six tires, and a rusted-out shopping cart. The Limke-Scott family even launched kayaks into the river to paddle by the shore, picking-up trash and removing the fishing line that had become entangled in trees and was otherwise inaccessible.

The hard-working volunteers did not go without nourishment! The Dunkin' Donuts on Main St. in Walpole generously donated coffee, donuts and water to the cleanup crew. Additional support was provided by the Walpole Department of Public Works, which donated trash bags and gloves in addition to picking-up the piles of debris. Weston Solutions employees also participated in the hands-on collection of litter.

The success of the river cleanup was uplifting for all those involved, and it demonstrated that with a little bit of planning, members of the community can truly make a difference in their surroundings and benefit the environment. NepRWA thanks Summer Intern Emily Tran for organizing this event, and NepRWA Members Rita Corey and Brian Gay for suggesting it. View event pictures at: www.neponset.org/RiverCleanupJul08-Walpole.htm.

NepRWA Promotes Water Conservation

This past winter, the Town of Sharon and NepRWA partnered to facilitate a grant from the MA Department of Environmental Protection to implement a one-year water conservation program. NepRWA has hired Nancy Fyler as a Water Conservation Coordinator to assist with the program. Over the past few months, Nancy has been busy developing a water conservation curriculum within the Sharon schools, meeting with civic groups, boards and committees, writing water conservation articles for the local newspaper, and promoting water conservation through a new website and various other outreach tools. The success of the Water Conservation Program in Sharon, combined with a new round of grant money from the DEP, also has led NepRWA to partner with the Town of Walpole in submitting a grant request to implement a similar water conservation program. Learn more about the water conservation program by visiting www.sharonwater.com or contacting Nancy Fyler at 781-575-0354 x307 or fyler@neponset.org.

Life as a NepRWA Intern, by Emily Tran



l-r: NepRWA Intern Emily Tran and DCR Assistant Forester Alexandra Echandi survey *Galerucella* beetles at a Purple loosestrife biocontrol study plot.

When first coming to work at NepRWA, this summer, I envisioned that I would spend the majority of my time sitting in a lab running tests on water samples or outside tramping around looking for bugs. In retrospect, my vision was only accurate on some accounts.

I did, indeed, run tests and search for bugs (*Galerucella* beetles that are used to control Purple loosestrife populations), but I also helped with the Annual Meeting and with outreach mailings, and I have conducted research on the watershed and the Neponset St. canoe launch. I have also participated in wetland restoration fieldwork, and I even had the opportunity to plan a river cleanup by myself and see it all come together. Certainly, I have learned more here than how to wash bottles and test for *E. Coli*.

Overall, I recommend this experience to any student thinking about pursuing studies and/or a career in environmental science or a related field. NepRWA is a caring, devoted organization, and I am very glad that I had the chance to be a part of it. At the end of the summer I will return to Roger Williams University in Rhode Island to continue my studies in Environmental Science, all the while keeping in mind what I have learned here.