

## Of Note

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Join NepRWA if you aren't already a member! Member support helps to further environmental protection throughout the communities of the Neponset River Watershed. It's easy to become a member. Sign-up at [www.neponset.org](http://www.neponset.org) or request a membership application from Kristina at 781-575-0354 x301 or [lafrance@neponset.org](mailto:lafrance@neponset.org).

### To Unsubscribe

To be removed from the NepRWA newsletter mailing list or from our e-mail list, contact Membership Coordinator Kristina LaFrance: 781-575-0354 x301, or [lafrance@neponset.org](mailto:lafrance@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

January - February 2009

## Mass Highway to Restore & Return "Northern Stub" to Blue Hills Reservation

The state and federal governments designed Interstate Highway 95 to go through, rather than around, the City of Boston. Environmentalists, including NepRWA, put a stop to this idea, but not before a bridge was built across Route 128 and a few hundred yards of interstate highway built into the Blue Hills Reservation. MassHighway has kept this land for decades, using it to store salt and road building equipment.

As part of a major new project to redesign the interchange where I-95 departs from Route 128 and heads south to Providence, RI, MassHighway has agreed to restore this area, called the "northern stub," and give it back to the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Blue Hills Reservation. Fill will be removed, wetlands restored, habitat created for the rare Blanding's turtle, and trails built to Royall St. in Canton and to the AMTRAK/MBTA station in Westwood. NepRWA and DCR also influenced the developers of Westwood Station, which is to be built right next to the train station, to donate \$325,000 to build a pedestrian bridge over the Neponset River so people south of 128 will have access to the many trails of the Blue Hills Reservation.

While work will not begin on the project for a couple of years, NepRWA finds the latest design for the new northern stub area to be both aesthetically and environmentally pleasing.

## New Water Conservation Program in Walpole

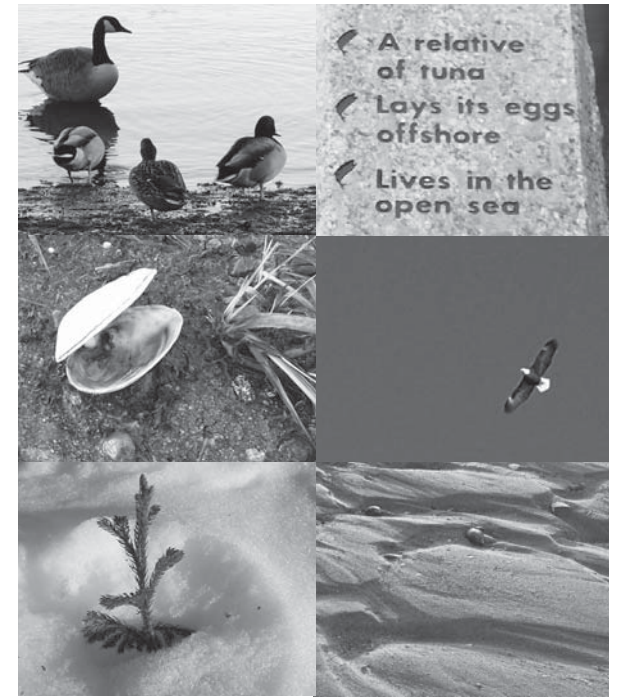
With grantwriting help from NepRWA, the Town of Walpole has recently received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for a one-year water conservation program.

The grant will be used to promote water conservation outreach, identify and reduce unaccounted for water loss from the Town's distribution system through leak detection and repair, and offer rebates to residents for water-saving fixtures, appliances and other approved low-flow devices. The water conservation outreach program will promote general education about water-saving practices through newspaper columns and the Internet, outreach to civic groups, and a school education program. The Town has partnered with the Neponset River Watershed Association to help implement the grant, and Nancy Fyler, Water Conservation Coordinator at NepRWA, will assist in the program.

For more information, contact Nancy Fyler at 781-575-0354 x307 or visit [www.neponset.org](http://www.neponset.org).

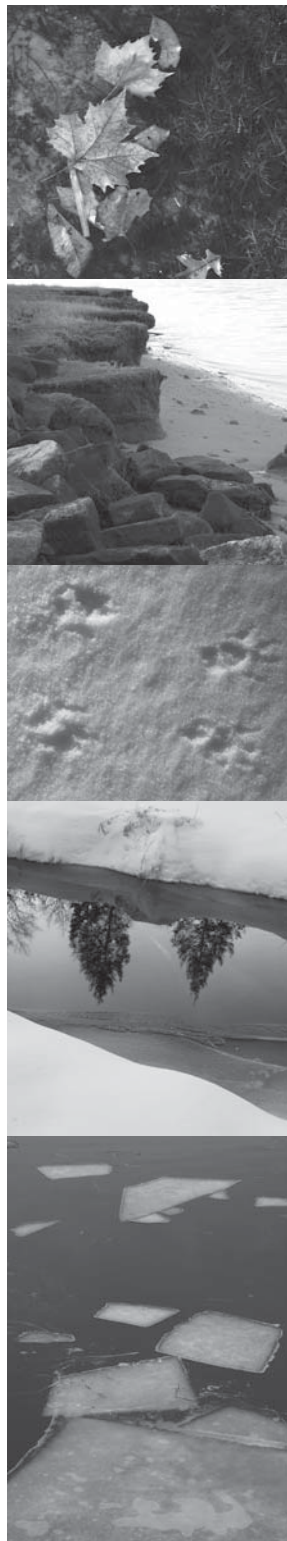
## Norwood Solves One Water Pollution Problem

Since an article appeared in the previous NepRWA newsletter highlighting water quality problem areas in the Neponset Watershed, the Town of Norwood has investigated an affected outfall at which NepRWA suspected an illicit connection to the stormwater drainage system was causing poor water quality downstream. Norwood confirmed that sewage was, in fact, making its way into the stormdrain. According to Norwood Conservation Agent Al Goetz, the issue has been fixed. NepRWA plans to re-visit the site to confirm the effectiveness of the repair, via water sampling. NepRWA appreciates the Town's quick action on this issue and looks forward to working with Norwood in the months ahead to correct the numerous other problems uncovered by NepRWAs 2008 Follow-Up Sampling Program. Questions? Contact NepRWA Environmental Scientist Bill Guenther for more information: 781-575-0354 x302 or [guenther@neponset.org](mailto:guenther@neponset.org).



Neponset Watershed Nature. Clockwise from top left: Canada goose & Mallards, Turner's Pond, Milton; Mackerel sign at the Neponset Estuary, Dorchester; Bald eagle, Milton; Beach at Squantum Point Park, Quincy; Clubmoss, Stoughton; Clam, Quincy.

## Winter Comes to the Neponset Watershed



Images, top to bottom: Sycamore leaves in Turner's Pond, Milton; Peat shoreline, Squantum Pt. Park, Quincy; Wildlife tracks and reflective creek, Ponkapoag Golf Course, Canton; Ice in the Neponset Estuary, Dorchester.

## MassDEP Proposes Regulations for Upland Stormwater Discharges

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has recently proposed a new set of regulations (314 CMR 21.00) to deal with some currently unaddressed sources of stormwater runoff. As DEP points out in its introduction to the rules:

Stormwater ... represent(s) 60% of the pollutants that damage water quality and cause toxic algae blooms that kill fish and close waterways to recreational activity. Impaired waters and decreased recharge could eventually result in MA not having enough water to meet demand, hampering our ability to grow.

The question for NepRWA is, will the proposed regulations make a significant dent in these water quality and water quantity problems in the Neponset Watershed?

The good news is:

- MassDEP is proposing for the first time ever to regulate stormwater discharges at locations that are not covered by the MA Wetlands Protection Act.
- MassDEP is proposing for the first time ever to regulate stormwater discharges from existing, as well as new, sources (the U.S. EPA also has stormwater requirements for existing sources, but these are limited to municipal storm drains).
- The new regulations would require reasonably strict controls on sites whose stormwater goes to "TMDL-Identified Stormwater-Impaired Surface Waters" TMDLs are "total maximum daily loads" of pollutants that a water body can accept without violating state Surface Water Quality Standards. A Bacteria TMDL for the Neponset River Basin was issued by MassDEP in 2002.

The bad news is:

- The proposed regulations, and the accompanying General Stormwater Permit, would apply only to discharges from a very few large, privately owned sites with five or more acres of impervious surfaces, such as mall buildings and parking lots.
- For existing sites, no new structural stormwater controls would have to be installed; owners would only have to properly operate and maintain whatever

stormwater controls they already had, if any.

- Although the 2002 Neponset River Basin Bacteria TMDL sets specific limits for stormwater discharges, the proposed regulations do not include the Neponset in the list of "TMDL-Identified Stormwater-Impaired Surface Waters."

So what's a watershed association to do? NepRWA, along with other watershed associations and environmental organizations, will be submitting comments asking MassDEP to strengthen the new rules. Among other things, NepRWA intends to say that:

1. The regulations should apply to sites with as little as two acres of impervious surface.
2. At a minimum, relatively inexpensive stormwater management structures should be added to existing sites, if there is a place to put them.
3. Both the proposed regulations and the General Permit state that MassDEP "shall not issue a permit ... when the stormwater discharge ... will cause or contribute to a violation of the Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards." Not requiring large impervious areas to meet the stormwater discharge limits for bacteria contained in the Neponset River Basin TMDL will, by definition, violate those standards. Therefore the proposed new regulations and General Stormwater Permit should either include the Neponset Basin as a "TMDL-Identified Stormwater-Impaired Surface Water" or exempt the Neponset from coverage under the General Permit.
4. Adequate public notice and public comment provisions must be added to the regulations.

NepRWA believes that MassDEP is to be commended for finally making upland and existing sites take action to control their stormwater. However, without a significant strengthening of the proposed regulations, we don't believe that there will be much improvement in stormwater quality or in the quantity of stormwater that is safely recharged to our aquifers.

Questions? Contact NepRWA Advocacy Director Steve Pearlman: 781-575-0354 x304 or pearlman@neponset.org.

## Save Water at Home

Did you know that toilets typically consume the largest amount of water in your home? If your house was built before 1992 and you haven't replaced your toilets, you may have a toilet that uses 3.5 to 7.0 gallons of water per flush, and you would benefit from installing a high-efficiency toilet that uses 1.3 gallons or less per flush.



Clothes washers are usually the second largest water user in your home. If you are in the market for a new clothes washer, consider replacing it with a high-efficiency model. Most Energy Star clothes washers use 35 to 50 percent less water and 50 percent less energy per load than traditional washing machines. To save the most water, look for a clothes washer with a low water factor. The lower

the water factor, the less water the machine uses. Water factor is listed on the Energy Star website qualified product list at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).



Before making any purchases, you may want to check with your local Water Department to find out if they have a rebate program for water-efficient appliances.

Questions? Contact NepRWA Water Conservation Coordinator Nancy Fyler at 781-575-0354 x307 or fyler@neponset.org.

## Patagonia Lends a Hand for Herring & Shad

Patagonia, the iconic outdoor wear company, is joining forces with NepRWA to help advocate for a restored Neponset River. Through its local Newbury Street Store, Patagonia has provided a small grant to help support the advocacy push that will come after the Community Advisory Committee wraps up its work.

The Lower Neponset Ecological Restoration Citizen Advisory Committee or "CAC" has been weighing the pros and cons of various ways of going about restoring herring and shad runs on the Neponset River while also respecting important historic preservation, aesthetic and land-side recreation values. The CAC, which is composed of representatives from some 25 local neighborhood groups, has been deliberating for nearly a year and is expected to wrap up its work in March or April. The goal for the CAC is to develop a consensus recommendation on how to proceed that meets the needs of all the groups represented.

Look for more information in the next few months on the outcome of the Lower Neponset CAC and how you can help bring back the Neponset's historic fish runs.

Learn more about this effort at [www.neponset.org](http://www.neponset.org), by clicking on "Restoring the Neponset River", or by contacting NepRWA Advocacy Director Steve Pearlman at 781-575-0354 x304 or pearlman@neponset.org.



Get Active with NepRWA

## Liquid Assets & You — this April!

Come watch the much talked about documentary film "Liquid Assets" with your Neponset neighbors! NepRWA show this thought-provoking film in April (date, time and location to be announced). Lively discussion and refreshments to follow! Check for event updates on the NepRWA website, [www.neponset.org](http://www.neponset.org) (click on "Events"). Questions? Contact NepRWA Outreach Director/Restoration Manager Carly Rocklen at 781-575-0354 x303 or rocklen@neponset.org.

## Virtual Watershed Tour & On-line Exhibit

Celebrate your inner photojournalist! Browse a colorful array of Neponset pictures and post your own within the on-line picture group [www.flickr.com/groups/neponset](http://www.flickr.com/groups/neponset). Questions? Contact Outreach Director/Restoration Manager Carly Rocklen at 781-575-0354 x303 or rocklen@neponset.org.

## And, They Asked, "Are You My Mother?"

Take advantage of the perfect opportunity to restore the environment, protect wildlife habitat and spend time outdoors. How? Join us in raising Galerucella beetles, this spring! The beetles will help to control an exotic, invasive weed that has been spreading through local wetlands and degrading their value as wildlife habitat.

What can you expect, as a volunteer? In early April, we will harvest Purple loosestrife plants from specific field sites and pot them. Then, at home, volunteers will make sure their assigned plants (in multiples of 10 to 12) get enough water and sun, for about a month. Then we will place Galerucella beetles and a net on each of the plants. Over several more weeks, volunteers will continue to care for their plants as the beetles feed and reproduce. Finally, in July, volunteers will bring the beetles and plants out to selected wetland sites, remove the netting, and let the insects go! This is a great hands-on opportunity for families, individuals, school groups, civic associations, environmental clubs, scouts, religious organizations and more. Learn more at [www.neponset.org](http://www.neponset.org) by clicking on "Be a Beetle-Rancher!", or by contacting Carly at 781-575-0354 x303 or rocklen@neponset.org.