

NEPONSET RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

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PRESS RELEASE

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BATTLING POLLUTION & FLOODING IN PINE TREE BROOK

Perhaps you've noticed ducks dabbling in the cold, clear waters of Pine Tree Brook, or gazed at the arched, purple stems of berry plants along its banks. Maybe the quiet whiteness of Pope's Pond has caught your eye, blanketed in snow and surrounded by a wintry woods. These are just a few of the brook's characteristics cherished by Milton residents.

Together, the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA) and the Milton Department of Public Works (DPW) have developed a strategy to protect and restore Pine Tree Brook to fishable, swimmable conditions. Public feedback is now needed on the plan.

The public is invited to attend a February 5 discussion, 7:00-8:30PM at the Milton Senior Center/Council on Aging, 10 Walnut Street, Milton. NepRWA, the Milton DPW, GeoSyntec Consultants, and the Pine Tree Brook Neighborhood Association will be available to present the plan and answer any questions. Contact NepRWA for more information, 781-575-0354.

Many Milton residents visit Pine Tree Brook, walking its streamside trails with pets and friends. The waterway crosses beneath Blue Hills Parkway and runs behind Milton High School, by residential developments.

For several years now, NepRWA has also frequented the waterway, monitoring its condition and testing its water. Tests have revealed occasional elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria. These bacteria originate from pet waste deposited along streamside paths and in nearby streets.

Rainwater and meltwater carry the waste into the brook's waters, often first through stormdrain grates and underground pipes. In addition to this pet waste, the flowing water picks up oil, antifreeze, fertilizers, and snow-melting chemicals, all of which end up in the brook.

Brooks with contaminated water are generally unable to support diverse aquatic life or provide a safe environment for human recreation. Pine Tree Brook's contamination encourages excessive plant growth. When these plants die, the bacteria that decompose them will consume much of the water's oxygen, causing the deaths of other aquatic organisms. Besides this oxygen shortage, water contaminated with pet waste also suffers from viruses, parasites and other bacteria – none of which humans should be exposed to.

With the implementation of NepRWA's restoration strategy, the contaminated stormwater will be filtered through the ground before it can enter the brook. Thus, many of the pollutants will be removed from the water and transferred to the soil for eventual decomposition. Besides making

for a cleaner brook, this process will also reduce the speed at which water enters the waterway, reducing flooding, erosion, and sedimentation in the brook.

The restoration plan also calls for the creation of formal recreational pathways to replace the dirt trails that now border the brook. Along these paths, waste receptacles will be installed with plastic “mutt mitts” to provide dog-walkers with a means to pick up their pets’ waste, and signs will be erected to remind pedestrians to pick up after their pets.

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