

490 Chapman Street, Suite 1B • Canton, MA 02021  
voice 781/ 575-0354 • fax 781/ 575-9971

**PRESS RELEASE**

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Please Contact:  
Jessica Stephens

**Toilet paper and high fecal coliform levels found in Unquity Brook in Milton.**

In a recent water quality monitoring event, conducted by volunteers for the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA), high levels of fecal coliform were found in Unquity Brook in Milton. Fecal coliform is a bacteria that is found in sewage, as well as animal feces. The presence of fecal coliform in Unquity Brook is an indication that there is an illicit connection between one or several sewer pipes to one of the town's storm drains, which discharges into the brook. In fact, at one location monitored this past June in Unquity Brook at Squantum Street, toilet paper was found floating in the stream and strewn along rocks making up the stream bed.

Unquity Brook has long been considered a "hot spot" by NepRWA, as it quite frequently shows elevated levels of fecal coliform. This bacteria can have serious consequences on the health and safety of humans and animals. People who come in contact with fecal coliform, especially by ingesting the bacteria, can become very ill. This bacteria is often the cause of beach closings along Massachusetts coasts; such closings are implemented to prevent people from swimming in and possibly ingesting water contaminated with sewage containing the dangerous bacteria.

In response to these results, NepRWA, a non-profit conservation group, has been in contact with the Town of Milton's Department of Public Works to try to find a solution to the ongoing problems occurring at Unquity Brook. Together, the two offices have located several drain outfalls that could be possible sources of the sewer input to the stream. However, there are potentially hundreds of homes and miles of sewer and drain pipe in the drainage area of each outfall, any number of which could be the source of the problem in the stream.

It is a painstaking process to locate the actual connection, but yet it is something the Town must do in order to protect public health and the environment. The pollution of the brook

is also causing a violation of the federal Clean Water Act, and as owner of the offending drainage system, the Town could be subject to enforcement action and penalties if the situation is not addressed promptly.

At an upcoming Selectmen's meeting in Milton, the issue concerning Unquity Brook will be discussed as well as ways to repair the problem and how to appropriate funding to address the situation.

NepRWA has been conducting water quality monitoring in the Neponset River and its tributaries, throughout the watershed, every other month for 6 years. During this process, there have been some startling findings of water contamination in various areas within the watershed. Sewer leaks from broken or rusty pipes, runoff of pollutants from lawns and streets, low stream flow levels from increased water withdrawals, and illicit connections of people's sump pumps and home sewer pipes to the stormwater drainage system are just some of the problems that have plagued water quality in the Neponset River Watershed. However, due to education of homeowners, remediation of faulty sewer pipes and illicit connections, and stricter state regulations prohibiting direct pollution into surface water bodies, the health of the Neponset River and its streams and brooks has improved greatly, and water quality generally meets the State's Surface Water Quality Standards.

NepRWA will continue to monitor water quality at over 40 sites within the watershed. Additional efforts will be made to work with towns to remediate any water quality violations as well as ways to ensure that adequate amounts of water are left in the streams to protect aquatic habitat and stream ecology. Volunteers are always needed by the organization to help further the water monitoring program, or to attend the various town meetings and report back to NepRWA on specific projects or developments that may impact water quality within the watershed. For more information, please contact the Neponset River Watershed Association at 781-575-0354 or visit their website at [www.neponset.org](http://www.neponset.org).

