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wat e r-shed (n): 1. the area draining into a particular body of water

Neposet River Watershed Association
NepRWA is a nonprofit conservation group founded in 1987 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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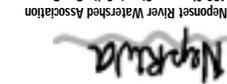
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Neposet River Watershed Association
490 Chapman Street, Suite One B
Canton, MA 02021
Address Correction Requested

YES! I WANT TO JOIN THE WATERSHED TEAM!

Please send me a Volunteer Application Form.

Name: _____
Street: _____
City, Zip: _____
Daytime Phone: _____
Evening Phone: _____
Email Address: _____

Mail this form to NepRWA at 490 Chapman Street, Suite One B, Canton, MA 02021
Or visit www.neposet.org to download a copy of the Volunteer Application Form.

2. a crucial turning point & communities connected by water

News From the Neponset

A Publication of the Neponset River Watershed Association

November - December 2002

"If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door." Milton Berle



What does volunteer mean? The definition of 'volunteer' is 1) [noun] a person who offers to do something of his own free will 2) [verb] to offer or give one's own free will. What is Free Will? It is the freedom to choose a course of action without external force; it is the freedom of choice.

Why do people volunteer for the watershed?

Volunteers for NepRWA - be they water quality volunteers, office volunteers or river cleanup volunteers - all become involved for different reasons. For some, helping the watershed is a way to gain fulfillment in their lives. For others, it is to improve their neighborhood, or address concern about the water quality, the fish, or their children's future. Whatever the reason, we choose to volunteer because we have the energy and the freedom to decide our future.

How Can I Volunteer for the Watershed?

There are many opportunities to volunteer for the watershed. Words like protect, nurse, support, observe, monitor, tend, study, educate, learn, act, walk, swim, canoe, kayak, check, speak and listen all describe ways you can achieve a healthier Neponset River Watershed. NepRWA encourages everyone to be stewards of the land and water around us, to get involved with the projects we're working on, and if NepRWA is not tackling an issue you're concerned about, to take charge and find a way to solve that problem or answer that question yourself.

NepRWA is in the process of launching an exciting new Volunteer Initiative, the WatershedTeam, which will help you, as a member of the Neponset Watershed, decide how to be involved. In this issue of *News from the Neponset*, we challenge you to reconsider what it means to volunteer for NepRWA. We urge you to join the WatershedTeam so you may choose how, when, why and for how long you want to be involved. You can choose from political projects, (Let Your Voice Be Heard) field projects (Get your feet wet!) or community projects (Lead the Charge), all of which help NepRWA and the Neponset Watershed in a myriad of ways. Finally, make sure to visit the new Volunteer link on NepRWA's website, www.neposet.org.

Step up to the challenge...

...of a healthier Neponset River Watershed! Because of the tireless efforts of NepRWA volunteers, staff and sponsors, water quality has dramatically improved in the Neponset River since a small group of concerned citizens founded the organization in 1967. We are continually expanding our reach and developing a deeper understanding of problems facing the Watershed, as well as the most effective ways to address these challenges. However, illegal discharges polluting the water and surrounding lands, aging sewers and septic systems, encroaching development, over-use of natural resources, and drought still threaten the Watershed. NepRWA has celebrated many victories in tackling these challenging issues. Over the past year, however, with a slumping economy, one of our greatest challenges has been finding the necessary resources to maintain and enhance our current level of leadership on environmental affairs of regional and local importance. That is why we are asking you to step up to the challenge and become a WatershedSponsor today!



Become a WatershedSponsor!
There are many ways to support NepRWA and a healthier watershed. If you are not a member already, join, and if you are a member encourage your friends and neighbors to join. If you own a business, join our Business Partnership or sponsor

a NepRWA event. There are numerous opportunities for you to be a WatershedSponsor, to learn more contact Laura Raymond at the NepRWA office, or email her at raymond@neposet.org.
In just a few weeks we will be contacting you personally to let you know how you can sponsor the many efforts to restore and protect your Watershed. Each fall, NepRWA conducts our annual River Fund Campaign to reach out to our members and friends so that we can achieve even more together. Membership fees alone are not enough to cover the growing needs in our region. Throughout the year, NepRWA also relies on our partners to support community action on urgent issues that need immediate attention. These issues - for example proposed development that may harm natural resources or aesthetics, open space parcels going up for sale, or severe water shortages - are often town-specific and very important to quality of life in your neighborhood. We hope that when you receive your letter in the mail, or a phone call from a NepRWA Board Member, you will step up to meet the challenge and choose to become a WatershedSponsor. Also, visit www.neposet.org, to read more about the numerous opportunities to get involved further.

Get Your Feet Wet ...

...and your hands dirty! Become a NepRWA WatershedWatcher. This volunteer opportunity is a great way to get out and see the Neponset River while taking "ownership" of a specific site or stretch of stream. Sample with the Citizen Water Monitoring Network (CWMN) or organize new field programs in your community or at your school to get involved.

What does a WatershedWatcher do?
As a NepRWA WatershedWatcher, you will be in the field collecting data on the health of the river. Some of the parameters that measure the health of the river are its:

Biological Properties: Fecal Coliform and E.Coli are bacteria that live in the intestinal tracts of animals and humans. High levels of these bacteria can render rivers and streams unsafe for swimming, boating, drinking or shellfishing.

Chemical Properties: The presence of sewage, fertilizers, animal wastes and home cleaning products all affect the chemical properties of the river, specifically its nutrient levels. High levels of nutrients can result in excess plant growth and low dissolved oxygen levels, which can cause fish kills and foul odors.

Physical Properties: Some of the important physical parameters to observe include the acidity of the water, the depth and flow of the water, the temperature of the water, and the amount of dirt, sand and other particles stirred up in the water. These physical parameters determine the ability of a stream or stretch of river to provide habitat for fish and other wildlife.

Macroinvertebrates: The presence of aquatic insect populations indicates water and habitat quality.

What kind of experience do I need?

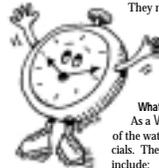
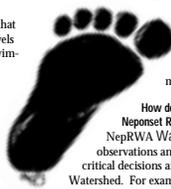
None. If you choose to become a CWMN volunteer, NepRWA staff will train you and provide a thorough Sampling Manual. NepRWA can provide suggestions, guidelines and some materials if you choose to organize a new field program in your community or at your school. For more information, visit www.neponset.org.

How much time do I need to commit?

CWMN volunteers need to dedicate 1 to 3 hours between 6 to 10 AM every other month. If you choose to organize a new field program, this time commitment will vary and is flexible.

How does a WatershedWatcher affect the Neponset River Watershed?

NepRWA WatershedWatchers, through their observations and the data they collect, can influence critical decisions affecting the health of the Neponset River Watershed. For example, one goal of the WatershedWatchers program is to use data collected to establish additional cold-water fisheries within the Neponset River Watershed. Once established as a cold-water fishery, stretches of stream will receive increased protection. Data collected by WatershedWatchers is critical to preserving existing habitats and restoring degraded habitats within the Neponset River Watershed.



Let Your Voice Be Heard...

...for a healthier Neponset River Watershed! Become a NepRWA WatershedAdvocate. NepRWA likes to consider our members the eyes and ears of the watershed; a vocal witness to things happening in all towns and communities that effect water quality and quantity, wildlife protection, land use, and development issues. We want all those voices to be heard by the people making decisions that will inevitably affect each and every one of us, and the local resources that surround us. Unfortunately, NepRWA's staff can't write every letter, make every phone call, or be at every local meeting.

They need your help! More voices equals more attention, and more attention is needed to protect open space, improve water quality, and initiate water conservation efforts on Beacon Hill, and at town Selectmen, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission meetings. The Watershed needs your voice!

What does a WatershedAdvocate do?

As a WatershedAdvocate, you will communicate the needs of the watershed to your local decision-makers and public officials. The activities involved in becoming a WatershedAdvocate include:

Letter-Writing: We give you the heads up, and you respond by writing letters to State and local politicians asking them to support an important issue affecting the watershed. You can also ask your friends and neighbors to write letters, too! This kind of action may only be required a few times a year, depending on when issues arise and how urgent they are.



Phone-Tree: We need people to alert their friends and neighbors about issues occurring in their communities and raise awareness so that as many people as possible have the opportunity to comment on issues and be involved in the decision-making process. Again, the amount of time required of you for this action depends on the number of issues that arise at any given time.

Meeting-Monitoring: There are meetings happening in your town all the time in which decisions are being made that will directly affect you and the health of your watershed. We need you to be NepRWA's eyes and ears at these meetings so that we can always stay informed about what is happening throughout the watershed. In most cases, there is one meeting a month held by each town's Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Board of Selectmen. All of the meetings are open to the public.

What kind of Experience do I need?

None. Just a desire to become actively involved in the future planning and protection of your community and all its resources!

How much time do I need to commit?

Anywhere from 5 minutes a year to 2 hours a month. It's up to you!

How does a WatershedAdvocate affect the Neponset River Watershed?

By advocating for such things as cleaner water and stronger open space protection, you can influence major initiatives within your community and across the state in a positive manner.

Lead the Charge...

...for a healthier Neponset River Watershed! Become a WatershedSteward. A WatershedSteward is someone who recognizes that simple everyday actions can have a huge impact on the health of the Neponset River Watershed. Each of us live within a watershed, in fact the small piece of property we live on is a mini-watershed in itself. By leading the charge within our communities and practicing basic stewardship techniques in our own homes and communities, we can all contribute to restoring the natural, chemical, and biological integrity of the Neponset River Watershed.

What does a WatershedSteward do?
A WatershedSteward is a resident or business owner who practices water conservation, a homeowner who maintains their septic system, a landscaper who minimizes using fertilizers or does not use them at all, a boy scout who stencils storm drains, or a citizen who organizes a river cleanup. A WatershedSteward can do many things, but most importantly, a WatershedSteward is someone who leads by example inspiring their neighbors to take the first step towards protecting their watershed.



What kind of experience do I need?

None. NepRWA has available on its website, www.neponset.org, resources for becoming a WatershedSteward, such as easy water conservation tips and guidelines for organizing a cleanup. All it takes is creativity, enthusiasm and commitment.

How much time do I need to commit?

The great thing about being a WatershedSteward is that most of the steps you can take are things that you do already, like maintaining your lawn, but now you are practicing good watershed stewardship by using less fertilizer for example. Organizing a cleanup is another example where the time commitment can be as big or as small as you decide.

How does a WatershedSteward affect the Neponset River Watershed?
Over 330,000 people live within the Neponset River Watershed. Our individual actions can have a huge impact on the health of the river and its surrounding lands. If all 330,000 of us took small steps each day to reduce the amount of Nonpoint source pollution draining into the river when rainfall rinses oil, litter, fertilizers, pet waste, sediment and herbicides into streams, we could positively impact the health of the river. These steps range from reducing the amount of fertilizer we place on our lawns to properly disposing of our pet's waste.



**Photos of a Changing River:
Lower Neponset River
1940's, '50's and '60's
Wednesday, November 20, 2002
7:00 PM
Strauss Library, Milton Academy
170 Center Street, Milton**

Call 781-575-0354 for directions
Coffee and dessert will be provided.

Suggested \$10 Donation
RSVP to 781-575-0354

Come share and discuss historic photos of the Neponset River with Mike Merrill from the MA Riverways Program.

Please bring any historic photos or newspaper clippings you may have of the Neponset's history to share.

Photos: by Barbier (1956) courtesy of the MDC Archives.

