

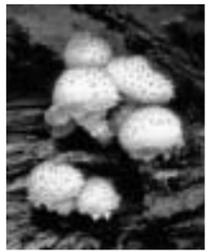
# News From the Neponset

A Publication of the Neponset River Watershed Association

July - August 2003

## Artists: Get Ready for River Art 2003

Attention all area artists, plans are underway for River Art 2003: Plein Air Art of the Neponset. Works must be submitted on September 14-16, 2002, and this year's exhibit opens September 28. River Art promotes the use, appreciation and preservation of the Neponset River, its lakes, streams, ponds and surrounding lands. The underlying guideline for the annual River Art exhibition is that artists must create their works on site, *plein air*, within the boundaries of the Neponset River Watershed. Works can be done anywhere within the 14 communities of the Neponset Watershed and do not have to be of the river or water. Detailed maps are available upon request from NepRWA.



River Art awards ribbons and prizes in four categories: Oil & Acrylic, Watercolor, Photography, and Various (mixed media, pastels, etc.). Prizes will include gift certificates from area art & photography retailers. The Call for Entries outlines all the details on how to submit your creation to the exhibition. If you would like to receive a Call for Entries, a map of the watershed or additional information, please call NepRWA at 781-575-0354 or visit [www.neponset.org](http://www.neponset.org).

## NepRWA Wins Critical Groundwater Protections for Walpole in Final Bird Estates Plan

After a permitting odyssey, spanning more than 8 years, Toll Brothers, a national developer, has cleared the final hurdles for its 197-lot subdivision on the shores of Bird Pond and the Neponset River in Walpole. The 200+ acre parcel was once owned by the Bird Family, which built an early industrial empire using water and waterpower from the Neponset.

This veritable development soap opera began with a land swap between the Toll Brothers and the Town of Walpole that gave Toll more house lots and the Town more soccer fields and access to Bird Pond. But after the swap, things spiraled out of control for the developer when both the Walpole Conservation Commission and Planning Board denied permit applications. From there, it got stranger and stranger, when the Conservation Commission reversed its own denial, and a land court judge overturned the Planning Board denial in a resounding defeat that ordered the Town to pay Toll Brothers' legal costs. With \$500,000 in legal fees hanging over its head, the Planning Board approved a revised (and improved) plan and the Conservation Commission revised its wetlands permit. Toll ultimately decided not to collect its legal fees from the Town.

NepRWA along with several other groups became involved during the late 1990's when we appealed the second Conservation Commission permit to the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The appeal was based on concerns over inaccurate wetland lines, failure to cluster houses in areas away from wetlands, the need to relocate roads that were too close to wetlands, and an inadequate stormwater/groundwater management system. DEP finally took up NepRWA's appeal late last fall after keeping it on hold for years as other appeals were sorted out.

Haggling amongst the DEP, the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board and the developer had resolved many of NepRWA's

original concerns over wetland protection. However, one problem area that had never been addressed was stormwater treatment and groundwater recharge—critical for protecting the purity of the river and keeping it flowing during dry weather.

Using donations provided by dozens of Walpole residents who responded generously to a special appeal for funding, NepRWA hired Geosyntec, an area engineering firm expert in the latest stormwater management techniques, to develop a menu of ways to bring the stormwater system up to par.

After intensive negotiations, Toll Brothers and NepRWA agreed on a series of measures including the installation of dry wells on all 197 lots to recharge groundwater, a ban on irrigation wells to keep water underground, and additional oversight of erosion controls to prevent silt from polluting the river during construction as happened severely at another development right on the other side of the river. In all, Toll committed to some \$650,000 in additional mitigation measures.

Ian Cooke, NepRWA's Executive Director, who helped negotiate the deal said, "I know some people in Walpole had hoped a large portion of this beautiful property could be saved as parkland, but there was no way to accomplish that unless the Town was prepared to step up and buy the land at top dollar." Cooke added, "The project is infinitely better than the original proposal. If we had been starting from scratch it could have been better still, but given all the 'history' behind this project, we were very pleased with the improvements Toll agreed to make. Once we showed them we were serious with bringing our engineer to the meeting, our discussions became much more constructive, even congenial." NepRWA would like to express a special thanks to all those members whose donations made this successful advocacy effort possible!

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water shed (b) - 1. the area draining into a particular body of water

## Neponset 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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Paigonia

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

You are invited to the...

## 1st Annual Pin Knockdown!

A gathering of NepRWA's knock out members!

Wednesday, August 20th at 6 pm at the Norwood Sports Center, 65 Cottage Street East in Norwood



Join us to celebrate while enjoying some old-fashioned candlepin bowling. Tickets are \$10/adult and \$6/kid and include pizza, soda, rental shoes and three strings of bowling. Don't miss this chance to meet other NepRWA members in a social and casual atmosphere.

Please reply by August 13th to Wendy at (781) 575-0354. For directions, call (781) 769-0606 or visit [www.neponset.org](http://www.neponset.org).



## NepRWA Creates Rain Garden to Demonstrate Outdoor Water Conservation

This spring, NepRWA has been focusing much of its resources on an issue that has grown increasingly significant within the watershed: **water quantity**. Most people think of NepRWA as a force in protecting water **quality** in the Neponset River and its tributaries, but as the past few summers have shown, we all have just as much reason to be concerned about the **quantity** of water in the river as well. Just as with water quality, actions we take as individuals and as members of a community have a direct effect on the amount of water in the Neponset River.

With funds from the **Massachusetts Watershed Initiative in collaboration with the Massachusetts Riverways Programs**, NepRWA has initiated a series of water conservation demonstration projects to spread the word about water quantity and instream flow in the Neponset and to educate watershed residents about how important and **easy** it is to reduce the amount of water we use in our homes and yards, and to combat the effects of paved and impervious surfaces which prevent water from soaking into the ground. By reducing the amount of water we use and the amount of rainwater lost to evaporation and runoff, we can increase the amount of water available to sustain wetland wildlife and fisheries.

One way to recharge rainwater back into the ground



rather than letting it runoff and be lost to the local drainage system is to create a **rain garden**. A rain garden is a simple, effective and attractive way that homeowners and developers can capture rainwater, which would otherwise be lost to runoff, and recharge it into the local groundwater supply, which in turn sustains flows in the river and tributaries in times of drought.

A rain garden is a beautiful garden of native flowers, shrubs, and grasses that is built in a small depression into which downspouts from nearby roofs are directed. A well-designed rain garden will capture rainwater running off the roof, and can even be designed to capture runoff from paved areas like driveways and sidewalks. The rain garden will hold water just long enough that it percolates into the soil. Because it gets frequent runoff, a rain garden needs no watering, and the use of

native plants helps attract birds, butterflies and other wildlife! Rain garden owners get the benefit of having an aesthetically valuable natural feature in their yard while recharging to the groundwater each year twenty to fifty thousand gallons or more of rainwater!

NepRWA received approval from the Canton Conservation Commission to create a model rain garden at Pequitside Farm, a town-owned property open to the public, in order to demonstrate how an attractive, landscaped feature of one's yard can be functional in recharging water back into the ground.

NepRWA's rain garden at Pequitside Farm was created with the insight and assistance of several key individuals and businesses. We would like to thank Wendy Ingram and **Gold Star Wholesale Nurseries (Lexington, MA)** for the contribution of over one hundred discounted plants, shrubs, and grasses that were utilized in the rain garden. We would also like to thank **Will Sand and Gravel (Canton, MA)** for the donation of compost and shale aggregate that is designed specifically for increased infiltration of water through the soil—an ideal product for all rain gardens.

The rain garden will be available for the public to visit and enjoy throughout the year at Pequitside Farm, 79 Pleasant Street in Canton. To learn how to design your own rain garden visit [www.neponset.org](http://www.neponset.org).

Some other web resources to learn more about rain gardens include:  
**Rain Gardens** by Karen Cozzetto. Conscience Choice, May 2001 [www.consciencechoice.com/enviro/raingardens1405.html](http://www.consciencechoice.com/enviro/raingardens1405.html)  
**Rain Gardens: Gardening with Water Quality in Mind** [www.mninter.net/~stack/rain/](http://www.mninter.net/~stack/rain/)

## I Was so Impressed with NepRWA that I Threw a Party!

By Mary Truslow

I was introduced to the Neponset River Watershed Association for the first time in August of 2001 after joining a group of Milton residents and nonprofit organizations working to save Forbes Woods from development. Forbes Woods is the 35+ acres of mature woods that sit behind the marsh on the Milton side of the Estuary. The Woods are home to two state champion trees, the largest Black Cherry and largest Black Oak in Massachusetts, and provide crucial upland wildlife habitat to more than 200 species of birds. Our efforts paid off, and today this area is protected. If the watershed association had not taken a leadership role in this grassroots effort, the outcome of our efforts might have been different.

I was so impressed with the dedication and leadership exhibited by NepRWA that over the past two years I have become increasingly more active in the organization and today serve on the Board of Directors. Recently, I decided to share my enthusiasm for the organization with my friends and neighbors by throwing NepRWA a party. My husband, Charlie, and I along with fellow NepRWA members hosted a "NepRWA House Party." We offered attendees food and drink for a nominal donation. The response was overwhelming – over forty people attended and we raised \$2,400!

A "NepRWA House Party" is the perfect way to gather NepRWA members, neighbors and friends together and to share with party attendees the amazing natural resources within the Neponset Watershed and the ways NepRWA has helped the Neponset run clean. Not only were we able to raise money and awareness about NepRWA and the great work that we have accomplished together, but we also had a great time! Two additional parties in Milton are planned for this fall and next spring. If you feel the same way about NepRWA as I do, I encourage you to throw NepRWA a "House Party" in your town. You can find out more information by calling NepRWA Outreach Coordinator Maggie Estlinbaum at 781-575-0354. You'll be glad you did!



## NepRWA's 1st Annual Fall Fest Saturday, October 4, 2003

Sharon Recreation Center  
Lake Massapoag, Sharon  
6:30pm-10:30pm  
Dinner, Live & Silent Auction, Dancing & Live Music

Enjoy an evening of food, drink and friends. Bid on exciting and unique raffle items. Try Contra Dancing, a type of simple folk dancing similar to square dancing. It is easy and fun and a professional caller will help us learn the steps. Bring your families and friends for a delightful evening and help raise money for the many important projects on the Neponset River including water quality testing, preserving special land areas and protecting water quantity. Tickets are \$35 per person or \$250 for a table of 8.

**How can you help?** Come to the event, invite your friends and spread the word! Donate a raffle item- anything from a gift certificate, sports tickets, a gift basket, vacation home or any creative item you can think of! Call NepRWA with your item or to order tickets 781-575-0354 or e-mail [estlinbaum@neponset.org](mailto:estlinbaum@neponset.org).

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**NepRWA would like to thank the following members and businesses who have contributed auction items to Fall Fest for their generous support:**

**Members:** Fran and John Carleton (A weekend at their summer house in Brewster); Tom Birmingham (A Game Boy); Gretje Ferguson (Family Portrait Session); Amy Killeen (Crib size quilt in water theme); Lea Paul (A wall quilt); Steven and Nancy Davis (Pumpkin Flower Arrangement, Indian Dream Catcher, 2 Tickets to Footlighters in Walpole); Kevin Schofield (Framed 3 Season Photos of Neponset); Mitt Launstein, artist (Framed watercolor painting of the Neponset River); Paul Launstein (A day of bird watching); Gall Martin (His & Her Neponset River Watershed Basket).

**Businesses:** Boston Professional Hockey Association (Boston Bruins Autographed Puck); Hilliards Candy (A Gift Certificate to Hilliards House of Candy); Jo Remillard, Interior Design Consultant (2 Hours of an Interior Design Consultation); Poirier's Appliances (\$200 Gift Certificate to Poirier's Appliances); Holiday Inn, Dedham (A weekend stay for two at the Holiday Inn Dedham including breakfast); The Vanderbilt Club (3 months individual membership to the Vanderbilt Club); Shaws (\$20 Gift Certificate); National Amusements (2 Passes to a film at a National Amusements theatre); Water Country (Water Country Passes); Children's Museum in Easton (6 Passes to the Children's Museum in Easton); The JFK Museum & Library (4 Admission Passes to the Museum at the John F. Kennedy Library); The Preservation Society of Newport County (4 Passes to the Newport Mansions); Roger Williams Park Zoo (A one year Family Membership to Roger Williams Park Zoo); Tweeter Center (2 Tickets To the Tweeter Center); Zoo New England (4 Passes to either Franklin Park or Stone Zoo); The Discovery Museums, Acton (4 Passes to the Discovery Museums); Jenny Nourse Photography (Photo Session); DeCordova Museum (Two Family Pass to DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park); Sky Restaurant (Complimentary brunch for four).

- NepRWA Rain Garden Plant List:**
- Osumunda regalis* "Royal fern"
  - Adiantum pedatum* "Maidenhair fern"
  - Lobelia cardinalis* "Cardinal flower"
  - Tiarella cordifolia* "Foam flower"
  - Dicentra eximia* "Bleeding heart"
  - Polygonatum falcatum* "Solomon's seal"
  - Asclepias tuberosa* "Butterfly weed"
  - Aquilegia canadensis* "Columbine"
  - Panicum Virginiana* "Heavy Metal Switch Grass"
  - Matteuccia Struthiopteris* "Ostrich fern"

- NepRWA Rain Garden Shrub List:**
- Clethra Alnifolia* "Hummingbird"
  - Cornus Sericea* "Baileys Red Twig Dogwood"
  - Vaccinium corymbosum* "Blue Bush Blueberry"
  - Ilex glabra compacta* "Inkberry"
  - Ilex verticillata* "Winterberry Jim Dandy"
  - Ilex verticillata* "Winterberry Red Sprite"
  - Leucothoe Fontanesia* "Gerard's Rainbow"