



Of Note

Become a Member

Join NepRWA if you aren't already a member, and help us get more done around the Watershed! 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 or request a membership application from Kristina at 781-575-0354 x301 or 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.

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

September - October 2008

Green Living Bonanza at the Sharon Energy/Water Fair



Demonstrating the flow of water and pollutants through the ground with a groundwater model.

On Sunday, September 21, the Sharon Energy Advisory Committee and Sharon Water Conservation Program hosted an Energy/Water Fair at Sharon High School. More than 500 people turned out to learn about energy and water conservation. They were greeted by folk musicians, hybrid vehicles, an electric car, and displays of energy-efficient doors and windows and a solar panel before entering the gymnasium to explore 35 additional booths. The school interior was abuzz with activity as people alternated between booths on water conservation, rainwater recovery systems, water-efficient clothes washers and dishwashers, recycling, insulation, alternative heating, and more. Children learned about wind power from MassAudubon Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, "e" inc. shed light on water conservation, and the Sharon Youth Robotics Association managed an environmental challenge. NepRWA Executive Director Ian Cooke and CWMN Assistant Laura Hallowell operated an interactive groundwater model, and NepRWA Board Member Peter Kane gave a well attended presentation on solar heating and solar electrical. There also were talks on geothermal solutions, low water use lawns, small wind power, and

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Through the Museum, Across the Field & into the Canoes!

Families spilled onto the treed grounds of the Forbes House Museum in Milton for the annual Fall Family Festival on the sunny afternoon of Saturday, September 20. The classic rock of local band Murphy's Kitchen flowed over the rolling lawn and into the street, and children and parents bopped to the beats while engaged at the arts and crafts tables. Families gathered around the NepRWA information booth for a demonstration of hydrology and the flow of pollutants through the watershed. Meanwhile, Prof. Wing-kai To presented on the history of Chinese-Americans in Boston, and local historian Anthony Sammarco led a tour of the historic Milton neighborhood. The Forbes House Museum also was open for touring. Phyllis Forbes Kerr signed copies of her new book *Cabin Boy*, and local environmental advocate, naturalist, author, photographer and NepRWA Board Member Tom Palmer led a nature walk through adjacent Governor Hutchinson's Field and down to the Neponset River. Throughout the afternoon, DCR employee Rob McArthur and NepRWA volunteers managed canoe rides along the Neponset River. NepRWA extends a heartfelt thank you to volunteers Chris and Karla Clifford, Kathy Sedor, Elise and Fred Brink, Taber Keally, Maura O'Gara and Rob McArthur of DCR for leading a variety of activities, from canoe rides to operating the groundwater model, to educating attendees about NepRWA. We were also glad to see Friends of the Neponset in attendance! NepRWA Volunteer Tammy Yost Fisher was spotted maneuvering a canoe on the Neponset just downstream of Baker Dam, and Volunteer Theresa Kirby and CWMN Volunteer Amy Waters and her family, among other individuals, stopped by the NepRWA booth. Join us next time! Learn about upcoming events at www.neponset.org/Events-NepRWA.htm.

Governor Vetoes \$12 Million for Lower Neponset Restoration



In late August 2008, Governor Deval Patrick vetoed \$12 million in the Environmental Bond Bill

that was earmarked for the Lower Neponset Restoration Project, which NepRWA and our legislative allies had worked all year to add to the Bond bill.

The Lower Neponset Restoration Project would clean up polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) that are poisoning fish in the lower freshwater portion of the river and the people who eat them. These PCBs are now flowing over the dams into the Neponset Estuary and as far as Dorchester Bay. The Restoration Project would also restore historic spawning runs of herring and shad for 17 miles up the Neponset by removing two obsolete, state-owned dams in Boston and Milton, or by providing fish access over or around them. Removing the dams also would create unimpeded canoeing from Walpole to the sea and go a long way toward restoring the health of the River.

We still have not been given a clear explanation for why the Governor vetoed this funding, but we did get the following reassurance from his

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NepRWA Discovers Oil Leak at DCR Dam

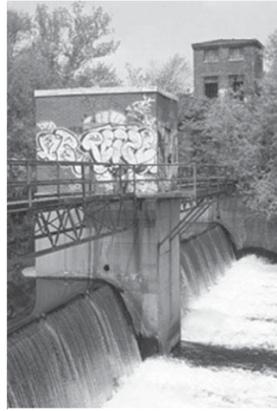


Photo. Credit: Tom Palmer

In late August, NepRWA staff were collecting samples from storm drain outfalls on the Neponset River in Hyde Park, when they discovered an entirely different kind of problem: an oil spill. NepRWA immediately contacted the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), who called in the Milton and Boston Fire Departments.

The source of the spill was quickly traced back to the State-owned Tileston and Hollingsworth Dam, one of two

dams on the river which NepRWA would like to have removed so that herring and shad runs can return. It turned out that the spill was caused by hydraulic fluid leaking from the dam. The MA Department of Conservation & Recreation called in a private cleanup company to contain the situation.

Any time that you see more than a small, stray amount of oil in a stream, please call DEP or your local fire department. You can also call NepRWA during business hours and we will follow-up with the appropriate authorities, 781-575-0354.

NepRWA and Hyde Park Citizens Appeal Stop & Shop Permit

Many watershed residents know the Stop & Shop grocery store located on Truman Parkway in Hyde Park. The store was built some 30 years ago, on a filled section of Neponset River floodplain. The store was sited directly on the riverbank, with no stormwater controls and with pavement a mere five feet from the water's edge in some spots. Furthermore, the site has been the source of consistent concerns about dumping, litter and snow management over the years.

In August, Stop & Shop presented to the Boston Conservation Commission their proposal to demolish and redevelop the existing stores. NepRWA reviewed the plans and found that they did not meet state requirements for cleaning up polluted stormwater, and that severe problems with stream bank erosion were left unaddressed. Much to NepRWA's dismay, the Boston Conservation Commission voted to approve the permit application in spite of these deficiencies.

NepRWA then initiated discussions directly with Stop & Shop to outline our concerns and suggest improvements. While Stop & Shop did agree to some improvements, we were unable to reach an enforceable agreement that fully supported the requirements of the Wetlands Protection Act. Reluctantly, NepRWA has therefore decided to file an appeal of the Stop & Shop permit with the MA Department of Environmental Protection, in conjunction with a "10-citizens group" from Hyde Park.

For more information, contact NepRWA Advocacy Director Steve Pearlman at 781-575-0354 x304 or pearlman@neponset.org.

\$12 Million Vetoed for Lower Neponset Restoration, from page 1

Undersecretary for Environment, Phil Griffiths:

I understand your disappointment with the veto, but I assure you that the Patrick Administration is supportive of restoration of the Lower Neponset River. The Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Department of Environmental Protection are actively participating with NepRWA, the City of Boston and others on the Citizens Advisory Committee that is evaluating a range of restoration options for the river. We look forward to the results of that process, and pledge to give full consideration to the recommendations that come out of that process. At that time, we will explore all of the federal and state funding sources that might be appropriate for the project.

Despite this reassurance, Bond funding is likely to be critical to this project. There is other money in the Environmental Bond that could be spent on the Lower Neponset project, but it's not specifically earmarked as we had hoped. We have therefore let Governor Patrick know of our disappointment with his veto.

To make sure that message gets through, we urge you to contact the Governor as well to express your disappointment, and ask for his help on moving this important project forward. It's not necessary to give the Governor an elaborate explanation of the project, though of course you may wish to do so. To contact the Governor:

Phoning is the most effective method of getting your message across. Call 617-725-4005 and ask to speak with a Constituent Services Aide.

Write: Office of the Governor, State House, Room 360, Boston, MA 02133

Fax: 617-727-3666

Email: To send an email, go to "mass.gov/governor," then scroll to the very bottom of the page and click on "Contact Us." You must send your email from that page.

Thank you for helping us to keep this important river restoration project on track!

Contact NepRWA Advocacy Director Steve Pearlman at 781-575-0354 x304 or pearlman@neponset.org, for more information.



The Purple Curtain Closes on Field Season '08

An early September site-monitoring session closed the first summer field season of a five-year Purple loosestrife biocontrol project being implemented by NepRWA and the MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation.



Volunteer Elizabeth Redlich searches for a healthy Purple loosestrife plant into which she will place the beetle-covered lid of a bucket of biocontrol beetles.

Purple loosestrife-specific *Galerucella* beetles are being released in the wetlands of Fowl Meadow and Brookwood Farm to reduce populations of the exotic, invasive Purple loosestrife plant. The targeted feeding of the beetles will lessen the dominance of this plant and improve wetland function and wildlife habitat.

The first field season kicked off with the scouting out of treatment sites, the installation and surveying of study plots, and six weeks of beetle releases (a total of 80,000 *Galerucella* beetles were released), followed by site-monitoring sessions.

The CZM-Wetlands Restoration Program is providing guidance for this project, and a strong corps of volunteers is providing hands-on assistance. The NRCS Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, the DCR Partnerships Matching Funds Program, and the NLT Foundation are helping to fund this project.

NepRWA would like to thank the following individuals for their volunteer assistance during Field Season '08: Arnaa Alcon, Matt Bingham, Linda Eyster, Chuck Glenn, Dawn Glenn and Rick, Theresa Kirby, Martha McDonough, Maura O'Gara and her daughters and their friends, Tom and Nathan Palmer, Susan and Elizabeth Redlich, Andrea Stuart, Emily Tran, and Mike Traynor. NepRWA would also like to thank DCR for its assistance, and especially DCR Assistant Forester Ale Echandi and DCR employees Jim Rusconi and Jake Vogenberg, among other DCR staff, for their hard work this past spring and summer.

Field Season '09 will begin with beetle-ranching activities in the early spring. For information about volunteer opportunities, see the "Get Active with NepRWA" column above or visit www.neponset.org, then click on "Get Involved," and select "Volunteer." Or, contact Restoration Manager Carly Rocklen at 781-575-0354 x303 or rocklen@neponset.org. For more information on the project, visit www.neponset.org and click on "Restoring Wetlands."

Get Active with NepRWA

Calling All Gardeners

NepRWA seeks volunteers to help maintain the rain garden at Pequitside Farm in Canton. Learn more by contacting Laura Hallowell at 781-575-0354 x300 or hallowell@neponset.org. Read about the rain garden at www.neponset.org/raingarden.htm.

Be a Beetle-Rancher!

NepRWA seeks volunteers to help with beetle-ranching. This is a great hands-on opportunity for families, individuals, school groups, civic associations, environmental clubs, Scouts, religious organizations and more to help restore local wetlands. Learn more at www.neponset.org, by clicking on "Volunteer," or contact Restoration Manager Carly Rocklen at 781-575-0354 x303 or rocklen@neponset.org. For more information about the Purple loosestrife biocontrol project, visit www.neponset.org and click "Restoring Wetlands."

Sharon Energy/Water Fair, from page 1

green cleaning options. NepRWA Water Conservation Coordinator Nancy Fyler offers special thanks to event volunteer Laura Hallowell and to NepRWA Board Member Rory McGregor who assisted with set-up and helped manage the Sharon Water Conservation table. Learn more about the Sharon Energy/Water Fair by contacting Nancy Fyler at 781-575-0354 x307 or fyler@neponset.org, or by visiting www.sharonwater.com/ef/SharonEnergyFair.htm.

NepRWA Receives Grant to Study Sources of PCBs in the Neponset River



In September, NepRWA received a \$10,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to review studies of possible PCB sources on the Neponset River and its tributaries in Hyde Park. PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) are toxic substances that have been found in the

water, sediments and fish of the Neponset River in Boston and Milton. Most of the grant money will go to a licensed hazardous waste site professional who will perform the actual review. NepRWA will hold quarterly meetings in Hyde Park to explain the study, its progress, and its results to the public. For more information, contact Advocacy Director Steve Pearlman at 781-575-0354 x304 or pearlman@neponset.org.