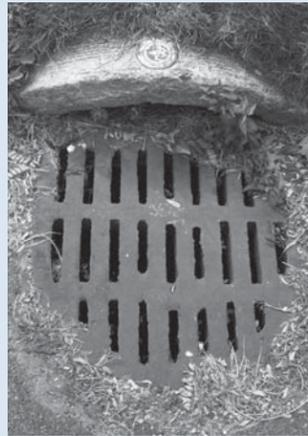


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## New Rules for Towns on Polluted Runoff: Oct. 18 Workshop Kicks Off Program to Help Neponset Towns Better Protect Our Water

Rain water that runs off of dirty streets and parking lots is the leading cause of water pollution in Massachusetts. Strict new federal rules for town-owned storm drains are coming soon, though, and the Neponset Watershed Association is ready to help our towns comply. To kick off the effort, the Watershed Association is the local sponsor of a Stormwater Management Training Seminar for town officials on October 18, from 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM at the Westwood Town Offices, 50 Carby St. For more information or to attend, RSVP to Steve Pearlman at: 781-575-0354 x304 or [pearlman@neponset.org](mailto:pearlman@neponset.org).



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2173 Washington Street, Canton, MA 02021



## Become a Member! Triple Your Donation

Become a first-time member or renew your lapsed membership before year-end, and a generous donor will TRIPLE your gift!

That's right, a gift of \$50 from a new or lapsed member is worth \$150 for the river, if we receive it this fall!

There also never has been a better time to introduce us to your family and friends. Their support will help us make the most of this unique challenge grant.

Join at [www.neponset.org](http://www.neponset.org) today!



October-November 2011

# Neponset News

Protecting Our Water From Headwaters to Harbor

## Restoring Streamflows with **WATER CONSERVATION**



*Water Conservation Coordinator Nancy Fyler teaches Sharon students about water conservation & the water cycle.  
Photo by Ann-Marie Ford.*

### As Debate Drags on, Water Conservation Can Save Money & Help Rivers, Now

Almost 160,000 people get a portion of their drinking water from underground aquifers connected to the Neponset River or its tributaries. Water supply is one of the Neponset's most important and economically valuable natural resource functions.

However, here and in a number of other watersheds across the state, the levels of water withdrawals allowed by state regulators have left too little water in our rivers to sustain populations of fish and aquatic life. For more than 15 years, the Neponset Watershed Association

and other watershed groups have been pressing State policy makers to reduce permitted water withdrawal levels and address the related problems of water that leaks into aging sewers or runs off of paved surfaces.

It has been a very contentious debate over the years, and faced with resistance from local water suppliers, the State has been extremely reluctant to do what their scientists say is necessary to protect rivers.

**Going local.** Frustrated by state inaction, the Watershed Association has been going directly to our water suppliers to help initiate meaningful water conservation programs that can blunt the impact of water supply activities on the health of the Neponset.

*Continued, page 3*

## Long Awaited Pedestrian & Bicycle Trails Expanding in Mattapan, Milton and Quincy

Since the early 1970s, the Watershed Association, the DCR and numerous community groups have been working to create a greenway trail along the Neponset in Dorchester, Mattapan, Hyde Park and Milton. The vision is to connect Boston Harbor to the Blue Hills. A long stretch of that trail—from Pope John Paul II Park in Dorchester to Central Avenue in Milton—has been in place for several years, and a key

new section from Mattapan Square to Hyde Park has just been added.

The missing link has been the area from Central Avenue in Milton to Mattapan Square. This section has been dogged by controversy, but after many years of planning and negotiation, the DCR has just announced a plan that seems acceptable to all the affected neighborhood

*Continued, page 3*



*Neponset Watershed Association Advocacy Director Steve Pearlman surveys a soon to be built trail along the river in Quincy.*



### Neponset River Watershed Association

The Watershed Association is a nonprofit conservation group founded in 1967 to protect and restore the Neponset River, its tributaries and watershed lands.

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## Director's Corner

### Focus on Partnering

We hope you enjoy this first edition of our redesigned Neponset News, and we hope you'll agree that our updated logo, newsletter and (soon) website help better convey who we are and what we do!

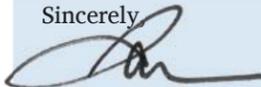
In this issue you may notice a theme of partnering—working with towns to reduce water demand, with a local company and the state to open up the river to the public, with the City of Boston and some hard-working volunteers to clean up a neglected corner of the river.

Partnering to leverage shared resources and expertise is one of our key strategies for getting things done. Our goal is to bring people together—be they volunteers, local officials, state regulators or local landowners—to focus on a problem and get something done about it.

Ironically, it is often the funding needed to cultivate and create those partnerships that is hardest to find. Government and private grant makers usually want to support the tangible results of those partnerships, not the hard work of forming them.

That's one reason why the generous support of our members, volunteers and Board Members is so important. You keep the work moving forward, particularly during times like these when grants are few and far between.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,  
  
Ian Cooke  
Executive Director

## A Neponset Cleanup Day in Hyde Park: Neponset Watershed Association & Boston Conservation Commission Team Up

Saturday morning, September 17, dawned sunny and cool. Volunteers streamed in to join the river cleanup along the pedestrian bridge over the Neponset River, between B St. and Easton Ave. in Hyde Park. People arrived with rope, gaffs, canoes and kayaks, wheelbarrows, grappling hooks, shovels, hand-saws, pruners, and a winch.

Our goal for the morning was to remove the debris—shopping carts, bikes, broken furniture, and wood—that had accumulated against and between the bridge supports. We aimed to make the river safer for boaters and wildlife, and a more attractive place overall.



Michaela and Rayne O'Gara-Pratt carry an excavated shopping cart over to the parking lot for pick-up by DCR.

This being a challenging spot for a cleanup—with steep river banks, blocked access, and high water—we decided to launch a few boats from the Martini Shell Park, just upstream of the cleanup site. The boaters then would paddle back downstream to the



Watershed Association Board Member Taber Keally hooks a shopping cart with a grappling hook handmade by volunteer Kris Armando.

pedestrian bridge to help volunteers on the bridge to hook submerged shopping carts and debris and heave them out of the water with ropes from above. Ultimately, we removed 15 shopping carts and other debris from around the bridge supports. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation then picked up and disposed of these materials.

The cleanup was organized in response to concerns raised about this problem area by Hyde Park residents during a Lower Neponset River Citizens Advisory Committee meeting, and a follow-up phone call from Chris Busch of the Boston Conservation Commission to Watershed Association Outreach Director Carly Rocklen. Chris and Carly teamed up to organize the September cleanup.

View river cleanup pictures at: [flickr.com/photos/neprwa](http://flickr.com/photos/neprwa).

Learn about upcoming events: [neponset.org/EMailList.htm](http://neponset.org/EMailList.htm).

Thanks to all for your help!

## Volunteer Spotlight: Walpole High School Junior & Neponset Volunteer Finds 11 Species

Long-time Citizen Water Monitoring Network (CWMN) water sampler Sean Burchesky, now a junior at Walpole High School, recently finished a survey of the fish inhabiting 220-acre Willett Pond, one of the largest ponds in the Watershed.

Using nets, lines, and an underwater TV camera, Sean scoured the pond in the summer of 2010 and documented his finds with photos and measurements. He caught American eels, Brown bullheads, Black crappies, Yellow perch, and Chain pickerel. The non-breeding Brook trout stocked annually by the North Walpole Fish and Game Club didn't escape his notice, nor did two species—Banded killifish and Swamp darter—that were not found by state fisheries biologists who surveyed Willett in 2002.

Sean is the son of Doug and Jane Burchesky of Walpole, and has lived on Willett all his life. He has an analytic turn of mind, and what surprised him most about his findings was how closely Willett's fish, despite their various shapes and sizes, adhered to an exponential curve linking length and mass. You can find this curve on page 7 of his report, which we have posted at [www.neponset.org/Willett%20Pond/FishSurvey2010.pdf](http://www.neponset.org/Willett%20Pond/FishSurvey2010.pdf). Our thanks to Sean, who undertook the survey on his own initiative, and released all 150 fish he caught.



Watershed Association President Christine Grady and Volunteer Sean Burchesky clean up the dam at Willett Pond. Photo by Thomas Palmer.

### Trail Expansion

Continued from page 1

groups. The route will run along the Milton side of the river and cross to Ryan Playground in Mattapan on a new pedestrian bridge, making the most of river views. The project now moves on to permitting and hopefully will proceed to construction within just a few years.

Across the river in Quincy, we have been leading efforts to open up the waterfront to the public since 2002—a difficult feat, since most of the land is privately owned. Nevertheless, two Quincy RiverWalk segments are now open, and, after being stalled in litigation for years, construction of a key link at Two Hancock Street is slated to get underway this fall.

Further downstream, we have been working with Boston Scientific to fill another missing link in Quincy: the leg from Squantum Point Park to the existing Boston Sci. trail. Over the last few months, final designs have been completed, access arrangements worked out and permits obtained. In early October, the Association applied for a federal grant that would allow construction to get underway next summer.

### Water Conservation

Continued from page 1

The first phase of our water conservation initiative has been to partner with towns to obtain seed grants from the state to create town-wide water conservation programs, and where needed, to help implement outreach and education campaigns.

As of September, we have worked with Sharon, Walpole, Milton, Canton and Stoughton. Water customers have responded enthusiastically, and in Sharon, where we have been working the longest, water demand has dropped by 20%, and the program is more than paying for itself.

But these efforts face some challenges to their continued success. Three of our water-supplying communities still don't have robust water conservation programs. Another

town substantially scaled back its conservation efforts once the initial grant funds ran out, and it remains to be seen whether the communities that currently have grant-funded programs will decide to continue once the grant funds are gone. Further complicating matters, the state has discontinued its water conservation grant program.

The next phase of our efforts will require working directly with local elected officials to make the case for continued investments. We think it is a compelling case, because conservation saves money for both ratepayers and water suppliers. It's the kind of painstaking town-by-town work that is at the heart of what we do, and which is made possible almost exclusively by member donations.