

Calendar of Events March-June

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Unless otherwise noted, please RSVP by emailing fyler@neponset.org or by calling 781-575-0354 x307.

“DamNation” Movie and Discussion
Monday, March 23 at 6:30pm
Boston Public Library, Adams St. Branch
690 Adams Street, Dorchester, MA

Join NepRWA at an encore presentation of “DamNation”, a powerful film odyssey across America that explores the sea change in our national attitude from pride in big dams as engineering wonders to the growing awareness that our own future is bound to the life and health of our rivers. Note this film may not be appropriate for younger children.

This is a free event. Light refreshments will be served. Discussion will be led by NepRWA Executive Director, Ian Cooke.

Learn more about the film by visiting www.damnationfilm.com

Earth Day 2015: Living in the Neponset River Watershed
Wednesday, April 22 at 7:00pm
Morrill Memorial Library, 33 Walpole Street, Norwood

Let’s talk about building rain gardens, harvesting rain water, redirecting downspouts, monitoring water quality, and other ways we can steward our watershed. Discussion led by NepRWA Environmental Engineer, Sarah Bounty

This is a free event. Light refreshments. Co-sponsored with TogetherYes of Norwood.

Please sign up at the Library Reference or Information Desk or call the library at (781) 769-0200, x110 or 222.

Quincy RiverWalk Clean-up
Saturday, April 25, 9am-noon
Neponset Landing Pier
2 Hancock Street, Quincy

Calling all volunteers! Join NepRWA staff and DCR, as we take part in DCR Park Serve Day and help to maintain the RiverWalk. We’ll meet at the Neponset Landing Pier, and will spread out from there to help clear trash, and beautify the area, from Adams Inn to Squantum Point.

Wear clothes that you don’t mind getting dirty, along with appropriate footwear. Don’t forget hats, work gloves, sunscreen, and water.

Park under the Neponset Bridge, between the Adams Inn and Neponset Landing Apartments.

RSVP required.

Birding Walk at Fowl Meadow
Saturday, May 2nd from 7-10am
Fowl Meadow, Milton
Rain date - Sun., May 3

Join NepRWA Board Member, Les Tyralla for a birding walk through Fowl Meadow. In early May, this will be a “birdy” location, due to the near-peak of the spring migration and the habitat. Dress appropriately – and remember your binoculars and bird books.

Plan to meet at the small parking lot (can park on the grassy shoulder) on Brush Hill Road at the intersection with the Neponset Valley Parkway. There is a canoe launch point here next to the stone arch/Paul’s Bridge over the Neponset River on the Readville/Milton line.)

We will walk a mile or two on flat, possibly muddy paths near the river. The habitat is floodplain / swamp.

This walk is limited to 15 people. RSVP required.

NepRWA Annual Meeting
June 9 at 6:30pm
Curry College, Milton

This year, our guest speaker will be noted children’s author, illustrator, film maker, and environmental lecturer, Lynne Cherry.

Lynne has written and/or illustrated over thirty award-winning books for children. Her best-selling books such as The Great Kapok Tree and A River Ran Wild have sold over a million copies and are translated into many languages. She is also the producer and director of the Young Voices for the Planet movie series.

Tickets for the Annual Meeting will be available at the beginning of May.

Get Involved!

We offer a range of volunteer options—from working one-on-one with staff, to collaborating with a team of volunteers, to working in the field, or in the office. Call us at 781-575-0354 to learn more.

Stay informed! Keep up to date by subscribing to our e-newsletter. Simply click the link in the upper right hand corner of any web page at www.neponset.org.



Spring 2015

Neponset News

Protecting Our Water, Wildlife and Land

Safeguarding our Streams from Stormwater

Coming off a very successful first year, the Neponset Stormwater Partnership is gearing up for 2015. The Partnership is an effort to help towns save money and improve the effectiveness of their stormwater programs by working together on a regional basis.

The Partnership was spearheaded by the Watershed Association and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and included 11 of the Neponset’s 14 communities in its first year.

We have a large infrastructure dedicated to purifying drinking water and sewage, but polluted stormwater runoff has always been the Rodney

We all have a role to play in keeping our waterways clean for future generations.

Dangerfield of water infrastructure (it gets no respect). Rather than treat our stormwater, and remove the pollution that gets picked up when rain falls on pavement and other hard surfaces, most stormwater just gets delivered straight to the nearest stream.

During its first year, the Neponset Stormwater Partnership made significant headway on the list of items required in a strict new municipal stormwater permit



Dog waste is a major source of polluted runoff. Remember to always pick up after your pet, and dispose of the waste in the trash.

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

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p 781-575-0354

staff@neponset.org
www.neponset.org

Staff:
Ian Cooke, Executive Director
Sarah Bounty, Environmental Engineer
Nancy Fyler, Outreach Director

Kristina LaFrance, Office Manager
Dee Mullen, Development Director
Tom Palmer, Willett Pond Manager
Steve Pearlman, Advocacy Director

Board Members:

David Biggers, Elisa Birdseye, David Brookfield, Theresa Dolan, Christine Grady, Jim Green, Ardis Johnston, Peter Kane, Taber Keally, Paul Lauenstein, Martha McDonough, Rory McGregor, Richard O’Mara, Les Tyralla

Officers:

Brendan McLaughlin, President
Maura O’Gara, Vice-President
William Wiseman, Treasurer
Jerry Hopcroft, Secretary

Benefactors: Analog Devices,

Boston Water & Sewer Commission,
Brookfield Engineering, CHT Foundation,
Copeland Family Foundation,
Hollingsworth & Vose, Kraft Group/New
England Patriots, Walpole Cooperative Bank

Patrons:

Bank of Canton, Boston Scientific, Poirier
Sales and Service, VJ Properties

Sponsors:

Cedar Grove Gardens, Dedham
Savings, Toll Brothers, Voya Financial

Corporate Members:

Columbia Gas,
Melissa Gilroy, CPA

Soak up the Rain Campaign Being Piloted in Westwood

While most of our thoughts have been on snow, our Environmental Engineer, Sarah Bounty, has been busy working on a project to “Soak up the Rain” in Westwood. Thanks to a grant from MassDEP, Sarah is visiting private homeowners, businesses, and even with students at Xaverian Brothers High School, who want to help cleanup polluted runoff near their property.



She is encouraging them to consider simple projects like rain gardens, rain barrels, and downspout redirection that help keep polluted stormwater runoff from reaching our streams and rivers.

Working together, we can prevent pollution of local waterways, reduce flooding, protect water resources, and beautify neighborhoods. During this pilot project, Sarah is available to visit interested property owners and offer free technical assistance on how they can help. She is also looking for three sites to serve as demonstration projects to help educate others.

To find out more about how you can participate, please contact Sarah at bounty@neponset.org or 781-575-0354 x302.



Director's Corner

The Benefits of Snow

If a dump truck full of snow falls in the harbor and no one tests it, does the harbor get polluted?

Ironically, the problem of stormwater runoff has probably gotten more free publicity this winter than ever before, as cities and towns struggle to find places to put snow laden with salt, trash, and other pollutants scraped off our roadways. Unfortunately, the word “stormwater” has never been mentioned.

The Neponset has shouldered its share of the snow burden, as towns create snow farms around the watershed, and with one of Boston's farms discharging snow melter effluent to Mother Brook. The upside for the river will hopefully be better than average groundwater recharge this winter.

Looking ahead to 2015, stormwater will continue to be near the top of the Watershed Association's priority list, along with water conservation, restoring herring and trout habitats, and introducing more people to the beauty of their local river and the ways they can help protect it.

Thank you for supporting a healthy Neponset. Because of your volunteer efforts, advocacy and generosity, the Neponset is cleaner, more accessible and more filled with wildlife than it has been in decades.

I hope you'll make some time to get out and enjoy it with your own family this season. Our Outreach Committee has great outings and volunteer activities waiting for you.

Sincerely,

Ian Cooke
Executive Director

Keeping our waterways clean

Continued from page 1

expected from EPA. A few of the highlights included:

- Creating outreach materials for key target audiences and a new regional education web site www.neponsetstormwater.org
- Evaluating local bylaws in every community to identify needed updates and potential improvements
- Beginning the analysis towns must do to meet requirements for eliminating sewer to storm drain cross-connections
- Exploring innovative approaches to funding required upgrades such as stormwater utilities.



This first year's work was made possible by a Community Innovation Challenge Grant from the state, a grant program that has unfortunately fallen victim to the state's budget woes. But we have organized alternative funding that will allow the communities to continue working together during 2015, albeit with a more limited work plan.

In 2015, the Partnership will continue to focus on getting our communities ready to meet the new EPA requirements which are expected to take effect in 2016.

The communities participating for 2015 include: Canton, Dedham, Foxboro, Medfield, Milton, Sharon, Stoughton and Westwood.

To learn more about the program, and about stormwater, in general, go to: www.neponsetstormwater.org

Help prevent polluted stormwater runoff around your home.

Taking simple steps to protect our water can reduce the amount of tax payer money needed to clean up polluted runoff. Act today to keep pollution off of our streets—and out of our water!

Pick up after your dog.

Pet waste carries high levels of harmful E. coli bacteria. Always carry a plastic bag with you when you walk your dog, and dispose of pet waste in a trash can.

Dispose of household chemicals properly.

Be careful to avoid spilling oil, gasoline, antifreeze, and paint on paved areas or onto soil—and never pour anything in a storm drain.

Clean up leaks and spills.

Use an absorbent such as kitty litter or sand. Sweep up immediately and properly dispose.

Use lawn chemicals sparingly.

Avoid spreading fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides on paved areas, and sweep up any spills. Never use more than the directions call for, and choose organic and phosphate-free fertilizers.

Wash your car near the lawn.

When washing your car, park it in a spot where the soap will run off into grass, rather than going into the street and down the storm drain.

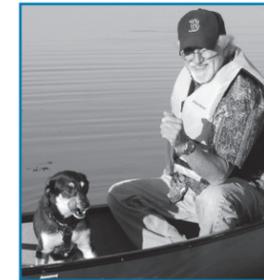
Put yard waste in its place.

Don't pile grass clippings, leaves, or other yard waste in streams or wetlands, and keep yard waste from being washed into storm drains. Consider starting a compost pile in your yard.

Soak up the rain. Redirect downspouts away from pavement and into grassy areas, shrubs, rain gardens, or rain barrels. This makes great use of rainwater and prevents it from running into storm drains.

Saying Goodbye—and Hello! Steve Pearlman, Advocacy Director Retiring in June

Steve Pearlman joined NepRWA as Advocacy Director in the spring of 2004. One of his first tasks was to comment to EPA on reports filed by our watershed towns, which explained what they were doing to reduce stormwater runoff. Steve wasn't impressed with the towns' actions, and didn't hesitate to let them know about it, creating a somewhat precarious relationship.



Not long after these comments, Steve and NepRWA began working alongside local officials to help them better comply with clean water rules—and today Steve is working very closely with ten towns to evaluate and update their stormwater bylaws. Local officials are now very appreciative of NepRWA's input, and our relationship with our towns has never been better.

Steve also spent many years working to create a pedestrian walkway along the Neponset in Quincy, and his dedication finally paid off when the **Quincy RiverWalk** was officially opened to the public in September of 2014.

Steve—and his lovable dog, Brady—will certainly be missed when he retires in June. Steve and Brady are usually the first ones to arrive at the office, and Steve always makes sure to loudly announce, “lunch time” promptly at noon. He regales us with stories of his travels to New Orleans and New Mexico, and loves to talk about sports, especially the Red Sox. We are grateful to him as an employee and friend, and we wish him a happy retirement, full of adventure and good food.



What Comes Around Less Often Than a Swarm of Cicadas?

It's a man-made rather than natural phenomenon that only rolls around once every 20 years, and it has long-term implications for the health of the Neponset. We are referring to the renewal of all of the water withdrawal permits in the Neponset River Watershed, which begins on **April 25**.

After five years of intensive advocacy on our part, the Patrick Administration issued new regulations under the **Water Management Act** in late 2014, and those rules will now be implemented by the Baker Administration.

The Neponset is one of the first watersheds where the new 20-year permits will be issued under the updated rules, and NepRWA is gearing up to be involved in the permitting for each of our towns that withdraws water.

One of the biggest impacts on our river's health is the

Welcome, Dee Mullen, Development Director



The NepRWA staff has grown by one, with Dee Mullen joining NepRWA's team as part-time Director of Development. Dee, who brings a wealth of experience with her from posts at a variety of nonprofits, will help NepRWA raise its profile in the community and engage new members, volunteers and donors.

Dee currently serves on the board of Hopa Mountain in Bozeman, Montana and volunteers on the development committee at the Loring Greenough House in Jamaica Plain.

Dee can be reached at mullen@neponset.org or 781-575-0354 x303.

Seeking a few Great Volunteers!

It takes the generosity of dedicated volunteers to monitor water quality around the Neponset River Watershed.

Each year, roughly 50 people take part in the Citizen's Water Monitoring Network Program (CWMN), which helps the Watershed Association to monitor the river and prioritize clean-up and restoration efforts.

This year we need people to **collect water samples, monitor drop off sites, make deliveries to the lab, help with data management, and dozens of other tasks.**

Our sampling events are once a month, from May thru October. If you think you can lend a hand, please contact Sarah Bounty at bounty@neponset.org or 781-575-0354 x302

14 million gallons of *daily* authorized water withdrawals. As you would imagine, the diverted water is used for many indoor and outdoor activities, with about **160,000 people** getting some or all of their drinking water from aquifers connected to the river. One result of the withdrawals is much lower stream flows throughout the watershed in the summer months, with impacts on water quality, recreation and the river's ecological health.

We have already been working closely—and very successfully—with communities to help them reduce their impacts through pro-active water conservation programs. During the permitting process, we will work with our communities to further raise the bar on water efficiency, and explore other ways to reduce impacts such as “optimizing” the use of different water sources and strategic use of water imported from the Mass Water Resources Authority.