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Calling all Volunteers!

Do you love the outdoors? Are you looking to help out in your community? Then we have the volunteer opportunity for you! The Watershed Association is looking for water testing volunteers to help with our Citizen's Water Monitoring Network Program (CWMN).

We need people to collect samples, monitor the drop off sites, deliver things to the lab, help with data management, and dozens of other tasks.

If you think you can lend a hand, please contact Sarah Bounty for more information at bounty@neponset.org.



Our first sampling event will be in late May this year and the program runs through October. Chest waders are optional!



Are You Out of the Loop?

Our newsletter is short and sweet twice a year (three times if you count our annual report), but there's a lot more news than fits in the newsletter.

Be in the know and part of the conversation! Subscribe to our e-newsletter by clicking the link in the upper right hand corner of any page at www.neponset.org.

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Spring 2014

Neponset News

Protecting Our Water, Wildlife and Land

A New Approach to Stormwater

Stormwater is created when rain falls on pavement, picks up pollutants and gets piped directly to the nearest stream. It's not only a pollution problem, but also causes flooding as large volumes rush off, and contributes to streamflow problems by blocking rain from soaking into the soil to replenish groundwater supplies. Stormwater is also the main focus of the Watershed Association's effort to stop water pollution.

This spring, those efforts will enter a new phase as we launch a new regional stormwater collaborative involving 12 of the 14 towns in the watershed, along with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). The project brings together a number of towns that have been working with us for several years, and adds four new communities

Stormwater, also known as polluted runoff, is the single largest threat to our river, lakes, streams and wetlands.

that are partnering with us for the first time. The communities include: Boston, Canton, Dedham, Foxborough, Medfield, Milton, Norwood, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole and Westwood.

The partners will be working together on how to most effectively and efficiently implement the requirements of much more stringent stormwater rules, which are coming from the US EPA. While the rules will greatly reduce water pollution, they also pose a tremendous



Fertilizers, gasoline, oil, and dog waste get washed into storm drains, and create polluted runoff, also known as "stormwater."

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An Alliance to Conserve Water

Almost 160,000 people get drinking water from sources associated with the Neponset River Watershed, and very little ever finds its way back. That's why issues of water quantity or "streamflow" have been high on the Watershed Association's radar for a number of years.

Our streamflow efforts have included advocacy to strengthen state regulatory protections for rivers, providing technical assistance to our communities, and perhaps most significantly, helping communities to set up and operate water conservation programs.

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Neponset River Watershed Association

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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Director's Corner

On Partnership and Persistence

This edition of "News From the Neponset" will have more than 100 new readers! That's because our New Member Challenge exceeded our wildest expectations.

Thank you to everyone who joined. We hope to get to know you better and build a long term relationship over the coming year. Member support and energy is at the heart of everything we do, and we are grateful to have you as a partner.

An equally enthusiastic thank you to the long-time members and Board Members who introduced us to so many new friends. The river and watershed are lucky to have dedicated advocates like you in their corner.

The theme of "partnership" is everywhere in this newsletter: neighbors partnering to create an effective watershed organization, as well as cities and towns partnering with the communities next door, a regional planning agency, academic institutions, and state agencies.

That's not surprising since bringing people and institutions together to leverage shared skills is one of the Watershed Association's core strategies, and something we do well.

We believe that the whole is usually more than the sum of its parts, and that regional collaboration will benefit local families, wildlife, ratepayers, and our river alike.

Thank you for making that possible.

Sincerely,

Ian Cooke
Executive Director

Stormwater Project

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technical and financial challenge for communities.

The project goal is to ensure that we accomplish as much as possible to reduce water pollution, while leveraging the shared knowledge and reduced costs that come with working regionally.



The project will keep the Watershed Association and MAPC staff busy until December. Tasks include developing a regional public outreach and involvement campaign; analyzing each town's drainage system and mapping out plans to stop illicit discharges from reaching waterways; examining opportunities to retrofit paved areas with measures that intercept and clean up polluted runoff; evaluating local rules and regulations to ensure that new development and redevelopment don't contribute to the problem; and conducting pilot projects in two communities to examine options for financing the added work to meet the new rules.

Last fall, the Watershed Association spent many hours securing the participation of our communities—work that was funded by the Association's members and donors.

The project will be funded by a state grant that encourages regional collaboration among towns, along with a \$5,000 per town cash match.



Upcoming Events

After a very long winter, it's nice to think about getting outside to enjoy the warmer weather. Our Outreach Committee has been busy planning some fun activities on water and land:

- **May 18**—Canoe trip, Neponset Estuary
- **June 11**—Annual Meeting, 6:30p.m., Endicott Estate, Dedham, featuring Beth Lambert of the Department of Environmental Restoration
- **July-Sept.**—Photography Exhibit, Bean & Cream Cafe, Hyde Park
- **August 23**—Annual river clean-up, 8 a.m., Martini Shell, Hyde Park

There is also talk of a **geology walk** along the Neponset in Lower Mills, and an **extended bike trip**. Keep an eye out for exact dates, times, and locations.

We look forward to seeing you soon, out in the watershed!



Remembering: Paula Band

Paula Band became a member of the Neponset Watershed Association some 17 years ago, when we were attempting to save the "Lot 23 Bird Sanctuary" in Quincy. Paula joined us at several breakfast meetings, and at a boat trip around the Estuary, and it was obvious that she cared about the river, Quincy's wildlife, and the future of her community.

We were sorry to hear in January that she had passed away, and it seemed fitting that she had been laid to rest at the Cedar Grove Cemetery overlooking the Neponset.

Paula generously left a small bequest to the Watershed Association—a thoughtful donation that makes a real difference to a group like us. We thank her for being a friend to the river for so many years, and for reminding us that everyone has the ability to make a difference.

An Alliance to Conserve Water

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Greater efficiency is an appealing strategy for dealing with streamflow problems, because there is tremendous room for improvement, and efficiency programs help reduce water bills. Over the last five years, we have worked with a number of communities on water conservation, but the work has always been done piece-meal, one town at a time.

That's why we are pleased to announce the formation of the "**Neponset Valley Water Alliance**," which brings together the water departments of Canton, Foxborough, Sharon, Stoughton, and the Dedham-Westwood Water District to pilot an integrated regional approach to water conservation, using a combination of local funds and a MassDEP grant secured by the Association.

The Neponset Valley Water Alliance pilot project is starting out simple, with an integrated outreach campaign to promote rebates on water saving devices. The pilot project only runs through **June 30, 2014**, but in those few months we hope to replace 720 toilets, 720 clothes washers and more than 1,440 faucet aerators and showerheads, which would save more than 157 million gallons of water over the coming years.

The communities are also evaluating the potential for a longer-term collaboration across the region, which would go beyond rebates, and which would ideally involve the watershed communities who have not yet joined the Alliance, such as Medfield and Walpole.

If you would like to help the river by improving your own household water efficiency, visit www.nvwater.org to learn how you can get your rebate or water saving devices.

For more information on the project, contact Nancy Fyler at fyler@neponset.org.

Small Dams Moving Forward



There are more than 100 dams along the Neponset and its tributaries. While our dams were a great asset in the days of water powered industry, today many of them no longer have any modern purpose, yet remain problematic for the health of the river. They

prevent fish and kayakers from being able to move up and downstream freely; exacerbate flooding; and contribute to water pollution problems.

Last spring, with the help of donations from dozens of local families, and a challenge grant, the Watershed Association kicked off its small dams program which aims to restore streams by removing some of our smallest obsolete dams, some of which are often only a foot or two high.

We had originally selected sites in Canton and Westwood to use as pilot projects, but ran into difficulties that sent us back to

Meet Our New Environmental Engineer, Sarah Bounty!



Sarah Bounty has recently joined the Association staff as Environmental Engineer. Sarah studied at the University of New Hampshire and University of Colorado, and has worked at several local engineering consulting firms helping Boston to keep sewer leaks out of rivers, and assisting with drafting the Town of Sharon's Water Master Plan.

Sarah takes over for Bill Guenther, who was with the Association for seven years, and moved on in January to pursue new adventures. Sarah will head up our "Citizen Water Monitoring Network", which collects water quality samples across the watershed; lead an effort to design and install "green infrastructure" measures in Westwood; and play an important role in our regional stormwater initiative.

We are excited to have Sarah join our team, as she brings great skills and tremendous enthusiasm. Please join us in welcoming Sarah to our staff! Sarah can be reached at bounty@neponset.org.



the drawing board. Over the summer and fall, we revisited our inventory of dams across the watershed, and identified a new crop of sites to serve as pilots.

The new sites include a trio of dams on the upper portion of Pine Tree Brook in Milton between Unquity Road and Canton Avenue near the Ulin Rink. This area includes high quality stream habitat, mostly on land owned by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation. We have applied to have the state Department of Fish and Game designate these sites as a "priority project" for technical assistance, and in the meantime are organizing a team of academic partners to begin scoping out the scientific work needed to evaluate restoration options.

We are also working to develop projects at several "micro dams", which are so small we think they can be restored with only limited permitting work using volunteer labor. The first of these is on Traphole Brook in Walpole which is an important cold water fishery area. For more information on this project, contact Ian Cooke at cooke@neponset.org.