



Currents

A Publication of the Saugus River Watershed Council

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2007-2008 Youth Education Programs

The Saugus River Watershed Council and New England Discovery are again offering free environmental education programs to youths throughout the Saugus River watershed.

Through innovative hands-on science, field trips, and classroom projects, students will learn about environmental stewardship, watershed concepts, and local wildlife.

Sample program topics include: building a watershed model, exploring the natural resources of the watershed through field trips to Rumney Marsh, Breakheart Reservation or Reedy Meadow, identifying signs and tracks of local wildlife such as deer, river otters and coyotes, and learning about the valuable role of salt marshes.

Programs are provided free for public schools and youth groups located in our 11 watershed communities: Saugus, Lynn, Lynnfield, Wakefield, Reading, Revere, Malden, Melrose, Everett, Stoneham, and Peabody. Does not include transportation. Typical programs include a classroom visit followed by a field program.

All programs are designed to meet the Massachusetts Science and Technology Curriculum Frameworks. Registration is based on a first come first serve basis and will fill up quickly.

To register or find out more contact SRWC at 781-233-5046 or srw@shore.net. ❖

Lake Quannapowitt Cleanup



In accordance with the Massachusetts Contingency Plan, the Wakefield Municipal Gas and Light Department and the Town of Wakefield Department of Public Works recently submitted an Environmental Notification Form to the state outlining their plan to remove approximately 16,000 square feet of contaminated sediments to a depth of approximately seven feet in the Hartshorne Cove boat ramp area of Lake Quannapowitt, Wakefield. The project is expected to take place during the spring of 2008.

The Saugus River Watershed Council submitted written comments supporting the plan to remove (instead of in-situ cap) sediments contaminated with arsenic, lead and petroleum, which currently pose a potential threat to public health in Lake Quannapowitt, headwaters of the Saugus River watershed. The recommended sediment remediation alternative would remove unconsolidated sediment in the "Readily Apparent Harm Area" to an average depth of seven feet and place clean sand to the performance standard of a minimum 12-inch separation layer on top of the consolidated sediment.

The Environmental Notification Form describes a carefully planned project with mitigation measures that appear sufficient to protect natural resources by containing contaminated sediments during the dredging, dewatering, and transport phases of the project. The proposed turbidity monitoring will evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation and enable the contractor to respond to any unexpected problems. ❖

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Editorial

Massachusetts Wetlands Regulations: Protecting Citizens' Right to Appeal

During August, the Saugus River Watershed Council submitted written comments regarding the Department of Environmental Protection's proposed changes to the Massachusetts Wetlands Regulations.

In our letter, we wrote that the Saugus River Watershed Council is adamantly opposed to the proposed changes which would significantly limit citizens' rights to appeal Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection wetlands decisions through the adjudicatory hearing process.

Though described as part of ongoing efforts to 'streamline' environmental permitting regulations, the proposed changes would in effect have eliminated the public's ability to challenge wetlands decisions through the adjudicatory hearing process. Previous changes to the state's regulations required prior participation in the public hearing process as a prerequisite of requesting an adjudicatory hearing. Those changes have already substantially reduced the number of appeals thereby streamlining environmental permitting associated with the Wetlands Protection Act.

Massachusetts has had a long-standing policy of according hearings to those seeking review of agency decisions as a fail-safe for inappropriate decisions associated with protecting wetlands. For the past 35 years, Massachusetts regulations have allowed a group of ten citizens (or abutters) the right to appeal DEP wetlands decisions through adjudicatory review. As a result, the state has a system with checks and balances aimed at ensuring protection of our wetland resources.

Even with existing regulations, wetlands in the Saugus River watershed and throughout the state

are being degraded each year by encroaching new development, illegal filling, and new sources of pollution. With limited state and local resources for environmental enforcement activities, it is more important than ever to maintain our existing regulatory structure in order to limit potential damage to the fragile habitat found in our rivers, streams and coastal wetlands.

While the proposed regulatory changes retained the right of conservation commissions to appeal wetlands decision, this does not take the place of public appeals. Unfortunately, conservation commissions are sometimes subject to political considerations and may also have limited financial resources to mount an effective appeal.

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of environmental groups and individuals throughout the state, Governor Patrick recently announced that the final version of the revised Wetlands Regulations will not lessen existing rights to appeal. This decision could have a significant impact on the future quality of the public drinking water supply for the City of Lynn, the status of recently re-opened shellfish beds in the Rumney Marshes Area of Critical Environmental Concern, and the Saugus River Watershed Council's ongoing efforts to work with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries to protect and restore fisheries such as rainbow smelt and American eel in the Saugus River watershed.

Although his initial proposal was troubling, the Governor's decision to revise the proposed changes indicates that his administration places a significant value on the voice of the environmental community in Massachusetts.

Joan LeBlanc ❖

Auto Auction Would Increase Runoff to Saugus River

Saugus Board of Selectmen recently approved zoning for a 500-car auto auction to be located at the far end of Kimball Lane adjacent to the Saugus River. SRWC opposes the proposal which would contribute significant new polluted runoff to the Saugus River. The Towns of Lynnfield and Wakefield have appealed the decision indicating that they don't believe the zoning allows for the proposed use. The site of the proposed auto auction is currently under enforcement order by the Department of Environmental Protection to clean up previous hazardous dumping. ❖

Saugus River



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Special Thanks to Volunteer Canoe Guide Fred LeBlanc



Photo credit: Joan LeBlanc

In August, Fred guided his final canoe trip for the Council by leading 16 canoes and kayaks out onto the Pines River in Rumney Marsh. On this idyllic sunny afternoon with light breezes, adults and children alike had a one-of-a-kind enjoyable experience in the watershed. Boaters heading back to shore from the trip are shown in the photo at right. ❖

The Saugus River Watershed Council extends sincere thanks to Fred LeBlanc who has volunteered to lead canoe trips on the Saugus River and Rumney Marsh for the past 15 years. Thanks to Fred's countless volunteer hours, hundreds of people have experienced the natural resources and quiet beauty that is found while paddling a canoe or kayak in the river.



Photo credit: Joan LeBlanc

BJ's Would Impact Rumney Marsh ACEC

The Saugus River Watershed Council recently reviewed a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed BJ's Planned Unit Development adjacent to Rumney Marsh in Revere.

The 19.85-acre project includes a 121,635 square foot BJ's Wholesale Warehouse, 1,081 parking spaces, three residential buildings with 281 units, and a gas station with two 20,000 underground fuel storage tanks.

The project proponent was required by the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act office to submit supplemental information to address environmental issues not adequately covered in their initial submittal of a Draft Environmental Impact Report.

After reviewing the new information, SRWC is still extremely concerned about the potential negative impact that this project would have on the Rumney Marshes Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

The most problematic aspects of the proposed project are: 1) filling and eliminating existing floodplain, 2) increasing peak discharge rates into Rumney Marsh, 3) changing (reducing) the boundary for the Rumney Marshes ACEC, and 4) locating a fueling station and underground storage tanks within the current floodplain and ACEC boundary. The revised submittal did not include any changes in site configuration or other strategies to address the concerns outlined above. ❖

Saugus River History

In late August, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Saugus River Watershed Council, and the National Park Service co-hosted a program at Breakheart Reservation, [Saugus River: Resource for the Past, Present and Future](#).

Using an interactive map, National Park Service Educator Amy Curry highlighted the Saugus River's native American and industrial history. The river served as an important fishing grounds for native Americans – artifacts found during reconstruction of the Saugus Iron Works can be traced back 10,000 years. Later, European colonists relied upon the river for shipping, fishing, and as a source of power for industry. Historic changes -- such as the Pranker's Pond dam and its subsequent breaching, construction of a railroad, and dredging -- changed the course of the river and its ability to provide habitat for wildlife.

SRWC Director Joan LeBlanc highlighted the important natural resource areas that still provide wildlife habitat throughout the Saugus River watershed today – including the Rumney Marshes Area of Critical Environmental Concern, the Lynn Woods Reservation, Breakheart Reservation, and the Reedy Meadow National Natural Landmark.

LeBlanc also highlighted results from the Council's fish monitoring programs which were aimed at assessing rainbow smelt and American Eel populations. During 2007, 2,433 rainbow smelt were counted and released in the Saugus River, while 9,082 American eels utilized a newly installed ramp to travel over the Lynn Water and Sewer Commission dam to upstream habitat.

Following the presentation, participants enjoyed refreshments and discussed the Saugus River's history, natural resources, and ongoing environmental issues. ❖

Sailing Aboard the Schooner Nathaniel Bowditch

By SRWC Board Member Kathy Wrynn



Jim and Kathy Wrynn enjoy sailing aboard the Schooner Nathaniel Bowditch, June 2007. The week long vacation was purchased at the Saugus River Watershed Council's 2007 River Night event.

At the 2007 River Night Auction Jim and I were the lucky high bidders for the Windjammer Cruise aboard the Schooner Nathaniel Bowditch out of Rockland Maine. We had a wonderful week of sailing the last week of June. Under blue skies and a fair breeze we sailed to Boothbay Harbor where 100's of boats of all sizes came out to greet us in celebration of the Windjammer Days Festival. Three other Schooners joined us for a Parade of Sails. It was very exciting and after an old fashioned parade, and concerts, the evening ended with fireworks over the harbor.

We enjoyed learning about schooners and while it wasn't mandatory, we willingly helped with hoisting sails and coiling ropes and many other chores appropriate to our abilities. One of the highlights of the trip was the food!

On an old converted iron wood stove our cook, Paul, baked breads, muffins, desserts, and all kinds of wonderful meals. When he rang the ships bell to announce meal time Jim was always first in line and I have never seen him enjoy vacation food so much. Because I had brought my sleeping bag, one of the highlights of the trip for me was sleeping on deck. I saw some glorious sunrises and had forgotten how many stars there are at night. ❖



Special thanks to the Schooner Nathaniel Bowditch for their generous donation of a one week sailing vacation.

SRWC Fall River Cleanups

Please join the Saugus River Watershed Council for one of the following fall river cleanup projects. All volunteers are welcome.

Saturday, 15 September Saugus River, Lynnway, Lynn 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Join SRWC and GE Transportation for our annual CoastSweep cleanup project. Volunteers will meet at the traffic turnaround located along the Lynnway in front of the Building 19 parking lot. T-shirts, gloves, bags and light refreshments will be provided.

Saturday, 20 October Spring Street, Saugus 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Join SRWC and Alcoa of Wakefield as we remove debris from this tributary to the Saugus River. Spring Street is located between Route 1 (next to McDonald's) and Water Street. Gloves, bags and light refreshments will be provided.

Saturday, 27 October Saugus River, Route 1 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Join SRWC and Prince Restaurant as we remove debris from in and along the Saugus River adjacent to Route 1. Volunteers should meet in the parking lot behind Prince Restaurant. Gloves, bags and pizza will be provided.

Please contact the Saugus River Watershed Council at 781-233-5046 or

srw@shore.net if you have any questions about volunteering for these cleanup projects. ❖



Around the Watershed

Protecting Rumney Marsh



Photo credit: Joan LeBlanc

During August, DCR staff Lisa Berry Engler, Jim Comeau and Vanessa Johnson (left to right) toured Rumney Marsh with SRWC Director Joan LeBlanc to discuss ongoing efforts to prevent pollution and provide long-term land protection for the Rumney Marshes Area of Critical Environmental Concern and the Saugus River watershed. DCR staff are shown above near the former "Bacon" property with the Saugus River in the background. The field visit included discussion regarding the proposed BJ's in Revere, potential redevelopment of the Eastern Tool site in Saugus, the Ballard Street salt marsh restoration project, future plans for DCR-owned properties in Saugus and Lynn, and land protection goals for several privately-owned sites.

Reedy Meadow Rail Trail

The Wakefield/Lynnfield Reedy Meadow Rail Trail held a public meeting in August regarding a Feasibility Study for the trail. Thanks to funding obtained by Senator Tisei last year, the engineering firm Fay Spofford & Thorndike is drafting a feasibility study for creating a landscaped multiuse trail along the old railroad bed that runs through Reedy Meadow.

During 2007, the railway owner formally abandoned 9.69 miles of the trail running through Wakefield into Lynnfield and to the Peabody border, and Town Counsel is currently negotiating with the MBTA for a 99-year lease. A newly formed non-profit, Reedy Meadow Rail Trail Alliance, will focus on raising funds for the project.

Dungeon Rock Pirate Day

The City of Lynn Parks and Recreation will host its Annual Dungeon Rock Pirate Day at Lynn Woods Reservation on Saturday, October 20th. This event is geared toward families with young children. Enjoy the fall foliage as you walk along the mile long course. During the hike you will encounter groups of pirates who will engage your kids in fun interactive skits. Not recommended for strollers. Each tour is led by a pirate guide and takes approximately one hour. Call 781-477-7096 to reserve your tour or contact the Lynn Woods Ranger at 781-477-7123 or lynnwoodsraanger@aol.com if you have questions about the event. A rain date has been scheduled for Sunday, 21 October.

Stocker Park, Saugus

This summer, the Town of Saugus held a public hearing regarding plans to improve Stocker Park located along the Saugus River. The plan includes upgrading play areas, expanding public access, improving the gravel driveway and parking areas, and adding interpretive signage to highlight the natural resources and history of the Saugus River. The Saugus River Watershed Council lent support to the Town's proposal for an Urban Self Help Grant from the state to implement improvements. The site is important regionally because the canoe launch at the park provides the best access to the navigable portion of the Saugus River.

Waterfront Center Conference

The Waterfront Center will host its 25th Annual International Conference, November 1-3, 2007 at the Seaport Hotel in Boston. This year's three day conference, "Urban Waterfronts 25: The Next Wave" will focus on waterfront public access and environmental issues. Panels will highlight tourism, public art, global warming, alternative environmental technologies, water supply, sustainable planning and other topics. The event includes optional boat tours and Harborwalk waterfront walking tours of Boston's waterfront. Registration for the conference is \$180 before September 28 and \$200 after September 28. Additional workshops and events are also available. For more information or registration forms, go to www.waterfrontcenter.org.

Piping Plovers, Revere



This summer, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs reported that piping plovers were found nesting on Revere Beach for the first time. DCR beach managers used snow fencing to help provide cover for the chicks. According to Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles, "the species' presence on Revere Beach underscores the beach's renaissance as a natural resource for Greater Boston and the North Shore." ❖

Saugus River Picnic A Success



Photo credit: Dan Burgess

Almost 300 people joined the Saugus River Watershed Council for our annual Saugus River picnic and children's festival held at the Saugus Iron Works on 31 July 2007. This year's event was especially important as it provided families with an opportunity to enjoy the Saugus Iron Works site, which has

been closed due to ongoing construction throughout the summer.

Children enjoyed making paper fish wind socks, looking at river insects under microscopes with staff from New England Discovery, dancing and singing about the watershed with Paul Erickson, getting their faces painted, and of course the popular balloon sculptures by Broosalooney. Families also relaxed to folk music by Dave Simmons and friends.

The Council provided free drinks and dessert for picnic-goers and approximately 50 children created artwork highlighting the river as part of our annual Saugus River art contest.



Photo credit: Dan Burgess

The Saugus Iron Works is expected to partially open this fall with a complete reopening celebration expected in the Spring of 2008. Site improvements will include handicap access, expanded interpretive and educational features, and building restoration work. Special thanks to all of the staff at the Iron Works for allowing us to host the Saugus River picnic and for helping to make the event a great success again this year. ❖

Saugus Sewer System Upgrades

The Town of Saugus is working to upgrade its stormwater and sewer system in compliance with a Consent Order from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. This fall, the Saugus DPW will begin upgrading sewer lines and replacing manhole covers in vicinity of Route 99.

As required by the Consent Order, the Town passed a by-law in August to prohibit unauthorized connections and private inflow sources to the

sanitary sewer system -- these include roof downspouts, exterior foundation drains, or sump pumps. Prohibited uses must cease according to a 10-year time line established by DEP. The by-law also indicates that all entities seeking to discharge new flow to the sewer system must adhere to the Inflow and Infiltration Reduction Program, Sewer Connection and Extension Policy established by the Consent Order. ❖

Recent Appointments Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Ian Bowles, Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, recently named the following people to environmental management positions within the agency. Both appointments will begin in September.

Laurie Burt, Commissioner - Department of Environmental Protection

Ms. Burt is a senior partner and founder of the environmental law practice at the Boston firm of Foley Hoag LLP. Burt has expertise in state and federal hazardous waste and Superfund laws, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, wetlands, endangered species, and environmental impact regulations. Prior to joining Foley Hoag in 1980, she was an Assistant Attorney General in Environmental law enforcement. She is also Vice Present of the Boston Bar Association and co-chair of the Appalachian Mountain Club's Board of Advisors.

Leslie-Ann McGee, Director Coastal Zone Management

Ms. McGee is a fisheries scientist with more than a decade of experience in marine habitat conservation and government relations. She currently heads the Essential Fish Habitat and Marine Protected Areas Program at the New England Fishery Management Council in Newburyport. Prior to that role, she served as Director of Legislation and Policy in the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Environmental Law Enforcement (now Department of Fish and Game), and as Protected Resources and Fisheries Biologist with the National Marine Fisheries Service in Long Beach, California. ❖

Working Locally to Combat Global Warming

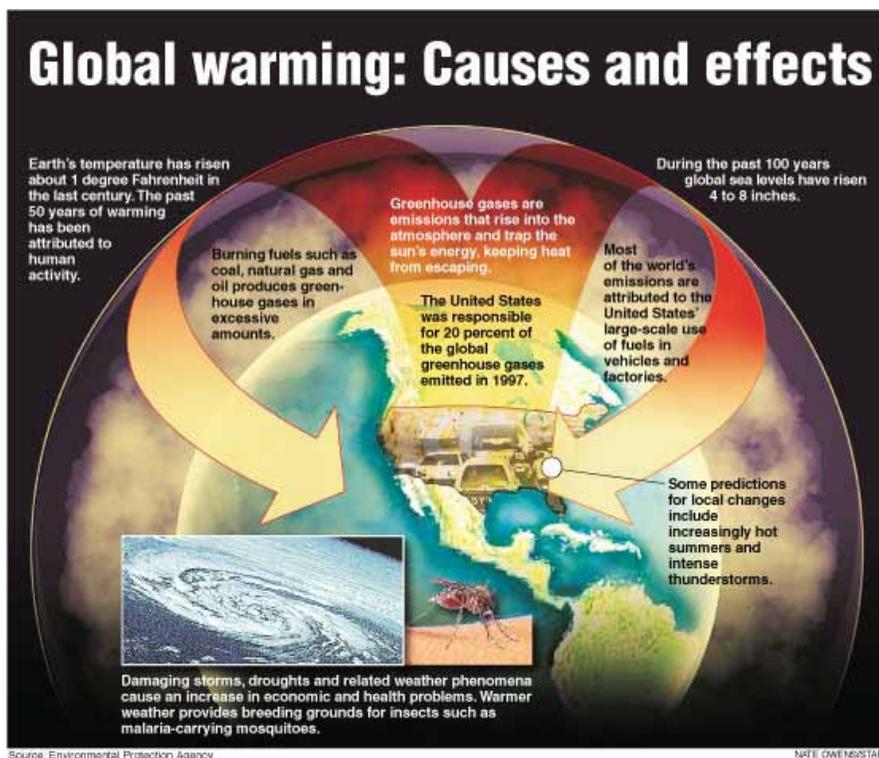


Satellite image of earth is owned by NASA. Available at www.visibleearth.nasa.gov.

Global warming is the most pressing environmental problem facing the world today. While the scope of this environmental challenge is certainly broad, the value of local efforts to quantify and help remediate global warming impacts cannot be underestimated.

As global warming continues, higher temperatures and erratic weather patterns will have a negative impact on wildlife habitat, river water

flows, and other natural resources of the Saugus River watershed. Beginning with this issue of its Currents newsletter, the Saugus River Watershed Council will occasionally highlight educational resources as well as local and regional efforts to combat global warming.



The diagram above developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency highlights the causes and effects of global warming. Additional information and resources can be found at www.epa.gov/climatechange. ❖

How You Can Help

A great deal of information as well as misinformation about global warming can be found on the internet. One of the best resources is www.climatecrisis.net. This website was developed as a companion to Al Gore's documentary film "An Inconvenient Truth". The site includes a downloadable educational guide, a calculator that you can use to calculate your Co2 impact, and suggestions about local and national strategies for promoting change. The site also includes a "What You Can Do" section highlighting every day actions that will make a difference, such as:

- replace regular incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents,
- move your thermostat down 2° in the winter and up 2° in summer,
- replace filters on air conditioners and furnace,
- turn off and unplug electric devices when not in use,
- get a home energy audit and implement recommendations,
- buy locally grown and fresh vs. frozen foods, and
- keep tires properly inflated and carpool when possible.

New State Policy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Massachusetts recently issued a new draft Greenhouse Gas Emissions Policy and Protocol. The new regulations seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with development projects that are reviewed through the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act. The policy requires project proponents to quantify greenhouse gas emissions and identify measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate such emissions. The new policy is part of a larger effort by the Patrick administration to focus attention on the causes of climate change and harness creative technology to implement long-term solutions. ❖

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Making a Difference

The Saugus River watershed stretches from Lake Quannapowitt to the Lynn Harbor / Saugus River estuary, encompassing all or part of eleven communities.

The Saugus River Watershed Council is a non-profit organization founded in 1991 to protect the natural resources of the watershed. Our priorities include restoring water quality, expanding public access, restoring habitat for anadromous fish and other wild life, and protecting critical resources such as Rumney Marsh and Reedy Meadow.

Please consider adding your voice, as a member of the Council, to our efforts to protect the natural resources and beauty of the Saugus River watershed.

Summer 2007

Join the Saugus River Watershed Council

Yes! I would like to become a member of the Saugus River Watershed Council.*

New Member Membership Renewal

Individual (\$10) Family (\$15) Friend (\$25)
 Steward (\$50) Patron (\$100) Other \$_____

* Corporations interested in joining the Saugus River Watershed Council should call 781-233-5046 for additional information.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

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