



Currents

A Publication of the Saugus River Watershed Council

Volume 15 No.1, Winter 2006

New! 2006 Watershed Education Program

The Saugus River Watershed Council has launched a new Watershed Awareness Program to provide free environmental education programs for public schools and youth groups. Through a unique partnership with New England Discovery, the Council is offering students a rich educational experience that incorporates environmental awareness, watershed concepts, and knowledge and appreciation of wildlife.

"We are very excited about this new environmental education program", said Joan LeBlanc, Executive Director of the Saugus River Watershed Council. "Local wildlife expert Bob Metcalfe of New England Discovery will introduce young people to the art of finding tracks and signs of local wildlife throughout the Saugus River watershed", said LeBlanc.

Typical programs include a classroom visit followed by a field trip to locations such as Rumney Marsh, Reedy Meadow or Breakheart Reservation. Programs are designed for grades K to 12 and can be tailored to each grade level. Through innovative projects and field work students will learn about local wildlife, natural resources and environmental issues. Program topics include: building a watershed model, water conservation, wildlife tracking, fish in the Saugus River, and the importance of salt marshes and freshwater wetlands.

...continued on page 2

River Night Set for 28 March 2006!



Photo credit: Dan Burgess

From left to right, SRWC Co-president Frank Ricciardi, SRWC Board Member Ann Farrell, and volunteer Auctioneer Bion Pike conduct last year's live auction.

Mark your calendar now for the Saugus River Watershed Council's fourth Annual River Night dinner and auction on Tuesday, 28 March 2006, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Spinelli's Function Facility, Route 1 South, Lynnfield.

Guests will enjoy a delicious dinner prepared by Spinelli's fine catering, live music, and an exciting silent and live auction. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to purchase high quality items while supporting the Council's river restoration and education programs. Thanks to generous contributions from many businesses and individuals, items such as Red Sox tickets, getaways, dinner at fine restaurants, theatre tickets, whale watch trips, artwork, and much more will be up for bid.

Tickets are \$35 per person, including dinner, parking, live music and access to the auction. A cash bar will be available. This event is wheelchair accessible. To reserve seats now, send

check directly to the Saugus River Watershed Council, P.O. Box 1092, Saugus, MA 01906. Anyone interested in donating an auction item or becoming a River Night sponsor, should contact the Council at srw@shore.net or 781-233-5046 or go to www.saugusriver.org to download donation forms. ❖

Inside this Issue

Editorial.....Page 2

Volunteers & Interns
Needed for Fish Monitoring.....Page 3

2006 Hydrology Study.....Page 4

Around the Watershed.....Page 5

Gertrude Spaulding Park.....Page 6

Lynn Mayor Chip Clancy
Rejects Land Swap.....Page 7

SRWC Winter Programs.....Page 7

Editorial: State Support Needed to Address Stormwater Problems in Revere

In response to the presence of bacterial pollution in local waterways, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently issued a Request for Information to Revere, Everett, Chelsea and several other North Shore communities to evaluate and identify potential sources of pollution.

The underlying goal of the request is to determine whether or not each community is in compliance with the Clean Water Act. Revere for instance has been asked to document known sources of bacteria and other pollutants, known sanitary sewer or storm water system infrastructure problems, and provide copies of all studies, reports, and planning documents for projects related to assessing or improving the sewer and storm drain system since 1980.

Over the past several years, the Saugus River Watershed Council has been working with Revere and other communities to evaluate and improve stormwater pollution problems affecting Town Line Brook and its tributaries, Linden Brook and Trifone Brook. During that time, the City of Revere has been working proactively to identify and resolve water quality problems related to stormwater pollution and sewer infrastructure, particularly those affecting Trifone Brook where bacteria levels often exceed state water quality standards.

As part of their efforts, significant work was spent developing and submitting an application to the 319 Program for financial assistance to create a constructed

wetland to address hot spot stormwater pollution found in Trifone Brook. The application followed detailed sewer and storm drainage engineering studies narrowing down the problem. Although matching funds were available, the state denied funding for this priority project in 2002. Later in 2004 and 2005, the City applied for funding of similar projects to address stormwater pollution at the Belle Isle inlet. Despite being included in earlier assessment reports funded by the state, both projects were denied funding for implementation.

The lack of state support for projects to address stormwater and sewer projects in Revere has contributed to the fact that high levels of bacteria continue to persist in Trifone Brook and other locations.

Revere and other urban communities face significant financial and engineering challenges as they work aggressively to address problems with aging and often inadequate sewer and storm drainage infrastructure.

The EPA's recent actions should help fast track efforts by Revere and other communities to improve water quality in our watershed. At the same time, however, these communities cannot go it alone. The state of Massachusetts should shift its funding priorities toward providing much needed assistance for well thought out and engineered projects to address stormwater pollution in our urban communities.

Joan LeBlanc ❖

Watershed Education

...continued from page 1

Programs are available to public schools and youth organizations located in the following communities which are part of the Saugus River Watershed: Saugus, Lynn, Revere, Wakefield, Lynnfield, Malden, Melrose, Everett, Reading, Stoneham and Peabody. Registration is on a first come, first serve basis and will fill up quickly. For registration or more information, please contact srw@shore.net or 781-233-5046. ❖

Saugus River



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Thank You!

Sincere thanks to all of our members and friends who contributed generously to our recent Annual Appeal and membership renewal request. We look forward to working with you to protect and restore the natural resources of the watershed during 2006!

SRWC Annual Meeting a Success

Approximately 75 guests joined SRWC for our Annual Meeting in November 2005 at Prince Restaurant in Saugus. Keynote speaker Brad Chase of the Division of Marine Fisheries gave a presentation about fish monitoring and habitat assessment projects which took place in the Saugus River watershed last year. Guests learned about fish found in the Saugus River and ongoing efforts to assess and restore fish spawning habitat.

SRWC also elected its 2006 Board of Directors, including the following officers: Co-president Lisa Capone-Condon, Co-president Frank Ricciardi, Vice President Doug Heath, and Treasurer Mary Kinsell. Welcome to new board members -- Dan and Pam Burgess, Denise Butler, Carl King and Bob McLaughlin. Many thanks to the following outgoing board members

for their many efforts on behalf of the Saugus River Watershed Council -- Stacy Aubin, Ray Maes Daniel Noon, and Dan Small.

Congratulations to the following individuals who received 2005 Saugus River Stewardship Awards!

Joe James of Revere received an award for outstanding contributions toward protecting and restoring the natural resources of Rumney Marsh and the Saugus River watershed.

Rick Dawe of Lynn received an award for outstanding contributions toward protecting and restoring the natural resources of the Saugus River watershed.

Douglas Heath of Wakefield received an Award for outstanding contributions toward protecting and restoring the natural resources of Lake Quannapowitt and the Saugus River watershed. ❖

Saugus River 2006 Fish Monitoring



Rainbow Smelt
(*Osmerus mordax*)

Volunteers and interns are needed to assist with the Saugus River Watershed Council's 2006 fish monitoring project this spring. The Council will again work in partnership with the Coastal Wetlands Restoration Program, Division of Marine Fisheries, the National Park Service, and General Electric to evaluate the presence and size of rainbow smelt and American eel populations in the Saugus River. This year's program will begin in March and continue into June.

Potential volunteers or interns should contact SRWC at srw@shore.net or 781-233-5046 for more information or to sign up as volunteers. For this project, volunteers should be comfortable working in the river with waders. Training and equipment will be provided. The Council also plans to hire one or two part-time interns to work regularly on the project this spring.

Potential volunteers, interns and the general public are invited to join SRWC staff on Wednesday, 15 February from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Breakheart Reservation to learn about results from last year's program and plans for this year. ❖

One North Shore Road, Revere



Photo credit: Andrew DeSantis

Property owner Jay Epsimos has begun environmental permitting to redevelop One North Shore Road, located at the intersection of the Saugus River and Route 1A in Revere. The plan proposes replacing existing dilapidated structures with a 10-story, 65-unit residential building.

During a January site visit attended by members of the

Revere Conservation Commission (RCC) and SRWC, Mike Furlong (in photo, at left) of the RCC discussed site plans with Steve Martorano of BSC Group (behind) and property owner Jay Epsimos.

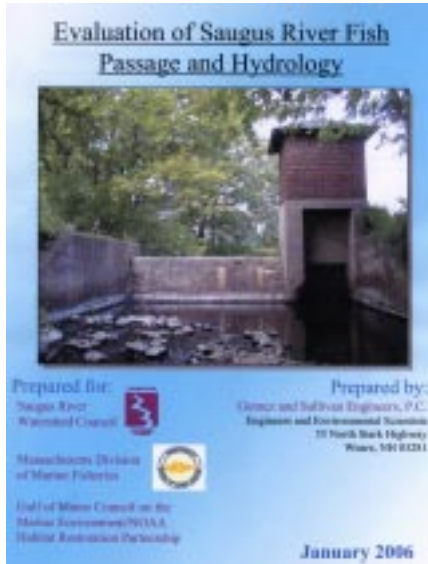
During the site visit, the following project details were discussed: 1) pursuant to Chapter 91 requirements, a walkway including green spaces and benches will provide public access the riverfront; 2) offsite water and sewer improvements will be implemented to mitigate Revere's already overburdened systems; 3) on-site drainage improvements will meet higher standards for a new vs. redeveloped site; 4) 1400 square feet of impervious surface will be removed; and 5) runoff from the indoor parking areas will be collected and treated before draining to the sewer.

Detail regarding upgrades to the riverfront riprap have yet to be developed. As permitting moves forward, SRWC will continue reviewing plans and submit comments regarding public access and environmental issues related to the Saugus River. ❖

Daniel Noon Heads to Alaska

SRWC wishes outgoing board member Daniel Noon good luck in his new position for the National Park Service at Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska. We also offer our sincere thanks to Daniel for his assistance with the 2005 fish monitoring project and habitat assessment research in the Saugus River. In his position at the Saugus Iron Works, Daniel also took the lead in environmental planning for the proposed Saugus River Turning Basin Project. ❖

SRWC Publishes 2006 Fish Passage & Hydrology Report



Thanks to generous funding from the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment/NOAA, the Saugus River Watershed Council and the MA Division of Marine Fisheries recently completed an "Evaluation of Saugus River Fish Passage and Hydrology". The study, conducted by Gomez & Sullivan Engineers, evaluates fisheries habitat and hydrology in the upstream portions of the watershed.

Special thanks to the following individuals for assisting with field work and research on this project: Brad Chase, Div. of Marine Fisheries, Rick Dawe, Lynn Water and Sewer Commission, Cindy Delpapa, MA Riverways Program, Doug Heath, SRWC, Linda Hutchins, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation, Margaret Kearns, MA Riverways Program, Joan LeBlanc, SRWC, Daniel Noon, National Park Service, and Alison Simcox, Friends of Lake Quannapowitt.

Hydrology conditions during 2005 were unusually stressed. The combination of unseasonably low precipitation combined with upstream impacts on streamflow made 2005 one of the worst summers from a hydrologic standpoint. Based upon 134 years of precipitation records, the sum of August and September rainfall was the 12th driest on record. Significant low flow conditions during August and September 2005 were adversely influenced by historically low summer precipitation, expanded beaver activity, excess vegetation, and problems with maintaining flows from Pillings Pond to Reedy Meadow during the Mill Pond dredging project.

As a result, both habitat and streamflow conditions during 2005 were poor for restoring anadromous river herring populations to the Saugus River.

The report recommends several actions needed to promote restoration, including: 1) additional study is needed to determine the extent to which conditions during 2005 were historically atypical; 2) implementation of culvert improvements and dredging are needed to improve upstream hydrology; 3) passage improvements such as construction of a ramp for American eel at the diversion dam should be evaluated; 4) installation of a fish ladder to support river herring passage upstream of the diversion dam should be reconsidered in the future if conditions and habitat are deemed adequate to support migration, spawning and rearing activities; and 5) additional fish monitoring projects should be conducted to further evaluate the presence and extent of fisheries in the watershed.

To request a copy of the report on CD, contact SRWC at srw@shore.net or 781-233-5046. ❖

U.S. EPA Expands Citizen Reporting of Environmental Violations

In conjunction with their 35th Anniversary, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has created a new Internet webpage for members of the public to report environmental violations on-line. The site features a badge button linking people to an on-line form where they can easily provide the EPA with information about potentially harmful environmental activities in their communities and in their workplaces. According to the EPA, over a million people visit the Agency's home page each week.

The EPA is also working to improve processes for routing and tracking citizen tips as they come in, and informing the public about the Agency's interest in receiving information about possible environmental violations.

To report an environmental violation, go to the EPA's website and click on the badge!

www.epa.gov



Saugus Collects Household Hazardous Waste

Saugus will host a hazardous waste collection day on Saturday, 13 May 2006 at Saugus High School. The event is open to residents from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and non-residents from 11:00 to 12:00. Non-residents pay for disposal. Pre-registration is required and begins one month ahead. Call Saugus Inspectional Services at 781-231-4115 to preregister.

Items such as propane tanks, TVs, computer monitors and tires will cost extra. Household hazardous wastes such as the following will be accepted: paints, cleaners, aerosol cans, pesticides, fertilizers, cosmetics, medicines, used auto oil, kerosene, antifreeze and other items. ❖

Around the Watershed



Photo credit: Dan Small

Red Foxes at Lynn Woods

According to Lynn Woods Ranger Dan Small, the red fox population in Lynn Woods has been growing, numerous sightings occurred during 2005. The kits (fox puppies) are born in March and stay with both parents through late summer or fall. The two kits shown in the photo above peer over a rocky outcropping at Lynn Woods.

DEP Northeast Office Opens in Wilmington

Last Fall, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection announced that its Northeast Regional Office (NERO) has relocated from downtown Boston to a new location in Wilmington, Massachusetts. The new office is located at 205B Lowell Street, Wilmington, MA 01887, 978-694-3200.

Friends of Lynn Woods March Meeting

Friends of Lynn Woods will host its general membership meeting and soup supper on Monday, 6 March 2006 from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Franco-American Club, 535 Western Avenue, Lynn. Keynote

speaker, Tom Ricardi of the Massachusetts Bird of Prey Rehab Facility will present a program on raptor ecology and conservation featuring live birds of prey such as the bald eagle. New members are always welcome. For information call 781-593-7773.

Winter Walk & Campfire Breakheart, Saugus

Join the Department of Conservation and Recreation at Breakheart Reservation on Sunday, 26 February, 11:00 a.m., for an easy 1.5 mile hike followed by a traditional outdoorsman's lunch of hot dogs and marshmallows toasted over an open campfire. This program is free and open to the public, children must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, call the North Region Headquarters at 617-727-1199.

SAVE Annual Meeting & Earth Day Event

Saugus Action Volunteers for the Environment will host their general meeting and pot luck dinner on Sunday, 26 February 2006 at 3:00 p.m. at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Saugus. Members of the public are invited to join the event to learn about and discuss local environmental issues in an informal setting.

Volunteers are also invited to join SAVE at their annual Saugus Tree Farm maintenance day on Saturday, 29 April 2006, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (raindate: Sunday, 30 April). This event is a great way to celebrate Earth Day during 2006.

2006 Ecological Land Management Conference

The Ecological Landscaping Association will host its winter conference and eco-marketplace, "An In-Depth Look at Ecological Land Management", March 3 and 4, at the Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center, Marlborough, MA. Educational seminars will highlight green golf courses, insect ecosystems, bio-control of insect pests and invasive plants, and much more. The event is also co-sponsored by the New England Wild Flower Society. Registration information, can be found at www.ecolandscaping.org.

Environmental Expo 20 May 2006

Breakheart Reservation will host an environmental expo on Saturday, May 20th. Environmental non-profit organizations from the region, including Saugus River Watershed Council, will provide fun activities, raffles, games, and informative displays for the general public. Mark your calendars now for this fun family event.

Bike to the Sea Volunteer Cleanup Day

Bike to the Sea will host a volunteer cleanup project on Saturday, 13 May 2006. Volunteers will remove trash from along the proposed bike trail route in Saugus. Volunteers will meet at Marshview Park in Lynn at 9:00 a.m. Any questions can be directed to Steve Winslow at 781-397-6893. ❖

Gertrude M. Spaulding Park *A Historical Perspective*

By Bob McLaughlin

This story is a timeline of 40,900 square feet of land (almost an acre) known as the "Gertrude M. Spaulding Park". This beautiful park is located next to the headwaters of the Saugus River on Lake Quannapowitt in Wakefield.

Our story starts in April of 1925, Wesley S. Parker and his wife purchased the site, moving their young business from Lynn, near South Lynnfield. By 1930, Parker's was known as the largest seller of fried clams in New England. Thirty men worked for Parker's, digging six to seven hundred gallons of clams a week. The main serving building had a frontage of six hundred feet and there were parking spaces for 100 cars. Parker's opened the stand for business in April each year and remained open until Thanksgiving.

After two years of planning by a hired consultant and the Town of Wakefield Planning Board, the Town passed a zoning by-law in 1925 for the entire eight square miles. Parker's was grandfathered with a business district designation.

A resident across from Parker's had had it with the odor of fried clams and the traffic. On 7 April 1930, an article was passed at Town Meeting to amend the zoning by-law to change Parker's clam stand from a business to a general residence district. The article passed with a 71 to 1 vote.

Almost one year to the day, 1 April 1931, it was Wesley Parker's turn at Town Meeting. He was able to flip the amended zoning change back to a business district. The vote was 556 for and 185 against. He got the necessary two-thirds majority by a margin of 62.

Around 1936, Parker's moved up the street to Reading, across from the present day REI store. Howard Johnson's then opened up a new restaurant at his old site.

In 1939 a group of local citizens called the "Upper Lakeside Associa-

tion" presented an article that was voted on 27 March 1939. Guess what, it was to rezone the Howard Johnson site and land across the street towards Reading from a business district to a general residence district. Unlike in 1930, the article failed with a 152 to 313 vote.

Eventually Howard Johnson's closed and several businesses recycled the former Ho-Jo's. There was a furniture store, snack bar, an Italian restaurant, and finally in the late 70's, the Lanai Island Restaurant.

On 20 May 1998, this writer and other concerned citizens showed up at a conservation commission meeting. This was the same night that Shorty's Mexican Restaurant was in for their demo permitting to replace Lanai Island. We asked the conservation commission for support to have the town purchase or take by eminent domain the site for park purposes. This was a very controversial issue in Town. It required two town meetings, a ballot vote, lawsuits, and applying for and receiving state funding to help defer the one million plus cost of this site.

Finally on 19 October 2002, the "Lady of the Lake" (an award given to Gertrude M. Spaulding by the Friends of Lake Quannapowitt) got a beautiful new park dedicated to our Town's most deserving protector of open space.

This 40,900 square feet of land at the head of Lake Quannapowitt has had quite a roller coaster ride since Wes was frying clams. I am proud to be a part of the happy ending and a friend of the late Gertrude M. Spaulding. ❖

Rumney Marsh **Eastern Avenue, Saugus**

Thanks to generous support from the ACEC Stewardship Grant Program, the Saugus River Watershed Council, along with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Saugus Italian American Club (ITAM) hosted a public meeting during December 2005 to discuss site improvements being considered for the property across the street from the Club.

Following a presentation by Joan LeBlanc of the Saugus River Watershed Council, neighbors and other members of the public provided comments to be incorporated into the site plan. Topics covered included: 1) preventing future illegal dumping, 2) designating parking for Saugus ITAM, 3) providing stormwater management, 4) improving landscaping, and 5) improving public access and interpretive information.

Given the site's location adjacent to the Rumney Marshes Area of Critical Environmental Concern, the site plan will utilize Low Impact Development (LID) techniques such as vegetative filters for stormwater management. While most of the site will be used for parking related to ITAM events, public access and interpretive information will be provided for pedestrians utilizing this informal gateway to Rumney Marsh.

Strategies identified at the public meeting will be incorporated into a final site plan to be developed by DCR during 2006. Environmental permitting for the site is anticipated during 2006. Phase 1 short term improvements such as the addition of gates and guardrails are expected during 2006. Longer term additional site improvements such as landscaping and interpretive elements will be implemented during 2007. ❖

Bob McLaughlin is a Board Member of the Saugus River Watershed Council and a Wakefield resident.

Lynn Mayor Chip Clancy Rejects Land Swap

Lynn Mayor Chip Clancy has rejected a proposed land swap that would have traded away a 15-acre parcel of watershed protection land in Lynn for commercial development in Lynnfield.

The plan called for exchanging 15 acres of land held by the Lynn Water and Sewer Commission for water supply protection with the 15-acre Bow Ridge parcel in Lynnfield, currently held for conservation purposes. Lynnfield would then rezone and commercially develop the former watershed conservation land.

Last fall, SRWC submitted comments opposing the land swap highlighting the following concerns: 1) the proposal would result in a net loss of 15 acres of protected land within the watershed; 2) the swap would violate Lynn's Water Supply Protection Plan approved by the Dept. of Environmental Protection; and 3) transferring environmentally valuable open space from Lynn to Lynnfield for commercial development to increase Lynnfield's tax base would violate the state's Environmental Justice Policy, particularly the goal of enhancing open space and building the urban park network.

Despite opposition by the Friends of Lynn Woods, SRWC, and Lynnfield residents, the plan was approved at Lynnfield Town Meeting last October.

Although the plan was promoted by Lynnfield Town Manager Bill Gustus throughout 2005, the City of Lynn only received its first written correspondence about the proposal in December 2005.

Later that month, Mayor Chip Clancy publicly rejected the plan. He was quoted in Lynn and Lynnfield newspapers calling the proposed land swap "nonsensical, strictly a non-starter, and absurd". Thanks to Mayor Clancy's leadership the proposed Lynn/Lynnfield land swap is no longer a threat. ❖

Saugus River Watershed Council 2006 Winter Programs

History of Pleasure Island

Sunday, February 12, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Breakheart Reservation, Saugus



Join Friends of Pleasure Island President Bob McLaughlin for an indoor program about the history of Pleasure Island, which was open in Wakefield from 1959 to 1969. This fun program includes video clips and a look at the far reaching impact that this amusement park had on the region.

Winter Wildlife Signs

Sunday, February 19, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Breakheart Reservation, Saugus

Join professional wildlife expert Bob Metcalfe for a winter wildlife tracking tour. Participants will look for tracks and other signs of wildlife found at Breakheart Reservation in Saugus. Meet at the Breakheart Visitor's Center for a brief indoor introduction to tracking and then head out to the nature trails for a leisurely hike. Light refreshments will be served. Participants should dress warmly and wear footwear suitable for snow or ice conditions. RSVP early as space is limited.

Saugus River Fish Monitoring

Wednesday, February 15, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Breakheart Reservation, Saugus

Join Saugus River Watershed Council Director Joan LeBlanc for an indoor presentation about results from last year's fish monitoring project in the Saugus River. Guests will also learn about opportunities to volunteer for the spring 2006 fish monitoring program.

History of Lake Quannapowitt

Sunday, February 26, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Breakheart Reservation, Saugus

Join Saugus River Watershed Council Vice President and local expert Doug Heath for an informative presentation about the history and natural resources of Lake Quannapowitt in Wakefield. Learn about the status of water quality and major threats to the natural resources of this 254-acre Great Pond, which forms the headwaters of the Saugus River.

Directions to Breakheart Reservation:

From Route 1, take Lynnfields Parkway exit toward Melrose. Take right onto Forest Street, immediately after Target. Follow to end. Meet in Christopher P. Dunne Visitor's Center, Breakheart Reservation.

Registration

All programs are FREE and open to the public. Registration is required for ALL winter programs. For more information or to register, please contact the Saugus River Watershed Council at srw@shore.net or 781-233-5046. ❖



Saugus River Watershed Council
P.O. Box 1092
Saugus, MA 01906



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.

Winter 2006

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 _____

Send check or money order to:
Saugus River Watershed Council
P.O. Box 1092
Saugus, MA 01906