



RiverWatch

July 2010

THE NORTH AND SOUTH RIVERS WATERSHED ASSOCIATION, INC.

Celebrating 40 Years!

Letter from the President

The late Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, an historically important jurist, was also a committed environmentalist. In 1965, he visited the South Shore and was taken by boat to explore the North River. His hosts were members of the local chapter of the Izaak Walton League. They had successfully led the struggle to upgrade the design of the Scituate Water Treatment facility to withstand the demands of the most extreme of weather events. Douglas was quite taken by what he saw of the river and remarked to his hosts “Congratulations... but while you may have won a battle, don’t think you’ve won a war... the price of victory is eternal vigilance”.

As I mull over this story (for which I thank Bob Detwiler), I’m reminded of several related things.

First, the history of protecting the watershed (thankfully) did not just spring forth in 1970 or, for that matter in 1965. While we are immensely proud of our 40 years’ accomplishments of protecting the watershed, it’s useful to recognize others – groups and individuals – who predated or contributed contemporaneously to that cause.

Second, the story is remarkable not only for the insight of Douglas, but for the foresight of those who fought to manage the risk of low probability but extreme impact threats. It is human nature for us to be lulled into complacency when we cannot see evidence of a threat firsthand. We have only to look to the current catastrophe in the Gulf to see how over-confidence in managing the environmental risk could build over time because – for whatever reason – there had been no precedent for the accident.

Third, we cannot completely know the extent to which the efforts of the NSRWA and

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Hanover High School's AP Chemistry class at Couch Beach during a class field trip on the North River with NSRWA.

“After all, I believe that it is extremely important to protect natural resources like the North River because it is the home to many plants and animals that are key in the chain of survival for many species...[including] ourselves.”

*Rebecca Mahoney, Hanover High School Student
after paddling the North River for the first time with the NSRWA.*

Reflections on Our Legacy

Letter from the Executive Director

2010 marks the NSRWA’s 40th year – quite a milestone. In July of 1970, at the height of our nation’s environmental consciousness-raising, a group of concerned citizens formed the NSRWA to protect our rivers. I was just three years old when the organization was formed. It is no small feat that this same organization can now employ me and others to protect and restore this river system. Jobs like this were rare if not unheard of back then.

Think about that. A group of citizens that started with literally nothing formed a group so vibrant that they passed laws to protect their river, fought legal battles to prevent pollution, and has lived on to hire the next generation to be the river’s steward.

It is quite a legacy to fulfill. It weighs both lightly and heavily on me at the

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THE NORTH AND SOUTH RIVERS WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

The mission of the North & South Rivers Watershed Association is to preserve, restore, maintain and conserve in their natural state, the waters and related natural resources within the watershed.

Our goals are to:

- *Restore the water quality of the rivers by identifying and correcting adverse impacts;*

- *Encourage stewardship of the watershed through public education, outreach and recreation programs; and*

- *Promote responsible growth by working in partnerships to preserve open space, scenic vistas and sensitive natural resources.*

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Shellfish Beds and Herring Runs

Restoring native fish runs and reopening shellfish beds have been defining NSRWA goals for 25 years.

In 1988, the North and South River shellfish beds were closed indefinitely. And when NSRWA did the first fish counts in our river system in 1996, we found that the First Herring Brook was functionally dead – despite its name, there were NO herring to be counted!

These problems have been a consequence of high pollution, low summer river flows, and many physical obstructions – indicators, essentially, of unhealthy rivers. And for much of our history, NSRWA has fought to restore health to the North and South Rivers, locating and controlling pollution sources, advocating for water conservation, and working steadily to improve fish ladders and remove other unnecessary impediments.

Testing and monitoring an essential role of NSRWA

Monitoring our rivers is one of the NSRWA's core strengths to improve our rivers' health. For 40 years the NSRWA has been not only the voice but the eyes and ears for the rivers.

Since 1990 the NSRWA has hosted annual RiverWatch sampling to collect a long term record of water quality and to engage the public in monitoring the rivers' health. Over the years we have sampled our rivers' waters to identify and fix the causes of pollution to our rivers. At the same time we have counted herring and monitored other stream organisms to determine our rivers' general health.

This tradition lives on in our current work. With a goal to open shellfish beds and preserve and restore fish runs we have embarked upon an ambitious expansion of our monitoring efforts. Please see our recent Blue Communities Campaign progress on the next page.

Shellfishing and Water Quality Monitoring

Collecting sound scientific data is the key to moving towards a cleaner, healthier river system. We have seen that in the progress that



has been made as shown by the opening of the North River for shellfishing in 1996 and the recent expansion of the shellfishing season today. There were many steps that were necessary in order for that to happen from the legal battle that required the Scituate wastewater treatment plant to emit clean discharges to the North River, to finding and then fixing storm water pollution sources. The NSRWA's years of monitoring the river's water quality was the key to understanding, stopping and preventing those pollution sources.

Similarly on the South River in 1998 with the South River Initiative the NSRWA identified pollution hot spots through our monitoring and laid the foundation for improving water quality and opening those shellfish beds. As a result the sewer system was extended in Marshfield in 2000, and today we continue our efforts to identify and fix stormwater pollution sources to the South River. Our work has paid off – over the past 10 years we have seen substantial water quality improvements in the South River.

Herring Runs and Streamflows

Restoring more natural streamflows in support of herring runs and other native river species in our watershed has also defined much of our work over the past years. Most of our "herring brooks" remain devoid of herring and other native fish due to impaired streamflow, habitat and unsurmountable dams and culverts.

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Blue Communities Campaign Progress

News

South River Park Passes at Marshfield Spring town meeting. Thank you to all who voted in support of this project. We are working with the open space and community preservation committees to garner donations and grants that we hope will minimize the total cost of the park construction and for further resources to pursue the walking path along the South River. South River Park construction is set to start in the Spring of 2011!

Community Preservation stays strong in tough economy. Thank you to the citizens from Marshfield, Norwell, and Hingham who voted to keep the Community Preservation fund strong! This funding is essential to continue to protect open space for our rivers.

Scituate Stormwater Regulations Finally Pass! In 2008 the NSRWA worked to pass a Stormwater Bylaw in the town of Scituate, and finally, after much debate the Scituate Planning Board has passed a set of regulations to administer the new law. These regulations will minimize paved surfaces and require more infiltration from new development, helping to repair the water cycle and put more water back into the ground and into the First Herring Brook!

Expanding our Monitoring Efforts

Measuring Streamflow

This year, in partnership with the Massachusetts Bays program, the NSRWA received funding from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust License Plate Fund. This funding will enable the NSRWA to distribute temperature and streamflow loggers in important fish runs from New Hampshire to Provincetown in partnership with the other Mass. Bays Program regions.

The NSRWA will install streamflow loggers where there are relatively strong fish runs in the Herring River in Pembroke and the South River in Marshfield. A website will be developed that will allow volunteers to enter their fish count data and track streamflow and temperature data for their streams, enabling citizens and fisheries managers to review streamflow and temperature information to ascertain impacts from climate change and to collaborate on restoring our herring runs.

South River Water Quality Monitoring and Stormwater Improvements

The Town of Marshfield, the NSRWA and Mass Bays program collaborated and were awarded federal stimulus funding to hunt down the remaining sources of bacteria to the South River, prioritize areas for remediation and provide engineering designs for the top three fixes. These designs when completed will be submitted next year for additional grant funding to retrofit existing stormwater systems that are contributing pollution to the South River. Slowly but surely we are making progress to cleanup the river and get the shellfish beds reopened.

River Guardian Challenge Complete!

We reported to you in past newsletters about the founding of our new River Guardian Circle to recognize major donors of \$500 or more, and the \$20,000 Challenge Fund offering to match new contributions of \$500 or more.

We were given until June 30 to match the fund, and are extremely pleased that we completed the \$20,000 challenge in early May!

Thank you to new or renewing River Guardian members!

Richard Krause

Karen Stone and Mike Waddell

Bill Gildea

Kathy and David Donahue

Richard and Jackie Leach

Mark DiRico

Andrea Miller

The Next Challenge

Successfully completing the River Guardian match on time has triggered a follow-up challenge from generous donors over the next 12 months.

Now *any* increase in your *total support* this year over what you contributed in 2009 will be matched from our new Challenge Fund; and if you increase to \$500 or more, making you a member of our new River Guardian Circle, the entire amount will be matched!

Celebrating Forty Years of Being The Voice For The Rivers

A HISTORY OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH RIVERS WATERSHED

1970

1970: NSRWA Founded



1976-78: North River Scenic Protective Order passed, establishing the North River Commission

1977: The North and South Rivers designated a National Natural Landmark

1980

1987: Monitoring discharges at the Scituate Treatment plant begins

1988: First River Cleanup Day

1988: First staff hired and office established

1988: The North and South River shellfish beds are closed due to pollution



1989: Lawsuit against the town of Scituate for illegal discharges from the wastewater treatment plant initiated

1990

1990: First study to locate stormwater pollution on the North River and implement strategies to fix them

1990: River-Watch Volunteer Monitoring program started

1991: Harvest 95 Campaign launched to restore shellfishing on the North River

1993: Pollution monitoring on South River begins

1993: Launch the Indian Head Greenway Project to provide public access in Hanover

1994: Scituate ordered to bring its treatment plant into compliance

1994: Install stormwater treatment system at Riverside Circle

1994: Adopt a Fishway program begins



1995: Begin monitoring the construction plans for the Greenbush Train line by the MBTA



1995: Provide public outreach for the Superfund Cleanup of hazardous waste at the South Weymouth Naval Air Station

1996: North River Shellfish Beds opened for one month - December



1997: Donovan property in Norwell, Fleetwood and Willowbrook Farms in Pembroke saved

1997: The South River Initiative begins with water quality monitoring, identification of lands along the South River in need of protection, and education about the South River

2000

2000: First Herring Brook Initiative launched

2000: Macro-invertebrates survey in the North River watershed completed

2000: Passage of Sewer in Marshfield and reducing the impact of failing septic systems on the South River



2000: River Adventures Camp begins

2001: Community Preservation passed in Duxbury, Marshfield, Norwell and Scituate

2001: Save Our River Campaign keeps the MBTA Greenbush Layover Station from being on the North River marsh

2001: North River mapping project begins

2001: The YMCA Mill Pond dam fails on Third Herring Brook, leading NSRWA to call for river restoration for herring passage



2002: Chosen to host South Shore staff for the Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program



2002: Launch the Watershed Action Alliance of South-eastern Massachusetts

2003: Greenscapes program started



2003: Study of boater needs in support of No Discharge Designation

2003: First Herring Brook initiates stream-flow monitoring

2004: Preserved 54 acres in First Herring Brook Watershed and 2.3 acres in North River Watershed

2004: Stormdrain pollution sources study in the downtown area of Marshfield

2004: Prioritize land along the North River for protection

2004: Pass Community Preservation in Hanover

2005: Launch Protecting What Matters to preserve land critical to the North and South Rivers

2005: 20 acres at Canoe Club in Pembroke and 25 acre Messer Property in Marshfield on North River preserved

2005: Marshfield High School Biology Class installs rain garden to clean stormwater at town hall

2006: Pass Community Preservation in Pembroke

2006: Appeal the Rockland Wastewater Treatment Plant permit for discharge of partially treated sewage results in stronger requirements to upgrade system

2006: 27.7 acre Ellis Property preserved in the South River Watershed. Preserved 70 acre Cervelli Farm in Hanover, 67.7 acres in Scituate, 6.5 acres in Marshfield - all in North River Watershed

2007: 50 additional acres of shellfishing beds are opened in the North River



2007: Condition placed on Scituate's Water Withdrawal Permit requires investigation to restore herring run

2008: Pass Stormwater Bylaw in Scituate requiring development to reduce impervious surfaces and to treat and recharge stormwater

2008: 25 acre Little's Conservation area along North River in Marshfield and 36 acre Stetson Kindred along North River in Norwell preserved

2008: Former Buckles and Boards property acquired on South River in Marshfield

2008: No Discharge Area for boat waste designation for rivers



2008: Pilot "Water All Around You" education program in Scituate 5th grade schools

2008: Streamflow gages installed in Third Herring Brook to assess impacts from dams and drinking water withdrawals

2008: The NSRWA successfully advocates for rain gardens to treat runoff from the 18 acre Target parking lot in the Third Herring Brook watershed

2008: Weymouth Naval Air station redevelopment project include NSRWA's request for daylighting of French's Stream

2009: Installed a demonstration rain garden in every town on the South Shore

2010

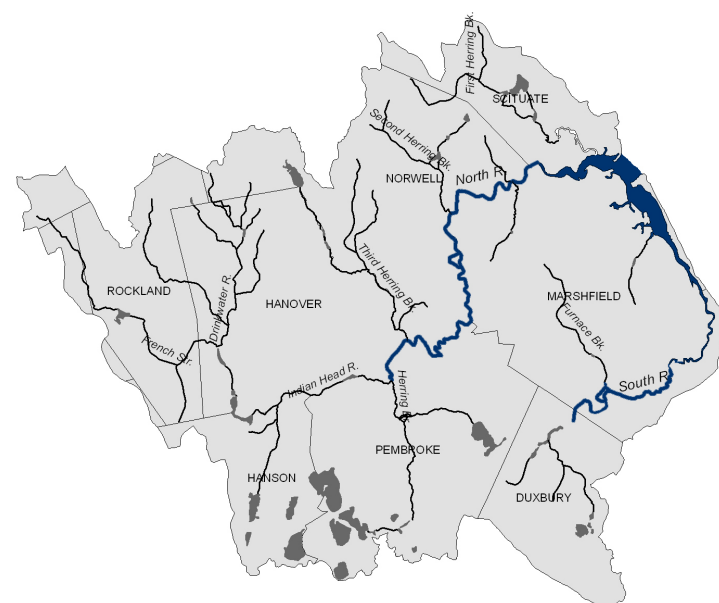
2010: Herring Brook fish ladder funding obtained for Pembroke

2010: 5 acres preserved next to Third Herring Brook in Norwell

2010: Launch Blue Communities Campaign focused on restoring nature's water cycle to restore shellfish beds and fish runs by reducing water consumption, improving stormwater treatment and overcoming impediments in streams

2010: Pass South River Park funding in Marshfield for former Buckles and Boards property

2010: Water quality improved such that shellfish beds are open from December until June 30th



North and South Rivers Watershed

Join the Greenscapes Water Challenge

Save water and the environment • You could earn \$500 for your favorite charity

What: Put together a team of at least 5 households in your town to compete with other teams in your town. Your organization or team must be based in **Norwell, Marshfield, Pembroke, Scituate, or Hanover** to be eligible. Then see which team in your town can consume the least amount of water between **July 15 and September 30**. The winning team in each town will receive \$500 for their favorite charity, and the pride of knowing they have saved precious summertime water.

Why: In summertime water use doubles, just when water is least plentiful due to droughts and the demand for lawn watering. Often there is not enough water to support fish in our streams and our reservoirs are diminished.

How: Put together a team of 5 households or more, and register your team on the North and South Rivers Watershed Association's website www.nsrwa.org, where you will find more information. The NSRWA's Greenscapes program will e-mail you water-saving tips throughout the challenge to help you reduce water consumption. The winning team will be calculated by determining which team consumes the least amount of water per person between July 15 and September 30.



May the best water-conserving team win! Sign up by July 15 at www.nsrwa.org

Letter from the President, continued from page 1

other protective organizations have had in managing the risk of threats, particularly the more insidious ones. What we do know is that we have a remarkable ecological resource in our “own back yard” and that while we have so far had significant successes in protecting it we still have much work to do.

Perhaps the most important part of our stewardship is to work to ensure that these past successes do not succumb to complacency; which is why the Douglas words, “eternal vigilance,” still ring with such clarity.

by Russ Haskell, President

Reflections on Our Legacy, continued from page 1

same time. It is heavy to note those who came before us, their accomplishments and how we must continue to build on those today. It is light on my shoulders when I see myself in the young people we work to enlighten and educate about their rivers and their enthusiasm for learning about and protecting them.

Just this past week I had the opportunity to take 35 Hanover High School AP Chemistry students, their teachers and some parent volunteers out to explore the North River. It was my first time on the rivers this season and it was a glorious sunny day. We timed our paddle to leave from the Marshfield Canoe Launch and ride the tide to Couch's Beach. One of the questions I asked the students when we stopped at Couch's Beach for a quick lunch was how many of them had been on the river before. Surprisingly, only a handful of students raised their hands.

How is it that these young people who live so close to this wonderful resource have never had the opportunity to get out and experience it? We have our work cut out for us! And with much appreciation for those who came before us, we are here to teach that next generation of river stewards.

by Samantha Woods, Executive Director

Shellfish Beds and Herring Runs, continued from page 2

Restoring fish passage has been an ongoing effort that we are increasingly making headway on and that our monitoring efforts are crucial in moving forward. The NSRWA has monitored the health of the fish runs through volunteer fish counts, measured streamflow and temperature, and assessed impediments to fish passage. This has resulted in our cleaning up fish ladders, providing technical assistance and funding to repair fish ladders, and advocating for more natural streamflows. For example, most recently the volunteer streamflow monitoring of the First Herring Brook Initiative has culminated in an understanding of why there are no herring in the First Herring Brook anymore, and how we might be able to restore them to their natural spawning habitat.

We use monitoring everyday in many aspects of our lives...to track weather, stocks, traffic patterns, and our own health. The health of our rivers and streams deserves no less observation. Through our scientific monitoring the NSRWA staff and its cadre of citizen scientists shed light on the damage done to our river's ecosystems and provide insight into our progress to bring them back to health.

by Samantha Woods, Executive Director

8th Annual Outdoor Adventure & Kayak Expo

The concept of expanding the Kayak Expo into a full blown Outdoor Adventure Expo came to fruition on Saturday, April 10th at the Marshfield High School Gymnasium. In addition to the best selection of kayaks gathered in one place on the South Shore, the 16,000 sq ft gym was brimming with everything related to outdoor activities including windsurfers, stand up paddle boards, fishing equipment, surf boards, skate boards, camping gear, bicycles and more. Hundreds of adults and children enjoyed the goods from top vendors, lectures, and "Stormy" the 15 ft duck. Special thanks to the NSRWA Expo Chairman, Roger Crawford, for organizing this event for the 8th straight year and our board members, volunteers and the vendor's who made this a fun and colorful event worth attending every year.

2010 EXPO VENDORS

Bicycle Link, Inc.
 Billington Sea Kayak
 Charles River Canoe & Kayak
 Crawford Boatbuilding
 East Wind Rowing
 EMS
 Geocaching on the South Shore
 Honest By Catch
 Levitate Surf and Skate
 Marshfield High School Boatbuilders

Marshfield Recreation Department
 Mass Striped Bass Association
 Monahan's Marine Inc.
 Nantasket Kayaks
 Osprey Sea Kayak Adventures
 Paddler's Shop at Rivendell Marine
 REI
 Sailworld Cape Cod
 Scituate Harbor Master
 South Shore Neptunes Dive Club

South Shore Quests
 SpitDudes
 The Fishing Academy
 Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center
 U.S. Coast Guard Auxillary
 Wampanoag Paddlers
 WATD Nautical Talk
 West Bridgewater Berwick, Inc.
 Wild Turkey Paddlers

23rd Annual Clean Up Day



Hanover volunteers display the trash they picked out of the river!

Over 100 adults, students, and families with children came out on a glorious day to rid the rivers, tributaries and surrounding areas of trash. All told we picked up more than 20 pick up truck loads of trash and prevented this waste from entering our waterways and ocean.

Thank you to Whole Foods Market who again donated quality hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, drinks and all the fixings for the cookout at the Driftway Conservation Area.

Janice Dayton of Scituate was the winner of the kayak raffle. The prize was a Heritage kayak and paddle generously donated by Doug Gray, owner of Billington Sea Kayak in Plymouth.

Thank you all who help us keep our watershed a beautiful place to live.

NSRWA Summer 2010 Events

To sign up or
 for more information
 contact us at
 781-659-8168 or paula
 @nsrwa.org

20th Annual Great River Race

Saturday, July 24th

People of all ages, come join in the fun. Registration forms are now available! To download visit www.nsrwa.org or call (781)-659-8168.

More on the next page . . .



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- Reflections on our legacy
- Progress towards a healthy river system

You're invited to the
NSRWA's 40th Anniversary Party
September 20!

Luddam's Ford to Tucker Preserve Loop Walk

Sunday, September 26 at 1 pm

Enjoy a long fall walk with volunteer, Judy Grecco. Beginning at Luddam's Ford Park in Hanover, you will walk along the old railroad bed along Luddam's Ford Pond to Hanson, then looping back through Pembroke through the Tucker Preserve (across the pond from where you started.) This is an approximately 4 mile walk.

On the Water Paddling Workshops

Every Monday Night in August

Improve your skills and learn correct paddling techniques, how to perform wet exits and re-entries, and rescues from Senior National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) Instructor and NSRWA board member, Doug Lowry. This workshop is for beginners and intermediate paddlers who are interested in improving their skills and learning new skills from the best.

Workshops will be held every Monday in August (2, 9, 16, 23, 30). Cost per session is \$10 for NSRWA members and \$25 for non-members (includes cost of new membership and free map). Participants must supply their own kayak and must wear a pfd. Location will vary. Pre-registration is required as class size is limited.

SAVE THE DATE 40th Anniversary Gala

*Monday, September 20, 2010
Mill Wharf, Scituate*

Your invited to help celebrate 40 years of being the voice of the rivers! Look for details on our website, email and in your mailbox soon!

Yoga at the River's Edge

*Saturdays, 8:30 am - 10 am
June 19 - September 11*

*Various outdoor locations along the North
and South Rivers*

For more info visit our website, get on our Rivernet email list, or join our Facebook group "Yoga at the River's Edge."