

## Town of Winchester Proposes Flood Mitigation Program

*Caroline Broderick, Winchester Resident and MyRWA Policy Committee Member*

**Floods in recent years.** Like many cities and towns in the Mystic River watershed, the Town of Winchester has experienced severe flooding in recent years. The Town estimates its economic losses resulting from flooding at over \$16 million over the past decade. Winchester is proposing to address its flooding problems by making structural changes to the Aberjona River, which flows south from Woburn through the center of Winchester and empties into the Upper Mystic Lake. Changes proposed include removing or bypassing constrictions throughout Winchester and widening the channel in the southernmost reach.

**Exploring alternatives.** As required by law, a Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) Environmental Notification Form for the project was filed with the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) in 2002. In response to comments from MyRWA and others, Winchester has explored alternatives and has modified its proposal to mitigate downstream flooding impacts. Winchester has hired the ENSR Corporation (which is also creating new Mystic River Basin floodplain maps for FEMA) to analyze the program using the FEMA model. With ENSR's assistance, Winchester has determined that the proposed structural changes, if left unmitigated, would increase flood elevations downstream. The predicted rise in flood elevation along Alewife Brook, for instance, would be approximately 0.24 feet, which would be a considerable extension of the floodplain in that area.

**Reducing flood impacts.** In February of this year, Winchester submitted a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) with the EOEA. The DEIR proposes two measures designed to reduce downstream flooding impacts of Winchester's proposed conveyance increase: changing the configuration and operation of the Scalley Dam in Woburn and modifying the Craddock Locks in Medford. According to the ENSR model, these two mitigation projects together with the proposed conveyance increase through Winchester would result in a reduction of the 100-year flood elevations along the Alewife Brook by 0.37 feet. The DEIR also notes that structural changes to the Mystic Lakes' mid-lakes dam and operational changes to the pumping regimen at the Amelia Earhart dam would further mitigate downstream impacts, but these changes are not described in detail, nor are they relied on as mitigation in the proposal.

**Falling short.** While the revised Winchester proposal responds to some of MyRWA's comments from 2002, the DEIR program falls short on several counts. In April, MyRWA submitted comments on the DEIR, which can be summarized in three categories. First, alleviating flooding risks by increasing channel conveyance is a short-term rather than long-term solution. Winchester should begin by increasing infiltration and storage and improving stormwater management practices. This goal can be achieved through regulation and through construction of infiltration and storage systems; only then should a conveyance increase be considered. Second, there is insufficient information in the DEIR to permit a detailed review of the downstream flooding impacts. Important assumptions underlying the model have not been revealed. For example, no details are presented for the proposed operation of the Scalley Dam; nor are measures outlined for what action will be taken when the operation fails due to human error. Third, the proposal effectively "captures" a large portion of the watershed's available overall conveyance capacity, to benefit primarily just Winchester, and may limit the ability of other municipalities to address their flooding problems effectively once the proposal is enacted.

MyRWA will continue to monitor and to keep you informed about the progress of Winchester's proposal. ➡

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The **Mystic Messenger** is a publication of the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), a community-based, private nonprofit, Section 501(c)(3) organization, established in 1970 to protect and restore the natural resources of the Mystic River watershed.

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Winchester Unitarian Society • Woburn Residents Environmental Network  
This issue of the Mystic Messenger was produced by Dara Olmsted,  
Managing Editor; Michelle Hewitt, Editor; Jane Sauer, Production Manager.

## Picture the Mystic ...

... the beautiful ... the ugly

### A photo contest for the Mystic watershed

MyRWA is looking for photographs that illustrate the glories and challenges of the Mystic River watershed. Photos might be used in slide presentations, on note cards, or in calendars to promote the Mystic and to raise money for MyRWA. These photos will remind us of why we do the work we do.

Send us your best watershed photos, in every season, at its most beautiful or saddest – whether the pictures show glorious scenery, happy boaters, or dead fish.

Submission deadline: April 1, 2007. Winners announced: May 2007.  
See [www.mysticriver.org](http://www.mysticriver.org) for contest rules and more details.

## Thanks for Continuing Support

US Environmental Protection Agency  
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation  
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Mystic Watershed Collaborative • Tufts Institute of the Environment  
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## From the Executive Director

Dear Friends of MyRWA:

After much deliberation, and a great deal of ambivalence, I have decided to resign as Executive Director of the Mystic River Watershed Association, effective September 1. I want to devote all of my attention to policy issues and advocacy related to urban river restoration, with a focus (of course) on the Mystic watershed. MyRWA is at a critical stage in its development, and needs to grow to maintain momentum in its work on behalf of the watershed. This will require a significant investment in fundraising, grant management, and staff and organizational development on the part of MyRWA's Executive Director. I believe that my best contribution to MyRWA's efforts – and my greatest interest – is in the policy arena, and have therefore made this difficult decision to change my role with MyRWA. I plan to continue my work with MyRWA as a member of the Policy Committee and, if current fundraising efforts and grant applications will support it, as a staff member focusing on policy. I look forward to working with MyRWA's new Executive Director, Board, and staff, either as an employee or in a volunteer role, to continue promoting watershed goals.

I am very proud of the work we have accomplished as an organization over the past three years. We have well-established programs, an excellent staff team, and an engaged and committed Board as a strong platform for the future. As the Board works on recruiting a new Executive Director, I hope you will continue to support MyRWA with your time, your talent and your treasure. We will keep you, our members and friends, informed about this transition as we move forward with plans over the summer, through the newsletter and our listserve.

Best wishes,

Nancy Hammett

## From MyRWA's Board President

Dear Friends of MyRWA:

The Board is looking forward to working with Nancy in her new role and eagerly awaits working with its new Executive Director. Our Search Committee is hard at work to fill the position by September .

Sincerely,

Sue Bass

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Please support them!

# Municipalities Respond to Mystic Monitoring Network Data Reports


By Todd Callaghan, Ph.D., Member of MyRWA's Committee on Water Quality

Water quality data provided by the Mystic Monitoring Network (MMN) has recently led several municipalities to identify and remediate illicit sewage discharges to the Mystic Watershed.

**Lexington.** Water samples collected in late 2005 and early 2006 from Mill Brook and Munroe Brook were found to have bacteria levels well above State Water Quality Standards. MMN Director Jenny Birnbaum has been working with the Town of Lexington to investigate possible illicit sewer connections to the town's stormwater infrastructure. The data, made available to the town and to the EPA, led to the EPA's invocation of Section 308 of the Clean Water Act. Section 308 authorizes the EPA to request the submission of any information necessary to determine whether a municipality is in violation of water quality standards promulgated under the Act. The EPA requested that Lexington provide detailed information on its sewer and stormwater systems as well as the quality of several of its other water bodies by May 10th. It is also requiring Lexington to collect water samples for bacterial analysis and has encouraged the town to work with the Mystic Monitoring Network.

**Revere.** Water samples were collected several times in 2004 and 2005 at an outfall in the upstream portion of Mill Creek where increasing bacteria concentrations had been observed. This past February, MMN volunteers observed raw sewage at this same site. Based on these observations, Nancy Hammett, Executive Director of MyRWA, sent a letter to Revere officials, including Mayor Ambrosino. It turns out that the culprit was a collapsed sewer line. Within days, the City of

Revere completed repairs to the damaged pipe. Follow-up samples taken by the MMN revealed that bacterial levels in the outfall had decreased substantially, indicating that the repair had successfully eliminated one source of raw sewage, but unfortunately, the levels remained above Massachusetts' standards. More work is required on this pipe for it to comply with State Water Quality Standards.

**East Boston.** Two stormwater outfalls near Constitution Beach were sampled for bacteria in March and April 2005. Analysis revealed bacteria counts above State Water Quality Standards. When MMN volunteers returned to the site this past March, bacteria levels were still high; the Network's data was forwarded to the City of Boston and as a result, a recent Boston Water and Sewer Commission report highlighted three outfalls to be investigated, two of which were outfalls sampled by the MMN. While the bacterial contamination has not yet been addressed, our efforts have helped the City of Boston target these outfalls for future remediation efforts. 


Lexington is not alone in receiving an EPA Clean Water Act Section 308 request. In 1998, letters were sent to Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, Somerville, and Winchester, and this past December, similar letters went to Chelsea, Medford, Everett, Malden, and Revere. Each community has made substantial progress improving contaminated storm drains, and efforts are still underway. Based on information supplied in response to these requests, the DEP has issued Notices of Non-compliance to Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, and Somerville. To help both the enforcement agencies and the municipalities remediate the health problems resulting from these contaminations, the MMN actively tracks the offending outfalls in these communities and confirms fixes as they are achieved.

## Report on the Mystic Watershed Forum 2006

By Anne Lightbody, MyRWA Board Member

The Mystic Watershed Collaborative, a partnership between MyRWA and Tufts University, sponsored the Mystic Watershed Forum on April 28th at Tufts. Approximately 50 people, including Tufts faculty, students, local, state, and federal government officials, and activists, gathered to exchange information and to plan for the next action items. As MyRWA's Executive Director, Nancy Hammett, pointed out, research and action are mutually dependent, because effective action relies upon well-reasoned, accumulated research—and research is most powerful when directed toward solving real-world problems. Dialogue among participants was lively throughout the afternoon, which included poster sessions, presentations, and panel discussions.

Research talks at the Forum included John Durant, an Associate Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Tufts, who used his experience monitoring Superfund sites on the Aberjona and Mystic Lakes to illustrate how redundant academic and governmental research programs can slow down a clean-up process. MyRWA's Mystic Monitoring

Network Director, Jenny Birnbaum, familiarized audiences with a draft of the MyRWA report card. Robert Breault from the U.S. Geological Survey revealed that in general, the top layer of sediment in the Mystic is of higher quality (except for arsenic levels) than that in the Charles River, but is still more contaminated by organics and heavy metals than the national median for urban rivers. Michael Toohill from ENSR Corporation described a new hydraulic model that would model flooding for the Aberjona and Mystic flood plains. Joan Blaustein from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council reported that 17 out of the 21 communities within the Mystic watershed were in the process of developing pre-natural disaster mitigation plans to address the effects of flooding. Bradford Chase from the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries discussed prospects for the restoration of anadromous fish in the Mystic, whose numbers are declining. Finally, a distinguished panel from the EPA, Department of Environmental Protection, Tufts, and local governments discussed plans for future action. 

# 2006 Mystic River Watershed Cleanups

# 10th Annual

## Mystic River Spring Cleanup

MyRWA sponsored its annual spring cleanup on Saturday, April 29, concentrating this time near Assembly Square and the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse, Somerville. Hardworking volunteers came from near and far – some were Mystic neighbors, while others traveled from Brookline and even the South Shore.

MyRWA tackled the trash from land and boat (thanks to Jim Kiely, who showed up in his kayak!) and carried away bags and bags of debris. Our effectiveness was multiplied exponentially when Al Gehant of Gentle Giant Rowing Club required his Malden and Somerville High School student rowers to participate in the clean up before their crew races. Highlights of our cache include eight shopping carts (although we could only pull out six), a couch cushion, countless glass and plastic bottles, a trash can, buckets, and an unidentified animal.

Our volunteers were excited to see a clear delineation between areas we had cleaned that day as well as in the past and those we haven't touched yet. This yielded instant gratification for us and demonstrated the long-lasting benefits of cleanups to the riverbank. Polluters are less likely to dump in a clean area as opposed to a trash-filled one, so our efforts today are important for the future. We made a dent in the rubble, but there remains much more to be removed, and we'll definitely return next spring (our fall cleanup will be on the Medford side of the river). We hope you'll be able to join us! We extend our thanks to our volunteers, the Boys and Girls Club of Middlesex County for use of the boathouse, the Gentle Giant Rowing Club for volunteering, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation and City of Somerville for hauling away the trash.

—Report and photo by Dara Olmsted,  
MyRWA Director of Community Programs



Some cleanup volunteers with trash collected from the banks of the Mystic River.

## Sunnyside Avenue Cleanup

Over 30 neighbors took part in the cleanup and neighborhood celebration (including a performance by the band *Roots*) on April 29 sponsored by the East Arlington Good Neighbor Committee and the Sunnyside Avenue Neighborhood Association. The cleanup stretched from the Arizona Terrace Condominiums to the Broadway bridge on the Arlington side of Alewife Brook. Nearly 40 bags of trash were collected, and recyclables were separated from waste. Several large items were also removed from among the vegetation.

Supplies and food were purchased with donations from local businesses: Hanson and Tilton Collision, Automotive Truck Center, Boyle's Body Works, and Johnnie's Foodmaster.

The East Arlington Good Neighbor Committee represents the East Arlington community on quality of life issues including development, traffic, parking, and air and water quality. The Alewife Brook had been a blight on the community since the Good Neighbor Committee was established in the 1970's. The Committee has a long history of involvement with the Alewife Brook.

—Report and photos by Jacob Benner,  
member, East Arlington Good Neighbor Committee



A portion of the Arlington crew pose behind some of the trash collected along one bank of Alewife Brook.



The Arlington cleanup crew enjoyed a barbecue after their cleanup efforts.

## Bucket Brigade: Herring Rescue

On May 26 and 27 volunteers of a "bucket brigade" moved more than 4,000 herring over the Upper Mystic Lake Dam so they could spawn upstream.

On the morning of May 14, 2006, the day of the Herring Run Festival, the sky was dark and the heavens were unleashing a heavy downpour. The MyRWA answering machine said the herring are running and so would we. The 5K race and the paddle races were "on," but the rest of the morning's events would be cut back or cancelled.

On the way to the Festival, held at the Middlesex Boys and Girls in Somerville, on the banks of the Mystic River, the temperature sign on the Winter Hill Bank on Broadway, Somerville read 50°. Early afternoon, the Weather Channel reported "Boston: 47°, 20-30 MPH winds, a chill factor of 38°.

The 2006 logo shows a herring with its head just above water. The t shirt was designed by Tufts student Andrew Laskey. Someone



Herring Run race fans get ready for the road and paddle races by taking cover.



Mystic Monitoring Director Jenny Birnbaum registers a 5K racer. A snug warm knit cap made sense for this Herring Run.

And, they are off and running ... in a cold and wet downpour. Todd Callaghan is in the lead at the beginning and at the end of the race.



# Herring Run Festival is a Wet Success

suggested that next year MyRWA use the same logo with the addition of a sun shining overhead. Particularly appropriate this year was the donation of a gift certificate from a pet store/pet sitting service called "Raining Cats and Dogs."

Weather not permitting, 20 runners were signed in for the 5K event and 17 canoe and kayak paddlers were ready to race in the 3 and 11.4 mile events. Mark Jacobson, who ran the paddling events for the last two years, was also coordinator of the 5K race. Mark said, "The energy of the competitors and volunteers was tremendous. Thanks to all who made the race possible." The plans are already underway for the 2007 Herring Run Festival.

2006 marked the first year of the Iron

Herring Run volunteers undercover. MyRWA staffer Dara Olmsted is front and center.



Herring award, given to anyone who completed both the 5K road race and a paddle race. There were two Iron Herring award winners: Pam Browning and Michael Melnikov, who completed both the 5K road and 11.4 mile paddle races.

This year MyRWA gave our Leadership in Advocacy award to Alison Field-Juma and our Leadership in Education award to Lisa Brukilacchio. Many volunteers make an event such as Herring Run a success, and there are too many to list here with one exception: Janey Tallarida, who has worked on the Herring Run for a number of years. Thank you for your hard work and dedication Janey!

—Article, Jane Sauer, MyRWA volunteer  
—Photos, David Dahlbacka, MyRWA volunteer



The Herring Run Festival herring keeping its head above water! Logo designer is Tufts student Andrew Laskey.

## 2006 Herring Run Festival Sponsors

Newton: Charles River Canoe & Kayak  
Somerville: Boys and Girls Club of Middlesex County, City of Somerville  
Patrick Johnston, Everett Marine Police  
Arlington: Armstrong Ambulance • Bagels by US  
Ye Olde Bake Shoppe  
Carberry's • Swifty Printing • The Book Rack  
Medford: Wild Oats  
AMRA • MyRWA

A paddler registers with MyRWA race Coordinator Mark Jacobson prior to the 3 and 11.4 mile canoe and kayak events.



Two in kayaks get ready to race.



A canoe racer pushes off from the dock.

Two 5K race fans wait for their winner to cross the finish line.



A kayak racer paddles into position.



Kayaks and canoes begin their races on a rainy, misty Mystic River.



A runner finishes her race and then receives her award.



## Results: 2006 Herring Run 5K Race

### Women: Overall Winners

- 1 Susan Scheiner, Cambridge: 25:29
- 2 Shannon Cheng, Cambridge: 25:48
- 3 Minona Heaviland, Somerville: 28:48

### Men: Overall Winners

- 1 Todd Callaghan, Somerville: 17:50
- 2 Andy Milne, Medford: 18:33
- 3 Reno Stirrat, Arlington: 18:38

### Women: 18-29

- 1 Shannon Cheng, Cambridge: 25:48
- 2 Minona Heaviland, Somerville: 28:48
- 3 Alexis Hovanessian, Somerville: 29:20

### Men: 18-29

- 1 Kenny Kurata, Granada CA: 22:05
- 2 Benjamin Yoder, Framingham: 23:18
- 3 Joshua Palen, Medford: 24:04

### Women: 30-39

- 1 Natasha Shulman, Auburndale: 33:01
- 2 Rachel Schmidt, Needham: 35:27

### Men: 30-39

- 1 Todd Callaghan, Somerville: 17:50

### Women: 40-49

- 1 Pam Browning, Carlisle: 28:56
- 2 Elizabeth Oneil, Roslindale: 37:08

### Men: 40-49

- 1 Andy Milne, Medford: 18:33
- 2 Michael Melnikov, Plainville: 22:45

### Women: 50-59

- 1 Carol Hovanessian, Somerville: 35:27

### Men: 50-59

- 1 Reno Stirrat, Arlington: 18:38

### Men: 60 Plus

- 1 Mark Stern, Somerville: 23:38

### Other 5K Race Finishers

- 1 Michael Spitznagel, Cambridge: 28:00

- 2 Erica Hubbard, Somerville: 30:21

- 3 Amy Hardy, Somerville: 32:21

### Team Results: Men

- Moose Milers: Todd Callaghan, Reno Stirrat, Mark Stern

### Team Results: Mixed

- Club 9 Racing Turtles: Benjamin Yoder, Shannon Cheng, Michael Spitznagel

## Results: Paddle Races

### 3 Mile Race

#### Mixed Racing Canoe

- 1 Carina Peritore/Mike Ripple: 42:50

#### Male Recreational Kayak

- 1 Andrew Bressen: 50:24

#### Female Recreational Kayak

- 1 Veronica Bressen: 59:55

### 11.4 Mile Race

#### International Canoe Federation

- 1 Joe Shaw: 1:46:24
- 2 Ken Cooper: 1:47: 52
- 3 William Prates: 1:55:30

#### Male Unlimited Kayak

- 1 Wesley Echols: 1:45:28
- 2 Ted VanDusen: 1:55:58

#### Female Unlimited Kayak

- 1 Pam Browning: 2:00:00

### Two Person Racing Canoe

- 1 Tim Allen/Dan Rabinkin:

#### Canoe Single

- 1 Paul Dyka: 1:56:46

#### Recreational One Person Canoe

- 1 Shawn Burke: 2:09:49

#### Recreational Two Person Canoe

- 1 Michael Melnikov/Natalia Shulman: 2:10:30

## 2006 Herring Run Prize Donors

Belmont: Belmont Wheelworks  
Cambridge: Paper Source • Raining Cats and Dogs  
Medford: Bestsellers Café • Mike's Gym  
Newton: Charles River Canoe & Kayak

# Woburn's Horn Pond Conservation Area: Much to Offer

By Gerry Kehoe, Member of Woburn Residents' Environmental Network (WREN)

Looking to add to your life list of birds you've seen? Maybe you're a fisherman in search of a new fishing hole? Do you love discovering new flowers? Is geology your bag? Or perhaps history is more to your liking. Maybe you love photographing nature's beauty. Wherever your interests lie, Horn Pond and the five other major conservation areas in Woburn have something to offer.

Woburn sports a lake, small ponds, streams, cattail marshes,



Horn Pond panorama


Photo by Gerry Kehoe

dry oak-hickory woods, a reclaimed sandpit, open fields, and the 287' monadnock called Horn Pond Mountain. Horn Pond is Woburn's largest and most varied conservation area.

Located a short distance from Woburn Center, Horn Pond has a fascinating history that includes being a resort area during the time of the Middlesex Canal, which ran along side of it. The main pond has a paved walking path around its entire two-mile circumference. Parking lots at each end, and restrooms (open from spring until fall) at the main lot on the south end make it convenient to visit. Benches line the shores of the main pond, so you're never at a loss for a place to sit and enjoy a beautiful sunset over the water. If your taste runs more toward exploring the non-beaten path, head out around the Lagoon (the smaller pond across from the main pond). The road is hard-packed gravel and runs around the lagoon for about three-quarters of a mile, then crosses over Fowle

Brook, which is the main feed for Horn Pond. Follow any of the side trails from this road to explore the woods. You'll see some lovely flowers such as New England columbine, or maybe you'll discover the reclaimed sandpit where owls can be found nesting in a lovely grove of pine. A trip up Horn Pond Mountain will reward you with a spectacular view of Boston on a clear afternoon, and around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July it is the only site featuring the Philadelphia Wood Lily. The Mountain also offers many other species of wildflowers as well as good blueberry picking if your timing is right.

Woburn's other areas offer different environments and their own histories. Shaker Glen is a lovely glacial ravine filled with ancient Hemlocks and the Shaker Glen Brook. As its name suggests, Shakers settled it in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Close by is Battle Road, an original piece of the road that Woburn patriots traveled towards Lexington and Concord on that fateful day. It is mostly wooded, with remnants of original Colonial stonewalls. Cranberry Bog, a working bog up until the 1950's, offers active bird watching and easy walking. Rag Rock is a small area with fabulous views of Horn Pond and Boston. And Forest Park hosts quiet walks in an evergreen forest with an abundance of beautiful ferns.

No matter your taste, no matter your interests, there's something for everyone in Woburn's conservation areas. Visit [www.GoWREN.org](http://www.GoWREN.org) for more information. 



A family of swans at home on Horn Pond.


Photo by Gerry Kehoe

## Middlesex Fells Visitor Center Reopening

The Middlesex Fells Reservation's Botume House Visitor Center has re-opened with a "Spring in the Middlesex Fells" First Annual Photo Show and Contest.

The Visitor Center is open on Fridays through Sundays, noon to 4 PM. Hours of operation will expand as staffing permits. The Center sponsors a variety of environmental education programs and exhibits throughout the year. It is located in the historic Botume House at 4 Woodland Road, Stoneham on the east bank of Spot Pond a half mile south from the Stone Zoo.

The Fells is a 2,400 acre natural treasure, something all too rare in this urban/suburban landscape. It is a diverse landscape of rocky hills, meadows, wetlands, forests, ponds, vernal pools, panoramic vistas, and intriguing geological features distinguish this woodland. The Fells sustains a variety of wildlife including foxes, white tail deer, turtles and salamanders, scarlet tanagers, eastern bluebirds, and hawks.


The Fells has a long and varied cultural history. Native Americans hunted here for thousands of years before the colonial period when trees were harvested, animals were allowed to graze, and town lots created. In the 1800's, Spot Pond provided ice for worldwide export. Extensive rubber manufacturing existed at the end of the 19th century in an area called Haywardville. Twentieth century human impacts can also be seen throughout the Fells due to the guidance of landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Charles Eliot, as well as the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration. Route 93 and many other roads as well as several drinking water projects have impacted the landscape. However, when you walk the many quiet hiking trails and old forest roads that wind through the reservation, you may forget that you are only a few miles from Boston. 

—Michael Arnott, DCR Seasonal Visitor Services Supervisor

## Alewife Herring: No Poaching

No, this isn't culinary advice about the best recipes for preparing freshly caught herring. Instead, it relates to a state-wide ban on fishing the species (both Alewife and Blueback) starting this year and continuing through 2009. Simply put, Massachusetts' herring are floundering. Herring, a foundation of the fish food ladder, is having such difficulty maintaining its numbers that the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries has taken the unprecedented step of halting all herring fishing for three years. This ban will assist the species in regaining viability and in turn, enable it to support a variety of important predator species such as striped bass.

The dwindling number of herring and the resulting statewide ban underscore the importance of MyRWA's efforts toward installing a fish ladder between the Lower and Upper Mystic Lakes. At this spring's Mystic Watershed Forum, Bradford Chase, Marine Fisheries Biologist for the Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries, declared that installing this ladder should be the top priority for fish-ladder building in Massachusetts because it would open up an additional 165 acres of prime habitat for this lake-spawning species; presently, Mystic herring are limited to a mere 65 acres in the Lower Mystic Lake.

To become involved or receive more information on this topic, please call John Reinhardt, Chair, MyRWA's Water Quality Committee, at 617-666-1751. 

—John Reinhardt, MyRWA Board Member

### A Mystic Meanders: August Canoe Trip on the Mystic River

Join MyRWA for an early evening canoe trips on the Mystic River in August. Meet fellow watershed residents. Spend time exploring on the river. Last year canoeists saw herons and song birds during trips. A group of canoes even went through the locks at the Amelia Earhart Dam! The August trip will be the annual *Fingerling Fling* to look for migrating Alewives. Watch the MyRWA website for more details. Canoe trips are open to all ages.

—Amy Singler, Outreach Committee

## Shout It from the Roof Tops!

### SILENT AUCTION

#### Attention: Prospective Donors

MyRWA is having a silent auction as a fundraiser for MyRWA's 35th birthday celebration.

We're looking for some valuable items or packages of items that will attract high bids.

Can you donate items such as Red Sox tickets; restaurant gift certificates; a case of wine; salon/spa services; week or weekend stays at vacation homes or hotels; professional services or consulting – landscaping, architecture, financial advising, design, etc.

If you can donate or solicit any of these or other coveted items, contact Thalia Tringo

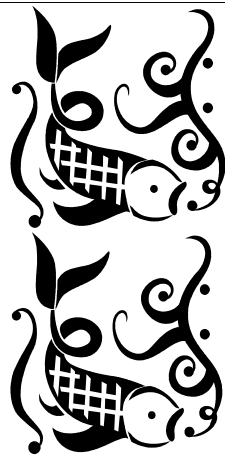
(ttringo@rcn.com) or by phone (617-245-3902).



## Members Make A Difference!

MyRWA's work would not be possible without the generous contributions from the many individuals, organizations and businesses. The following are a small sampling of members who recently renewed their commitment. We deeply appreciate the support of everyone listed here, as well as all those who have supported our work in past years.

Thomas Allen • Mairgrid Anderson • Brad Barber • Patty Barry • Jane Bestor  
Webb & Jeff Brown • Dotty & Paul Burstein • Andrea Campbell & Allen Feinstein  
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# Spy Pond Subwatershed Stormwater Survey

Spy Pond has been a familiar sight for Arlington residents for many years. The pond has an interesting history, from its glacial origins to its role as a worldwide ice supplier. This spring MyRWA and the Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development surveyed 2,000 residents of the Spy Pond subwatershed for their opinions, knowledge, and interest in nonpoint source issues and the pond itself. The answers are being used to inform and tailor upcoming nonpoint source educational forums for residents of the subwatershed. Nonpoint source pollutants enter waterbodies through natural precipitation, stormwater runoff, and from man-made or natural sources. Examples of nonpoint source pollutants are dog waste, oil, gasoline leaks from cars, sand, fertilizers, and pesticides. The following is a sampling of the survey's findings:

- Of residents who live on the shore of Spy Pond, 36% said they always or sometimes use a soil nutrient test.
- 8% of respondents always used a rain barrel; 78% never did.
- Across all survey locations, 84% said they always or sometimes cultivated native plants.
- Of residents living within a half mile of Spy Pond, 78% of their runoff went into grass while 22% went onto pavement.
- 64% of respondents would favor a bylaw limiting fertilizer and pesticide use, while 30% might, and only 6% would not.
- When asked if they would be willing to contribute financially to protect and revitalize Spy Pond, the responses were 20% "yes," 56% "maybe," and 24% "no."

In addition to using the survey as a way of educating residents at large, Arlington is installing 22 catch basins around the pond to reduce sediment input into the pond. The department is also installing markers on storm drain catch basins to remind residents that the drains lead directly to the pond – not a treatment plant.

It probably does not take a survey to know that Spy Pond is thought of as a valuable resource for Arlington, Belmont, and the larger community that enjoys the Minuteman Bike Path. Many residents have noticed an improvement in the appearance of the pond in the last few years.

The goal now is to reduce nonpoint source pollution through actions such as using organic compost instead of fertilizer, performing a soil nutrient test to tailor fertilizer use to actual conditions, using natural pest management, planting native plants, using minimal amounts of de-icer, installing rain barrels, and directing rooftop runoff to the grass. These actions, which each of us can pursue, will continue to improve the condition of Spy Pond for all of us to enjoy. ➡

—Eric Pheifer, Tufts student and MyRWA intern

MyRWA and the Town of Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development received a grant for two rain barrels from Massachusetts Riverways. The rain barrels will be raffled off at our nonpoint source educational forums for residents of the Spy Pond watershed, which will help to reduce the amount of runoff entering the pond while conserving water.

