



MYSTIC RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
20 ACADEMY STREET, SUITE 203
ARLINGTON, MA 02476

May 12, 2008

Jane Peirce, 319 RFR Coordinator
MassDEP, 2nd Floor
627 Main St.
Worcester, MA 01608

Dear Jane,

The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) is pleased to write a letter of support for the Town of Arlington's proposal to promote rain gardens and rain barrel usage through a Section 319 non-point source pollution education grant. MyRWA believes that the Town's proposal to promote rain gardens and rain barrels in Arlington and surrounding communities will support our watershed wide goal of improving water quality.

The Mystic River watershed, of which Arlington is part, is one of the most densely populated and urbanized watersheds in Massachusetts with a high percentage of impermeable surfaces such as roads, rooftops, and parking lots which contribute to widespread water quality impairments. MyRWA has been collecting water quality data in the Mystic River watershed since 2000 under a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Our data indicate that significant water quality impairments are often a result of polluted stormwater runoff.

According to the Center for Watershed Protection, a rain garden allows for 30% more infiltration of water than a typical lawn area and can filter out non-point source contaminants such as sediments, nutrients, oil and grease. The combined effects of infiltration and treatment will greatly benefit water bodies designated by the state of Massachusetts as impaired in the Year 2006 Integrated List of Waters, several of which are located in the Town of Arlington. These include Spy Pond, the Mystic River, Mill Brook, Alewife Brook, and Lower Mystic Lake.

MyRWA has collaborated with the Town of Arlington on previous efforts to educate the public about methods to minimize stormwater runoff through a past Section 319 grant. In 2006, we partnered with the Town to conduct a survey of rain barrel usage in the Spy Pond watershed with very good results. The survey indicated a very low frequency of rain barrel use, prompting the Town to offer rain barrels to local citizens at a reduced rate through a Section 319 grant.

We wholly support the Town's current initiative to further promote rain garden and rain barrel use to build on the success of the aforementioned efforts of the recent past. We are confident that these efforts will help to substantially reduce stormwater runoff in the Mystic River watershed.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this project.

With Best Regards,

EkOngKar Singh Khalsa, Executive Director, MyRWA