

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Mystic River watershed has ended the decade on a high note.

Right now you see bald eagles hunting along the rivers and lakes. Come spring, river herring will return from the ocean at four-fold the numbers in five years. In summer and fall, the river and its shores will be filled with walkers, runners, bikers and paddlers. The "A-grade" water quality, expanded herring habitat with improved fish passages at Mystic Lakes and the Aberjona, and the 2.5 new miles of recreational trails are contributing to this vibrancy.

You are part of this renaissance. During this decade, 20,000 volunteers—including many of you—cleared invasive water chestnuts from the river, helped write policy letters, and tabled at community events.

Organizationally, we now have a staff of 10, the most in our history, a board that includes 15 experts in their fields, and a cadre of great partners, volunteers and donors.

With your support we are ready for 2020 and everything the new decade will bring to the Mystic. Thank you!

Sincerely,



PATRICK HERRON, PHD
Executive Director

2010

Mystic River in Medford Center was covered in invasive water chestnuts. Now thanks to our volunteer removal program it is hard to find water chestnuts on the river.

2011

Photo contest in the Mystic River watershed, showcasing all the great birds and other wildlife found on our urban river.

2012

Herring monitoring project launched after a fish ladder was installed at the Mystic Lakes Dam. Last year, approximately 789,000 fish made it to the Mystic Lakes to spawn.

2013

Launched a nutrient pollution study that leveraged \$450,000 of in-kind support to determine the amount of phosphorous the Mystic can safely handle.

2014

A new water quality report card created to accurately measure the bacteria conditions in all of the tributaries in the Mystic.

2015

Began modeling work to build a daily boating advisory—now complete—@SafeMystic alerts you when it is safe to boat and swim.

2016

Mystic Greenways launched—since that time, 2.5 miles of paths have been built and an additional 5 more miles of paths are in design and construction.

2017

Winchester fish ladder opened—now herring can make it all the way to Horn Pond. MyRWA launches River Herring Video Project and invites community to help count the fish

2018

Resilient Mystic Collaborative launched with 14 municipalities—now up to 18. Efforts to address the impacts of climate change covering 90% of the watershed land area.

2019

2,000 youth have received high quality environmental education since the program launched in 2017.



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BIG WINS IN 2019



1

This fall we wrapped up our biggest stewardship season yet—1,500+ volunteers helped us remove 4,529 baskets of water chestnuts, 1,000 lawn bags of bittersweet and 100 bags of litter. We also planted 30 trees in Somerville, built and installed an osprey nest and 10 tree swallow boxes in Torbert Macdonald Park in Medford!

2

The Resilient Mystic Collaborative (RMC) secured \$1.1 million in funding specifically for regional climate work on the Mystic. In October, MyRWA hired a climate resiliency manager, Melanie Gárate, to ensure that our climate work is equitable and inclusive—helping everyone in our watershed.

3

Another big win—A team from the Friends of the Malden River, City of Everett & MyRWA completed an independent and comprehensive health risk assessment for the river. The results show that the Malden River is safe for boating!

4

This one speaks for itself—BIGGEST HERRING RUN EVER! More than 3/4 million river herring made it to the Mystic Lakes this year. More improvements are on the way to ensure herring gain access to 100 acres of spawning ground in Horn Pond.

5

The Mystic River and the Mystic Lakes continue to have clean water. This is the fifth year in a row that the river and lakes have earned A-range grades. We only have this data because of our baseline volunteer program and great volunteers who collect samples each month.

6

The Malden River Works, a coalition working to improve the Malden River and waterfront access, was awarded the prestigious MIT Leventhal Prize for Advanced Urbanism—along with \$100,000 to support their work!

7

“The greatest benefit of this project was working with the Mystic River Water Association and providing my students with a hands-on real life issue to create a solution for,” said Ms. Ononeme, teacher at Everett Public Schools. “Students were introduced to a career opportunity that they have never thought about before.” We couldn’t have said it better—and we continue to reach close to 1,000 students every year with impactful, formal educational programs.



Photo credit: Jeanine Farley



Photo credit: Margaret Walsh

Learn more about all these wins by signing up for the Mystic River Watershed Association’s E-news at www.MysticRiver.org and follow us on Twitter, Instagram or Facebook.

OUR TEAM

Patrick Herron, Executive Director
Julie Wormser, Deputy Director
Michelle Liebetreu, Development Director
Amber Christoffersen, Mystic Greenways Director
Andy Hrycyna, Watershed Scientist
Erica Wood, Outreach and Communications Manager
Marian Miller, Education Program Manager
Catherine Pedemonti, Project Manager
Melanie Gárate, Climate Resiliency Project Manager
Kim Provo, Office Manager

OUR BOARD

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THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MADE 2019 A SUCCESS

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