



# STREAMER

A PUBLICATION OF THE CHARLES RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

## Water Watch

By Bob Zimmerman

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### It seems like the lack of water in the Charles,

in its tributaries, and in most of the rivers of eastern Massachusetts is getting endemic. I recall Anne Blackburn, our Environmental Affairs Coordinator in 1993 and 1994 talking with any number of people who live and work along the river expressing their alarm at the lack of water.

Our concern was so great that when we started the Integrated Monitoring, Modeling and Management (IM3) project in 1994, we were intent on figuring out if the low flows in the river were a function of drought only, or whether they were exacerbated by human demand. From 1995 through 1997, we did intensive investigations on groundwater stores in Franklin in the Upper Charles to see if we could isolate human impacts to understand them better. We had always thought the river was stressed by human demand, but were surprised to discover that the extent of that demand, and the impact of our water and wastewater systems were far greater

than we had imagined. The bottom line? Due to potable (drinkable) water demand, sewer collection systems which draw groundwater in because pressure inside the pipes is much lower than pressure outside the pipes, and paved and constructed land surfaces which do not allow water to penetrate to groundwater, Charles River aquifers are stressed most all of the time.

Put more simply, we're running out of potable water as we grow, and we're likely to begin to understand how badly the system is broken toward the middle and end of this summer. We're in a drought, but it's not a bad drought as droughts go. It's relatively mild. Our precipitation numbers over the past year have us at 80 percent of normal. Put another way, we generally get 44 inches of rain in a year, and over the last 12 months we've gotten 36 inches. In a less populated, less built-out Boston, that sort of drought wouldn't cause a great deal of alarm.

*continued on page 2*

## Water Watch *continued from page 1*

Since 1997, as we clearly understood how badly the system was broken, CRWA has refocused 70 percent of its resources on identifying and testing potential solutions to the problem. We began calling for decentralized wastewater treatment, where wastewater treated to drinking water standards is reintroduced to groundwater. We developed “environmental zoning” in Holliston, where we identified land critical to protecting environmental water resources and habitat and earmarked it for protection or for reduced development. In those critical areas already developed, we recommended methods of reducing human impact, and restoring environmental function. We are continuing with this work in other communities, and with other similar organizations, assisting them in learning the methods so that they can help extend the effort.

We’ve spent a great deal of time studying the effectiveness of water regulation in Massachusetts, and of stormwater “best management practices,” or the methods commonly used to capture and treat rainwater that runs off roofs and parking lots. Unfortunately, we’ve found that most of the methods commonly used don’t work very well. Often, they simply can’t handle the sheer volume of water, and they are very seldom maintained, so that after working initially, they fail because they’re loaded with sand and salt and grit and oil. Our concern has led us to design and build our own cistern/drywell system for residential and some commercial use, which we will be introducing in limited pilot projects this summer (see page 13 for more details).

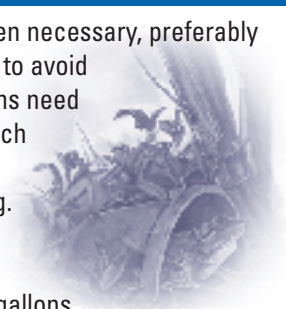
We’re doing these things because the alternative is unthinkable. The alternative will be to repipe communities in the Charles, to rob groundwater from everywhere to supply our demand. It will include the dusting off of the 1980s plan to skim the Connecticut River into the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs and connect scores of towns to the MWRA. The cost to us? Billions, certainly. The cost to the environment? Incalculable. Dried up wetlands, once

free-flowing tributaries turned into intermittent little trickles, concentrated pollutants and nutrients in the Charles causing the river to turn a deep rich green with algae and weeds and to stink as they die and decompose.

This is not science fiction. You are likely to begin to see the environmental impacts this spring and summer, and you are likely to begin to hear the political cacophony caused by people facing mandatory water bans, not just on their lawns, but in their homes. CRWA is racing the clock. If we don’t provide a clear, economical, environmentally sound and demonstrated alternative to more very expensive big pipes in the ground, we will get those big pipes and their even bigger environmental problems.

### Conservation . . . In Your Yard

- Water your lawn or garden only when necessary, preferably during the evening or early morning to avoid evaporation. Most lawns and gardens need an inch of water each week. If an inch of rain has fallen, don’t water. Use trickle irrigation instead of sprinkling. Be careful to water only the lawn, not the driveway or sidewalk. A hose left on for one hour uses 35 gallons.
- Cut grass with mower blades at 2-to 3-inch grass length to promote water retention.
- Plant indigenous species requiring less water.
- Cover your swimming pool when it’s not in use to prevent evaporation. Avoid overfilling the pool to prevent splashing.
- Wash your car with a bucket instead of a hose. Rinse using a hose with a spray nozzle or turn off water between rinses.
- Use a broom to sweep driveways, walks, and garages rather than washing with water.
- Check outside hoses, faucets, and sprinklers for leaks.



**Letter from the President**

**Sustaining Stream Flows**

Kelly McClintock



As you read the *Streamer*, the Charles probably looks as low as it usually does in June. Our river is troubled.

Beyond restrictions on your home water use:

- Reduced flow will increase water temperatures;
- Riffles that should be shallow but fast will almost dry up;
- Less water will concentrate pollutants; and
- Conditions will lead to excessive weed and algae growth, and stress wildlife populations.

It's a drought. We can do little about lack of rain, but the reduced flow is also caused from how we mismanage the water we have. And with your help, we can do a lot about that!

Bob's lead article explains how we have engineered our sewer systems to rush water from upstream users directly to Boston Harbor instead of replenishing aquifers. These pipes suck in-and waste — even more good ground water on the way through cracks and breaks. A central focus of CRWA's programs is to reengineer our communities to keep water local. Through a combination of land use planning, appropriate vegetation, and small scale technology, we want to assure that our rain — even if first used in a home or business — recharges our aquifers and keeps our river flowing.

CRWA is now in the middle of its annual membership renewal drive. Your support is crucial. Foundations are fickle and governments are cutting back.

You fund much of the science that drives our programs; you make our advocacy programs possible; and you give us freedom to move quickly in emergencies.

Please, when you get that membership letter from us, renew quickly and generously!

**Thank You!**

Compete or Volunteer at the

**20th Anniversary  
Run of the Charles  
Canoe and  
Kayak Race**



**Sunday, April 28th**

**Volunteers needed!**

Give a few hours helping the *Run of the Charles* Canoe & Kayak Race paddlers safely across the longest portage in the race at Cordingly Dam, Newton/Wellesley along Route 16! Call Janice at 508-698-6810 or email [rotc@charlesriver.org](mailto:rotc@charlesriver.org).

**Run of the Charles raffle**

Win a Dagger Kayak, canoe & kayak gear and clothing, gift certificates, or other great prizes. Order your *Run of the Charles* Raffle Tickets — Only \$5 for one or \$10 for 3 raffle chances!

Winning tickets will be drawn at the *Run of the Charles* Finish Line Festival at MDC Herter Park on Soldiers Field Rd., Sunday, April 28 around 3:30 P.M. Call 508-698-6810, 800-969-RACE or email [rotc@charlesriver.org](mailto:rotc@charlesriver.org).

**Run of the Charles and CRWA  
in the news!**

If you see any newspaper or magazine stories that mention CRWA or the *Run of the Charles* Canoe and Kayak Race, please mail them to *Run of the Charles*, c/o Classic Communications, 38 Mechanic St., Suite 101, Foxboro, MA 02035. Our members are the best eyes and ears for the river! Thanks for your help.



# Run of the River

*By Dudley Bonsal and Anna Eleria*

## Upper Watershed

### Balancing Act — Public Demands vs River Needs

To meet increasing water demands from rapid growth and related impervious surfaces, sewerage, and extremely dry weather conditions, the Milford Water Company (MWC) proposes to “flood skim,” or divert high-flow water from Louisa Lake either to Echo Lake for storage or MWC’s water treatment plant for treatment and distribution. The MWC’s proposal for a minimum streamflow requirement of only 0.3 cubic feet per second to the river from Echo Lake, the headwaters of the river, could exacerbate the problems of low flow and depleted groundwater reserves in the upper watershed and negatively impact aquatic habitat and fish populations. Therefore, CRWA suggests that the MWC recalculate its minimum streamflow requirement using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services New England Flow Policy and offer substantial mitigation solutions (i.e., groundwater recharge areas) to meet the revised requirement.

### Conflicting Plans for Wastewater

The residential development plan for Highridge Estates in Bellingham includes a proposal to export wastewater to a regional treatment plant. Although the proposed development is located in the Blackstone River watershed, CRWA has voiced opposition to any such diversion because it runs counter to Bellingham’s Comprehensive

Water Resources Management Plan (CWRMP), which deems the area suitable for onsite wastewater treatment. Through its CWRMP, Bellingham has balanced the needs for septic system improvements and public health protection with the issues of wastewater treatment, dwindling water supplies, and stormwater pollution.

### Another Project Counter to Bellingham’s Water Resources Plan

In a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the expansion of the Maplebrook Condominiums in Bellingham, the developer calls for the connection of 95 units out of the planned 250 units to the municipal sewer system and then to the Charles River Pollution Control District (CRPCD). CRWA opposes the plan and calls on the proponent to fully analyze and discuss onsite wastewater treatment options. CRWA believes that, like the Highridge Estates, the plan is out of step with Bellingham’s CWRMP.

## Middle Watershed

### Cleaning Up the Duck Pond

The Town of Wellesley proposes to dredge 1,250 cubic yards of accumulated sediment from the Town Hall Duck Pond to improve water quality. CRWA supports this remediation effort but also strongly encourages the town to prevent further contaminated and sediment-laden runoff from reaching the pond and adjoining waterways in the first place. CRWA recommends implementing best management practices to control stormwater runoff, sedimentation, and erosion, both



## Run of the River *continued*

upstream and around the pond and CRWA suggests the town devise a plan for relocating fish during the dewatering and dredging of the pond.

### Leaky Oil Tank

In late February, 50 gallons of oil from a boiler at Nova Biomedical in Waltham leaked into the Charles River. Local police noticed the oil spill in the river and contacted the appropriate authorities to clean up the site and prevent further oil discharge into the river. Impact to the environment was minimized as most of the oil was confined to a small cove of the river through the use of two layers of absorbent booms, removal of oil-covered low-lying branches and brush, and clean up of rocks along the riverbanks.

### Another Oil Spill

A tanker truck at the Route 2 and 128S interchange in Lexington spilled over 1,000 gallons of diesel oil into wetlands and the area adjacent to the Hobbs Brook Reservoir, the source of the City of Cambridge's drinking water supply. Fortunately, no diesel fuel is expected to enter the reservoir due to the immediate and thorough response of the Cambridge Water Department, with the assistance of the City of Waltham, in cleaning up the spill.

## Lower Watershed

### New Developments in East Cambridge

The North Point Project and the North Point Residential Development, two projects that will transform a rail yard to a mixed-use commercial/residential area, have been proposed for East Cambridge on the east side of O'Brien Highway. CRWA applauds many of the plan's components, including separation of the sanitary and street sewers and creation of a greenspace corridor and bike trail that will link to the Charles River park system. However, because the developments will generate at least an additional 17,000 vehicle trips per day, CRWA has recommended that the commercial space be significantly retail-based, thereby providing local residents with alternatives to driving for their shopping needs.

### Expansion in the Longwood Area

Various institutions in the Longwood Area of Boston propose to expand their current facilities which would increase traffic, stormwater, and air quality impacts to this already congested area. They include Children's Hospital, Emmanuel College, Harvard Medical School, Joslin Diabetes Center, Brigham & Women's Hospital's Center for Advanced Medicine, and the present site of Judge Baker Children's Center. CRWA believes that the cumulative environmental impacts of these six planned expansion projects warrant establishment of a special review procedure to coordinate and foster creative and area-wide solutions for mitigation of these impacts.



# Clear Win for Public’s Interest in Parkland

By Margaret Van Deusen

## In a major victory . . .

for the protection of parkland and a CRWA led coalition of neighborhood and environmental groups, State Environmental Affairs Secretary Bob Durand rejected Boston University’s (BU) preferred site (site 2) for a new sailing pavilion on the Boston Esplanade in late January.

During the MEPA (Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act) review process this past fall, BU conceded that its preferred site, 1.5 acres of prized Esplanade parkland on the central crescent between the BU and Harvard Bridges (site 2), would adversely impact the public’s interests; however, it contended that moving the location either east or west, but still on this same central crescent, would eliminate those concerns. This was directly contrary to an independent site analysis commissioned by CRWA in which the environmental consulting firm of Beals and Thomas, Inc. concluded that two sites — one on the water downstream of the MIT boathouse in Cambridge and one near Charlesgate on the Boston Esplanade (site 5) — are far superior locations for protecting the public trust.

Agreeing with CRWA’s study, and in a precedent-setting move, Secretary Durand told BU to focus on the Charlesgate site (site 5) in its final environmental impact report (FEIR). Durand cited reduced open space and tranquility, creation of shadows and obstructed views as reasons against BU’s sites.

This is a clear win for the protection of the public trust lands and establishes the importance of an objective analysis of the full range alternatives before public land is conveyed to a private entity. It also confirms the Secretary’s right and responsibility to select the best alternative when the public interest is at stake.

Thousands of people and organizations voiced their concern about this project through letters, petitions, and meetings and there is no question that the public’s concerns played a pivotal role in Durand’s decision. There will be an opportunity to comment on BU’s FEIR, which is likely to be filed within the next several months. CRWA will continue to advocate for full public input and review of this project. CRWA’s MEPA comment letter, the Secretary’s certificate and full background information on this campaign can be found on our website at [www.charlesriver.org](http://www.charlesriver.org). Thank you for your time and contributions that enabled us to secure this victory.



### SITE 5

Charlesgate site — favored by CRWA led coalition and EDEA Secretary Bob Durand

### SITE 2

BU’s preferred site on 1.5 acres of prized Esplanade land

### SITE 1

Another BU site

# On the Charles in the 1920s

*This is the second of a three-part series on the Charles written by Barbara Winslow who grew up on the Charles River. The first segment of the series appeared in the Winter 2001 edition of the Streamer.*

## Part II. Canoeing the Charles

My friends Dot, Peg, and I began to cajole Jim Bergen into taking us out on the river after he finished washing his canoes. Sometimes Jim would, sometimes he wouldn't. He'd pull his watch out of his pocket, bend his sun-wrinkled face down to it and we had to wait to see if after he snapped it shut he picked up a paddle and headed for his workshop.

The great joy of the canoe is its admirable silence in motion — silence that leaves the heron undisturbed in his triangular contemplation, lets turtles sun like clusters of beads on their log, the muskrat keep his v-trail crossing straight as a die. The skilled canoeist need not intrude on the natural habitat of the river. I never mastered the art of canoeing like Jim, but did pretty well. I slipped past family authority, easing my way from canoeing with Jim to canoeing by myself. I knew which hazards to avoid, and now learned the sweet delights of going farther and of observing the always-changing, seemingly never-changing, river.

Not that I could go very far on our beat of the Charles River. Downstream, below Nuttings, was Moody Street dam; upstream, beyond Norumbega, the river narrowed into a choked morass of



lily pads, tussocks, waterweeds and reed. But between these limits it was glorious: up around the S-bend, past the pumping station, into the wide water before Fox Island and Forest Grove, past the bridge to Purgatory Cove (Thirty years later in Istanbul I was to encounter a man who, when I told him I was from Waltham, Massachusetts, asked wistfully, "and is there still skating in Purgatory Cove?") through a narrower channel, then the great swinging river loop (or I could take the "cuts" across it) to the left, then Norumbega, with its merry-go-rounds, caterpillar ride, and miniature zoo.

Beyond Norumbega stood the Lasell boathouse where the Indian canoes were kept, then it was time to turn around and head downstream, perhaps to tie my canoe to the bank, read or listen to water sounds and wood noises, observe the snapping turtles sunning on rocks, the water lilies resting on their pads.

We left no mark on nature, my canoe and I, but those days of quiet watching and listening along the Charles River left their mark on my life.





# Spring 2002 Calendar

Events organized by environmental and recreation groups, neighborhood associations, and the MDC.

**SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY**

<b>APRIL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 1:00–2:00 P.M. Charles River Dam Tour, meeting location: Paul Revere Park, Charlestown
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> CRWA Volunteer Water Quality Sampling	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 1:00–3:00 P.M. Charles River Basin Walk (6 miles) meeting location: front main entrance to the Museum of Science
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 3rd Annual Charles River Earth Day Cleanup. For more information, contact Pattie Weikert at 617-879-7735
<b>21</b> 1:00–2:00 P.M. Discover the Lost Half-mile, meeting location: front main entrance to the Museum of Science	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 4-week Basic Fresh Water Fishing Course from 6:30 P.M.–8:30 P.M. For more information call 617-552-7120	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> CRCK Moonlight Tour, cost \$35, and includes guiding, canoe rental and food. To register call 617-965-5110	<b>27</b> Earthday on the Esplanade, visit the MDC table for more information, games and great prizes from 11:00 A. M.–6:00 P.M.
<b>28</b> 20th Anniversary Run of the Charles Canoe and Kayak Race. For more information call 1-800-969-RACE ext.300, visit <a href="http://www.charlesriver.org">www.charlesriver.org</a>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>				<b>April 27</b> noon–6:00 P.M. WBOS EarthFest at the Hatch Shell

<b>MAY</b>			<b>1</b> 4-week Basic Fresh Water Fishing Course, see April 24  Monthly Environment Page in the Newton Tab <a href="http://www.greendecade.org">www.greendecade.org</a>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> May 4th 10:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M. Waltham Earth Day Celebration, for more information call 781-314-3847	<b>4</b> 1:00 P.M. Historic Tour of Elm Bank. For more information visit <a href="http://www.massshort.org">www.massshort.org</a>
<b>5</b> 1:00 P.M. Sunday in the Park, for more information e-mail: <a href="mailto:jerylo@aol.com">jerylo@aol.com</a> Note: this event is also on May 12, 19, and 26.	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 4-week Basic Fresh Water Fishing Course, see April 24  Lecture/Rebuilding Community in the Age of Sprawl, call 617-524-1718 x175	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 10:00-11:00 A.M. Charles River Bird Walk, meeting location: front main entrance to the Museum of Science

<b>12</b> 9:00–10:00 A.M. Urban Wildlife Walk, meeting location: Galon Street Bridge, Watertown Square	<b>13</b> (Mother's Day) Birds and Breakfast at Mass Audubon's Broadmoor Sanctuary, 6:00–10:00 P.M. adults \$13., children \$8.	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 4-week Basic Fresh Water Fishing Course see April 24	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 10:00 A.M.- 2:00 P.M. Charles River Fishing Clinic, all equipment is provided free of charge
<b>19</b> 1:00 P.M. Sunday in the Park, for more information e-mail: jerylo@aol.com,	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> CRWA Volunteer Water Quality Sampling	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> CRCK Moonlight Tour
<b>26</b> 9:00–10:00 A.M. Herring Run meeting location: Galon Street Bridge, Watertown Square CRCK Moonlight Tour	<b>27</b> CRCK Moonlight Tour	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	

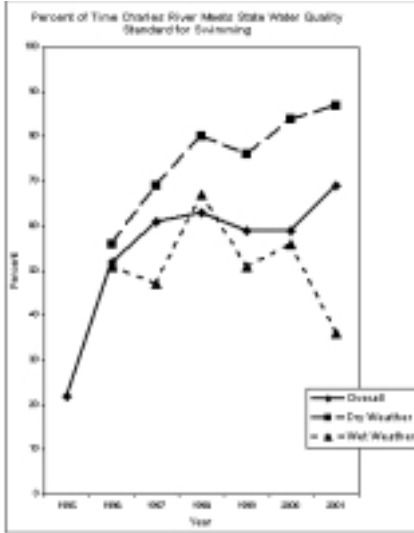
<b>JUNE</b>	Sunday's June 2, 9, and 16 1:00 P.M. Sunday in the Park, for more information e-mail: jerylo@aol.com,				June 1st 1:00–2:00 P.M. Meet the Trees meeting location: front main entrance to the Museum of Science	<b>1</b> 7:00–10:00 P.M. Elm's (Environment League of Massachusetts) Earth Night, for more information call 617-742-1553
<b>2</b> 1:00–3:00 P.M. Art and History in the Parks, meeting location: Paul Revere Park, Charlestown	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 6:00–8:30 P.M. Boston Barbeque Paddle, to register, contact 617-965-5110	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 23rd Dragon Boat Festival for more information, visit <a href="http://www.bostondragonboat.org">www.bostondragonboat.org</a>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Charles River Fishing Clinic meeting location: Charles River Esplanade, behind the Hatch Shell 10:00 A.M.–2:00 P.M.
<b>16</b> June 23 10:00–11:00 A.M. Discover the Lost Half-mile	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> CRWA Volunteer Water Quality Sampling	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> CRCK Moonlight Tour	<b>21</b> June 22 1:00–2:00 P.M. Garden in the City	<b>22</b> 1:00 P.M. Nature Walk Along the Charles Elm Bank. For more information visit <a href="http://www.massshort.org">www.massshort.org</a>
<b>23</b> CRCK Moonlight Tour <b>30</b> 10:00–11:00 A.M. Riverside Ramble	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>

# Charles River Report Card

## Spring 2002

By Kathy Baskin

### With only three years remaining . . .



until Earth Day 2005, the date set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a swimmable and fishable Charles River, CRWA's water quality data, collected monthly by 80 volunteers, is a crucial indicator of the river's progress. A look back at CRWA's water quality data indicates that the Charles is meeting the state's bacterial limit for swimming more frequently than ever before (69 percent of the time in 2001, com-

pared to 59 percent in 2000 and only 22 percent in 1995). This is good news for the Charles River! This improvement is likely the result of the major reduction in raw sewage discharging to the river that has been made by several Charles River communities since the mid-1990s — approximately one million gallons of untreated sewage have been removed from the river each day.

While river water quality is improving, it is still a long way from consistently meeting EPA's goals. More effort is needed to reduce bacterial levels, particularly during wet weather. By March 2003, most of the Charles River Watershed communities will be required to apply for a federal permit for their stormwater discharges. Towns will have to regularly sweep their streets and clean their catch basins. They will be required to remove illicit

discharges of sanitary sewage discharging to the river through their stormdrain systems. And while the towns take steps to reduce the amounts of pollution in their stormwater, CRWA's water quality monitoring will be ongoing, gaging the river's progress toward meeting the goal for 2005.

*Water quality samples have been collected monthly at 6:00 A.M. from 37 locations along the Charles River for several years and serve as the foundation of our technical and advocacy efforts. Samples are analyzed for several pollutants, including fecal coliform bacteria, an indicator that harmful fecal-related bacteria are likely to be present. EPA relies on our monthly monitoring results to determine how close the river is to meeting the goal of a swimmable and fishable river. For more information on water quality in the Charles, check out our web site at: [www.charlesriver.org](http://www.charlesriver.org).*

## The Streamer Takes to the Super Highway!

Starting with the Summer 2002 edition of the *Streamer*, readers will have the opportunity to receive the newsletter via e-mail in PDF format. If you are interested in receiving the email version of the *Streamer* vs. a mailed hard copy, please e-mail [crwa@charlesriver.org](mailto:crwa@charlesriver.org) with your name and preferred e-mail address.

## Conservation . . . In Your Home

- Take short showers instead of baths. (One less minute saves 3-7 gallons. A five-minute shower uses 25 gallons of water while a bath uses 35.) Shut off water while shampooing.
- Install low-flow shower-heads and faucet aerators, and add water saving devices (which displace water) to toilet tanks. (Consult your local water department or hardware retailer.) Consider replacing your toilet with a water savings model during renovation (saves 7,000 gallons/year/person).
- Flush less often and only when necessary. Don't use your toilet as a wastebasket (saves up to 6 gallons per flush).
- Repair leaks in faucets, toilets, hoses, and pipes. (A steady drip wastes up to 20 gallons of water per day while a leaking toilet can waste 50 gallons per day or more.)
- Minimize use of your garbage disposal.
- Run washing machines and dishwashers only when they are full and select cycles that use fewer rinses and washes. Favor using a dishwasher over washing by hand (saves 15 gallons per load).
- Minimize running water while brushing teeth, shaving, washing dishes, rinsing produce, or getting cold water. (Saves 4–10 gallons per day.) Store drinking water in the refrigerator



## Testing Private Wells in the Face of a Drought

Can the drought or personal choices regarding lawn care affect private well owners? Yes! Use of pesticides or herbicides on your lawn could affect private well water quality, and the drought could further concentrate these effects. Any contamination nearby could also affect your water quality. Approximately 2.3 million people (about 20% of the total population) in New England obtain water from their own private well. In recent years, studies in New England have identified contamination of some private wells with methyl-t-butyl ether (MtBE), radon, and arsenic. But, many homeowners are not aware of this risk to their drinking water.

If you have a private well, regular water quality testing is very important. Many contaminants cannot be identified by taste or odor, making it difficult for homeowners to know if the water quality of their well has changed. It is the responsibility of homeowners to periodically test their well for contamination.

How should you decide what to test for, when to test, and what the test results mean? EPA and the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services have produced a brochure called "A Guide to Water Quality Testing for Private Wells" that is accurate for those in Massachusetts as well. The brochure can be found on the web at [www.epa.gov/region01/eco/drinkwater/privwellfinal.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/region01/eco/drinkwater/privwellfinal.pdf) or call 603-271-3139. In the coming year, EPA will be spreading the word to other New England states. For further information on EPA's efforts, contact Jane Downing ([downing.jane@epa.gov](mailto:downing.jane@epa.gov)), 617-918-1571.





## Green Law

**Several bills are pending before the Massachusetts legislature this spring that, if enacted, will directly benefit the environment.**

As a member of the Coalition for the Environmental Bond, CRWA is working hard to ensure passage of the Environmental Bond Bill, H.4909, now pending before the House Ways and Means Committee. The first environmental bond bill in over six years, it provides capital authorizations of \$625 million in critical funding for state environmental programs and new initiatives. It includes \$219 million for open space and farmland protection, \$180 million for state forests, parks, beaches, fisheries, trails and recreation infrastructure, \$61 million for hazardous waste clean up, recycling, air quality and pollution prevention, and \$17 million for biodiversity resource protection and habitat management. The bond would fund urban self-help grants and parkland acquisition, implementation of the Charles River Lower Basin Master Plan, restoration and renovation of Boston Harbor beaches, farm protection programs, community preservation, and municipal open space plans. Passage of the Bond Bill is a clear win for the environment both now and for future generations. For more information, go to [www.massland.org](http://www.massland.org).

Another bill, S. 2281, known as the "No Net Loss Bill" would strengthen the protection of public conservation and park land. Under this legislation, before development or disposal of conservation lands could be considered by the legislature, all available options and environmental impacts would first need to be analyzed. This is the same environmental review process that CRWA and others successfully advocated for in the context of Boston University's sailing pavilion. Additionally, the bill requires that replacement land of equal resource or fair market value be provided to ensure there is no-net loss of these public trust lands.

This bill was unanimously endorsed by the Massachusetts State Senate in March, strengthening the chances of enactment during this legislative session.

Please help by contacting your state legislators to let them know that you support passage of the Environmental Bond Bill and the No Net Loss Bill.

## 3rd Annual Charles River Earth Day Cleanup

**Saturday, April 20th 2002**

Join over 1,000 people working together to clean the banks of our Charles River on Saturday, April 20th. Volunteer to organize a site or join other groups and individuals at a site in your area. If you are interested in volunteering or for more information, contact Pattie Weikert at 617-879-7735 or email [cleanup02@hotmail.com](mailto:cleanup02@hotmail.com).

This event is sponsored by CRWA, Metropolitan District Commission, Massachusetts Community Water Watch, Clean Charles Coalition, Senator Steven Tolman's office, and the Charles River Cutler Park to Commonwealth Avenue Protection Group.

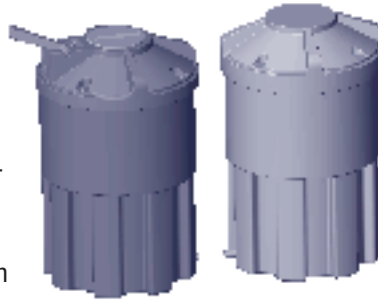


# SmartStorm™ Conservation Systems

Bob Zimmerman

## For two years, CRWA has worked

to create a system to capture rooftop runoff, to store some of the water for irrigation purposes and non-potable uses like car washing, and recharge (i.e., put in the ground) any excess.



This June, we will be introducing the results of our work. Called SmartStorm Conservation Systems, the systems are designed to change the way water works in municipalities. Each system will store or recharge up to 2400 gallons per day depending on soils, or the equivalent of 100 percent of the runoff from a 2000 square foot roof in a 2-inch rainstorm.

We will produce our first test systems by the first of May, and begin installations at the end of May. Our first pilot project is scheduled for the town of Bellingham, using funding from the American National Power fund we negotiated 5 years ago. SmartStorm will reduce demand on potable water supplies for irrigation, reduce polluted stormwater runoff dramatically, and enhance aquifer storage, particularly during the summer months, helping sustain public drinking water supplies and increase Charles River flow. SmartStorm will go a long way toward restoring the environmental balance between land and rainwater that would have existed prior to the construction of our homes and apartments. For more information email [crwa@crwa.org](mailto:crwa@crwa.org).

## Watchdog for the River

*Below is a list of the projects on which CRWA commented to the state, town, or developer between November 22, 2001–March 15, 2002. Copies of comment letters are available at CRWA.*

Town	Project
Bellingham	Notice of Project Change for High Ridge Estates
Bellingham	Supplemental Environmental Impact Report for Maplebrook Condominiums
Boston	Draft Environmental Impact Report for George E. Morris Sailing Pavilion (Boston University)
Boston	Environmental Notification Form for Brigham and Women’s Hospital — Center for Advanced Medicine
Boston	Environmental Notification Form for Joslin Diabetes Center Expansion
Cambridge	Environmental Notification Form for North Point Project
Cambridge	Environmental Notification Form for North Point Residential Development
Franklin	Environmental Notification Form for Marketplace at Chestnut Ridge
Franklin	Draft Environmental Impact Report for Oak Hill Senior Living Community
Milford	Final Environmental Impact Report for the Utilization of Louisa Lake Overflow for Public Water Supply
Wellesley	Environmental Notification Form for Town Hall Duck Pond Restoration Project
Statewide	Guidance and Policy for Lawn and Landscape Water Conservation

# Thank You

## As CRWA springs forward into an exciting season of challenges . . .

we give hearty thanks to all individuals and organizations that contributed since our last issue of the Streamer.

A thunderous applause reverberates down the 80 miles of the Charles for the exceptional generosity of an anonymous donor who provided a matching challenge for CRWA members. \$100,000 will be matched with donations from first-time Headwaters Society members (gifts of \$1,000 or more), current Headwaters or Millennium Society (gifts of \$2,499 or more) members who increase their donation over last year. \$46,955 has been matched to date. Thanks to those of you who have contributed to the match thus far.

Four anonymous and seven individual donors renewed memberships in the Millennium Society with contributions of \$2,500 or more. They include Bryan Austin and Sierra Bright, Bea and Woolsey Conover, Richard S. Emmet, Jr., Miss Elizabeth Jackson, Kelly McClintock, Mr. and Mrs. James Poitras, and Robert D. Rands. The Gunst Charitable Foundation, the Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation and one anonymous foundation contributed at the Millennium Society level as well. New and rejoining

Headwaters Society contributors of \$1,000 or more include Sheila Gamble Cook, Mr. and Mrs. George P. Edmonds, Jr., Bonnie and Jay Emmons, Belle L. Halpern and Mitch Rosenberg, Mrs. Arthur T. Lyman, Jr., Robert and Jane Morse, Geri and Douglas Payne, Roberta and Bill Schnoor, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Steiner and Lucy B. Stroock.

The fall Annual Appeal was successful and brought in \$56,612. We extend thanks to all who gave so generously to our important year-end fundraiser.

Thanks also to those who renewed your membership since the last *Streamer*. These contributions reached nearly \$8,000. Every April, CRWA asks members to renew their commitment to a healthy Charles, so please respond to our renewal letter.

Rock Bottom restaurant selected CRWA to be the charity for their Harvard Square opening in early February. The event raised over \$2,500 thanks to donations made by our members and employees of Cambridge businesses. Thanks also to Earth Share, which provided \$885 through workplace giving programs. Special thanks goes to Paratore Harshorn Design, Inc. for designing our 2001 Annual Report and 2002 *Run of the Charles* logo.



# The Streamer

Charles River Watershed Association  
2391 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02466  
Phone: (617) 965-5975, Fax: (617) 332-7465  
Email: crwa@crwa.org, Web:www.charlesriver.org

CRWA is a tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation established in 1965 to protect and enhance the health, beauty and enjoyment of the Charles River and its tributaries. CRWA is a member of Earth Share and the Massachusetts Environmental Collaborative.

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- Streamer logo: Lou Mucci
- Streamer design: Richard Gönci  
Ken Shemchuk
- Calendar Photography: Eric Endlich

## The New Streamer

The new look of this Spring's *Streamer* reflects our desire to make this periodical a truly engaging and useful communication to all who love the Charles River.

A regular feature, inaugurated in this issue, is a centerfold calendar with a comprehensive listing of river-related events sponsored by many different organizations. We invite submissions by all such affinity groups.

Both the *Streamer* itself, and expanded versions of some of the articles, will soon be available on our website: [www.charlesriver.org](http://www.charlesriver.org).

And, as before, the *Streamer* is printed on recycled paper stock!

Richard Gönci  
Chair  
Public Relations Committee

# *STREAMER*

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Charles River Watershed Association  
2391 Commonwealth Avenue  
Auburndale, MA 02466



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