



Watershed Action Alliance

*of Southeastern
Massachusetts*

watershedaction.org



Protecting water and
natural resources in
Southeastern
Massachusetts



P.O. Box 43,
Norwell, MA 02061

WAAcoordinator@nsrwa.org



Members & Friends

Barnstable Clean Water
Coalition

Herring Ponds
Watershed Association

Jones River Watershed
Association

Monponsett Watershed
Association

Neponset River
Watershed Association

North and South Rivers
Watershed Association

Save the Bay –
Narragansett Bay

Six Ponds Improvement
Association

Weir River Watershed
Association

Ensuring Enough Water for All

Increasing population and development, combined with the effects of climate change, raise the concern that we could run out of clean, fresh water necessary to sustain natural resources, including fish and wildlife, and for business, recreation, and development for centuries to come. Watershed associations work hard in their communities to ensure there is **enough water for people, fish, wildlife, and the environment.**

Success Stories

- Earned a MassDEP Water Management Act grant to support a rebate program to incentivize installation of water efficient fixtures in four partner towns (Neponset).
- Championed an outdoor irrigation restriction bylaw that resulted in the saving of 300,000 gallons per day in Scituate and allowed streamflow releases from reservoirs (North and South).
- Influenced decisions on locations of new community wells; encouraged the consideration of impact on water levels in ponds through commentary at Board of Selectmen and other meetings; advocated for formation of a new Water Conservation Committee (Herring Ponds and Six Ponds).
- Helped implement Kingston bylaws to conserve water; influenced decision to locate sewer treatment plant in aquifer recharge area rather than losing fresh water to Kingston Bay (Jones River).
- Provide leadership and expertise to towns on water supply management, infrastructure improvements that restore streamflow, conservation measures, recharge, improved regulatory standards, and more (all).
- Advocated for improved stormwater NPDES MS4 permit structure (many).

What Can Legislators Do?

Prioritize Dept. of Environmental Protection Administration funding (line item 2200-0100). While an increase of \$7.92M to \$40M (from \$32.08M in FY20) would be ideal, we urge at least level-funding of this line item. Adequate staff and resources are essential for watershed planning and permitting, safe management of toxics, enforcing environmental laws, hazardous waste cleanup, and preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

Prioritize Dept. of Conservation and Recreation Watershed Management Office funding (line item 2810-0100). While an increase of \$2.75M to \$50M (from \$47.25M in FY20) would be ideal, we urge at least level funding of this line item which is essential to support research to safeguard our rivers, lakes and water supplies and provide public access for recreation.

Maintain contact with your local watershed association whose staff are knowledgeable about the issues in your district and have subject matter expertise.



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Improving Water Quality

When it rains, stormwater carries pollutants into our waterways. Improperly treated or managed wastewater is also a source of contamination to our surface and groundwater. Streams, bays, ponds and rivers are vital to a resilient environment, healthy fisheries, and water recreation. Watershed associations dedicate themselves to keeping our waters free from multiple types of pollution.

Success Stories

- Monitor the long-term health of our waterways and provide data to inform decisions on stormwater infrastructure upgrades to target sources of pollution, and earn funding for the same. (Jones River, Six Ponds, Neponset, Herring Ponds, North and South, Monponsett, Barnstable, Save the Bay).
- Raised and planted 150,000 oysters to improve water quality (Barnstable).
- Purchased land to act as natural buffers in riparian areas to protect water quality, reduce erosion and provide recreation (Herring Ponds, North and South, Jones River).
- Implemented regional education program in 22 Southeastern MA towns to raise awareness about actions people can take to reduce pollution; reaches over 4,000 students annually (North and South, Neponset).
- Along with USGS and US EPA, drilled test wells and collected sediment core samples to determine best placement for installation of innovative/alternative septic systems in proposed residential development (Barnstable).
- Protected important fisheries through a revised power station permit, reducing use of bay water and temperature of cooling water discharge. (Save the Bay).

What Can Legislators Do?

Prioritize MassDEP Admin. funding (item 2200-0100). While an increase of \$7.92M to \$40M (from \$32.08M in FY20) would be ideal, we urge at least level-funding. Adequate staff and resources are essential for watershed planning and permitting, safe management of toxics, law enforcement, hazardous waste cleanup, and preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

Prioritize DCR Watershed Management Office funding (item 2810-0100). While an increase of \$2.75M to \$50M (from \$47.25M in FY20) would be ideal, we urge at least level funding of this line item which is essential to safeguard our rivers, lakes and water supplies and provide public access for recreation.

Support S.490/H.2139, An Act promoting awareness of sewage pollution in public waters, to institute a statewide sewage discharge notification system to alert residents when sewage spills make waters unsafe for recreation or work.

Support H. 3997, An Act relative to GreenWorks, which includes funding for climate resiliency efforts, including upgrading municipal stormwater infrastructure that filters water before it enters the natural environment reducing negative development impacts, improving aquifer recharge, decreasing erosion, fortifying wetlands, and preventing damage to roads.



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Reconnecting Our Rivers and Estuaries

Fish such as herring, smelt and eels must travel between the ocean and freshwater along rivers and streams to complete their life cycles, that is, to live and reproduce. Dams, many of which are obsolete and in poor repair, are big obstacles to aquatic wildlife. Removing dams and restoring rivers improves fisheries and recreation, decreases stagnant water and associated mosquito-borne illness, and increases safety.

Southeastern MA watershed associations, towns, and their local, state and federal partners have been leaders in Massachusetts in improving stream connectivity. Critical funding and assistance have been provided by the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and its agencies.

Success Stories

- Removed dams and restored rivers, opening up miles of river for fish and other wildlife, as well as human enjoyment (Jones River, Neponset, North and South, Save the Bay).
- Monitor herring for comparison before and after dam removal or fish ladder replacement (Herring Ponds, Jones River, Neponset, North and South).
- Improved fish ladders/fishways. When dam removal is not feasible, fish passage can be increased with better (or new) fish ladders or fishways, adding miles of river and stream for use as habitat. (Save the Bay).
- Advocate for superfund designation of lower Neponset for removal of PCBs, and, ultimately, removal of two major dams (Neponset).
- With the Department of Marine Fisheries, installed a fishway to restore diadromous fish habitat to glacial headwaters, Silver Lake (Jones River).
- Designated the Taunton River as Wild and Scenic (Save the Bay and partners).

What Can Legislators Do?

Prioritize Div. of Ecological Restoration funding (item 2300-0101). While an increase of \$500K to \$2.6M (from \$2.1M in FY20, including a \$100K earmark) would be ideal, we urge at least level funding of this item. DER oversees dam removals, culvert replacements, streamflow restoration, saltmarsh restoration and urban river revitalization across Massachusetts. These facilitate movement of fish, wildlife and water. By helping towns improve infrastructure with larger, safer structures and configurations, DER increases resilience to increased precipitation and more intense storms due to climate change.

Contact your district's watershed associations or Watershed Action Alliance for more information on the importance of reconnected waterways, current projects, and the many benefits of them to local communities.



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Promoting Environmental Justice, Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity

Clean drinking water, protection from storms and flooding, healthy watersheds — all residents have a right to these. Historically, some groups and communities have been disregarded, disenfranchised, or discriminated against, including people of color or of lower income, those who speak English as a second language, the elderly, the physically or intellectually challenged, and youth. Importantly, these are often the same communities hit hardest by the impacts of climate change and public health emergencies such as Covid-19. Watershed Action Alliance and its member organizations are committed to fighting for environmental justice and to promoting equity, inclusion and diversity on its boards, at its events, and in its membership.

Success Stories

- Protected natural lands on the Neponset River from development in densely populated environmental justice community in Norwood; now, supporting construction of accessible riverwalk and recreation area (Neponset).
- Sponsor annual YMCA campership for disadvantaged youth (Herring Ponds).
- Incorporating diversity and inclusion goals in strategic plan and seeking funding for paid internships to make them financially feasible for low- and middle-income youth and students (Neponset).
- Included Wampanoag speakers and viewpoints in lecture series (North and South, Herring Ponds).
- Work with local and state officials to maintain and preserve the Monponsett Ponds as clean drinking water for the city of Brockton (Monponsett).
- Advocating for fireworks mercury cleanup in area of historic water contamination and pollution (North and South).
- Planning low cost program for interns of diverse backgrounds (Jones River).

What Can Legislators Do?

Prioritize MassDEP Admin. funding (line item 2200-0100). While an increase of \$7.92M to \$40M (from \$32.08M in FY20) would be ideal, we urge at least level funding of this item. Environmental regulations and proper enforcement protect our most vulnerable communities from pollution and inequitable impacts of climate change.

Support S.490/H.2139, An Act promoting awareness of sewage pollution in public waters, to institute a statewide sewage discharge notification system to alert residents when sewage spills make waters unsafe for recreation, fishing or work.

Support H. 3997, An Act relative to GreenWorks, which could fund municipal stormwater infrastructure project. Many of these projects benefit environmental justice communities, which are often most at risk from the impacts of climate change.

Thanks to our sponsors



Thanks also to our donors - Wildlands Trust, Savery Pond Conservancy, Monponsett Watershed Association, Plymouth League of Women Voters, Taunton River Watershed Alliance, and Jones River Watershed Association.