MASSACHUSETTS
Rivers Alliance
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Massachusetts Rivers Alliance

Mass Rivers' mission is to protect and restore rivers across the Commonwealth.

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Monica Driggers, *Senior Program Director*
Anna Renkert, *Development & Engagement Coordinator*
Mikayla Hopkins, *Bookkeeper/Office Manager*

Flow into Fall at our annual celebration!

Oct 22, 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Powissett Lodge at Hale Reservation
80 Carby St, Westwood, MA 02090

Please join us for an afternoon at the scenic Hale Reservation to celebrate our vibrant community. Join us in an indoor/outdoor space for food, refreshments, games, a live band, a raffle, and fun! We hope to see you - friends and family are welcome!

Register today on our website!

MASSACHUSETTS
Rivers Alliance

The RIVER Advocate

HEALTHY RIVERS FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE

FALL 2023

Helping communities fund stormwater control

Our three-part summer workshop series on stormwater finance drew 250 participants! Supported in part by the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council, and developed in collaboration with Raftelis, Tighe & Bond, and OARS, the workshops were designed to help municipalities and nonprofits take advantage of both short- and long-term funding solutions to combat stormwater pollution. The workshops helped communities evaluate a variety of funding opportunities from grants and loans to stormwater enterprise funds, and shared tools for developing and implementing long-term revenue streams. Speakers from state and federal agencies, local municipalities, and regional environmental and financial consulting firms shared useful information and practical advice.

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Mass Rivers Senior Program Director Monica Driggers (left) and Board President Emily Scerbo (right) with Anna Keimel from Tighe & Bond (middle) at our Stormwater Financing Workshop in July!

Mass Rivers and partners take legal action for streamflow

Mass Rivers, together with the Ipswich River Watershed Association, and the Parker River Clean Water Association, jointly notified the EPA on July 17 of our intent to sue the agency under the Clean Water Act.

The purpose of this legal action is to compel the EPA to require meaningful streamflow protection in Massachusetts. The Notice of Intent (NOI) asserts that MassDEP's implementation of the state's Water Management Act (WMA), according to a set of 2014 regulatory changes following an EOEEA-led process known as the Sustainable Water Management Initiative, or "SWMI", does not follow sound science, and is allowing the degradation of the state's waters. The 2014 regulations and the state's implementation of them violate the federal Clean Water Act by failing to protect stream flow. Without water in rivers and streams, there can be no water quality at all. As the NOI says, stream flow is "foundational" to every kind of water quality - physical, biological, and chemical. The US Supreme Court has also held, in its 1994 decision, PUD No. 1 of *Jefferson County v. Washington Department of Ecology*, that water quantity and quality are

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Myles Standish State Forest by Neil Kittleson

From the executive director

AN INVISIBLE THREAT

Our country is running out of water. The case was made by the New York Times on August 28, in the first article in a planned series on "the causes and consequences of disappearing water." This piece shone a spotlight on a growing crisis that is all but invisible to the general public.

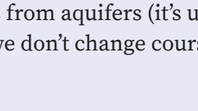
The Times reports that 90 percent of our water comes from aquifers (it's underground), and it is being depleted faster than it is being replenished. If we don't change course, both our farms and our cities will run out of water.

This is happening more quickly in some places than others but the problem is nationwide. Dry wells have led to a drastic decrease in Kansas corn yields and agriculture in California and Arkansas is rapidly drawing down those state's aquifers. Long Island's and Maryland's drinking water is in jeopardy, and Phoenix has halted new construction because of insufficient groundwater to support its existing population. The problem is exacerbated by climate change, both because snowpack is disappearing, and warmer weather increases water evaporation, leaving less to seep into aquifers.

Here in Massachusetts, our aquifers are more easily replenished, because they are shallower, and our soils generally allow recharge. However, recent droughts have dried up streams and threatened water supplies in some areas, and sustained, multi-year droughts could pose more serious problems for both our wildlife and communities. Like the rest of the country, our water management policies are more backward than forward-looking. Our weather is changing, and the way we manage our water needs to change as well.

This is a problem without easy solutions, but we do know we can live well using less water in our daily lives, we can reuse and recycle our water, we can manage our landscapes to promote recharge instead of letting rainwater runoff into rivers, and there are technologies that can help with everything from increasing the efficiency of agricultural water use to removing the salt from sea water.

This issue has been a priority for our organization since our inception and we are working hard to improve our state's groundwater protection to sustain both our streams and communities. Thank you for your support.



Julia Blatt
Executive Director

Our organizational members

River Heroes
$5,000+

Mass Audubon
The Nature Conservancy
Ipswich River Watershed Association

River Guardians
$2,500 - $4,999

Neponset River Watershed Association

River Stewards
$1,000 - $2,499

Charles River Watershed Association
Mass Organization of State Engineers and Scientists
Mystic River Watershed Association
Trout Unlimited, MA RI Council

River Defenders
$500 - $999

Connecticut River Conservancy
Conservation Law Foundation
North and South Rivers Watershed Association
Trout Unlimited, Greater Boston Chapter
Trout Unlimited, Nor'East Chapter
The Trustees

River Advocates
$250 - $499

AMC Interchapter Paddling Committee
Association to Preserve Cape Cod
Berkshire Natural Resources Council
Center for Coastal Studies
Charles River Conservancy
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Farmington River Watershed Association
Groundwork Lawrence
Nantucket Land Council
Nashua River Watershed Association
OARS
Save the Bay – Narragansett Bay
Riverkeepers
Shawsheen River Watershed Association
Sierra Club Massachusetts Chapter
Sudbury, Assabet and Concord Wild and Scenic
River Stewardship Council
Taunton River Watershed Alliance
Trout Unlimited, Cape Cod Chapter

River Friends
$100 - $249

Berkshire Environmental Action Team
Biodiversity for a Livable Climate
Buzzards Bay Coalition
Charlesgate Alliance
Clean Water Fund
Environment Massachusetts
The Esplanade Association
Franklin Land Trust
Friends of Belle Isle Marsh
Friends of the Blue Hills
Friends of the Malden River
Friends of the Middlesex Fells
Green Newton
Greenbelt
Hoosic River Revival
Hoosic River Watershed Association
Housatonic Valley Association
Jones River Watershed Association
League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust
Massachusetts Association of Conservation Coms.
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition
Merrimack River Watershed Council
Ocean River Institute
Stockholm Environment Institute
Sudbury Valley Trustees
Taunton River Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council
Trout Unlimited, Deerfield River Chapter
Trout Unlimited, Pioneer Valley Chapter #276
Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee
Weir River Watershed Association
Westport River Watershed Alliance
Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee
Westfield River Wild & Scenic River Advisory Committee

River Supporters
Up to $99

Belmont Citizens Forum
Blackstone River Coalition
Blackstone River Watershed Association
Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed Council
Deerfield River Watershed Association
Fort River Watershed Alliance
Friends of Jerry's Pond
Friends of the Assabet River, Oxbow & Great Meadows NWF
Friends of the Palmer River
Friends of the Ten Mile River Watershed
Hop Brook Protection Association
Massachusetts Watershed Coalition
Millers River Watershed Council
Muddy Water Initiative
Parker River Clean Water Association
Runnins River Watershed Alliance
Ten Mile River Watershed Council
Wareham Land Trust
Wastewater Advisory Committee to the MWRA
Western MA Rights of Nature
Westfield River Watershed Association

Enjoying a paddle on the lovely Mystic River

stormwater management...continued from page 1

Stormwater runoff is currently the leading source of pollution to Massachusetts' waters. Inadequate management of stormwater and water quality can lead to serious problems, like water contamination, habitat loss, and fish kills. As more land is developed, the volume of pollutants traveling over paved surfaces and entering waterways following storm events will continue to rise. Many cities and towns across the state are required to meet Stormwater Management Standards and implement a wide variety of stormwater management strategies, but many communities struggle to fund such strategies.

If you missed the workshop, you can find all the information shared at the workshops on our website under "Our Work."

July stormwater workshop covered stormwater utilities

legal action for streamflow...continued from page 1

inextricably linked.

The reason this litigation is directed at the EPA is that under the Clean Water Act (CWA) the EPA must review and approve state water quality standards, and although the WMA regulations are not labeled "water quality standards," they function as such. The EPA recognized this functional equivalence in a similar case in South Carolina, where the agency found nearly identical regulations in that state to violate the CWA. While the Water Management Act and its regulations are complicated, the problem with them is not - the regulations allow too much water to be withdrawn, at the wrong times of year, from the wrong places, for our rivers, streams and the wildlife who depend on them, to survive and thrive. As with many environmental problems, this will only worsen with climate change if we don't fix it.

State budget success!

During each budget cycle, Mass Rivers partners with leading statewide organizations to educate legislators about the challenges facing our agencies, and the increasing need for restoration and resilience work. This year, all of our requests were granted, resulting in a $47 million increase for environmental agencies from fiscal year 2023! Governor Healey signed the fiscal year 2024 budget in August, including:

$85 million ($20.6M increase)
for state parks & recreation

$8.8 million (a $7.4M increase)
for environmental justice

$10 million (a $4.6M increase)
for climate adaptation
& preparedness

$5.4 million (a $1.1M increase)
for ecological restoration

We're grateful to the legislature, especially Ways and Means Chairs Rodrigues and Michlewitz for their leadership and supporting these increases. This additional funding will strengthen protection for land and water stewardship in the Commonwealth.

Secretary Tepper and Commissioner Heiple meet Mass Rivers members

PFAS pollution, Title 5 (septic system regulations), reducing combined sewer overflows, coastal and climate resiliency, and "turning environmental justice from a buzzword into real action" were some of the water priorities shared by the state's new environmental leaders with Mass Rivers member organizations this spring. On June 5, 50 participants representing Mass Rivers organizational members met with the state's new Environmental Secretary, Rebecca Tepper, and MassDEP Commissioner Bonnie Heiple in Westborough. In a wide-ranging discussion that covered all of the above – and more - the two environmental leaders first shared their priorities and then listened as the organizations represented weighed in with questions, suggestions, and concerns. Members added to the list: Cape Cod water quality problems, the recent flash droughts, access to Municipal Vulnerability Program grants, stormwater management, dam removals, culvert replacements, improving the water quality monitoring grant program, MWRA water sales and deforestation, using gray water, and finally getting the stormwater handbook updated. We look forward to working with these leaders to address these issues during the next few years.

MassDEP Commissioner Bonnie Heiple with our Executive Director Julia Blatt

Left to right: Mikayla Hopkins, Monica Driggers, Anna Renkert, Julia Blatt, Katharine Lange, Sarah Bowers

New faces at Mass Rivers

Mass Rivers welcomed three new staff this spring! Monica Driggers, our new Senior Program Director, brings legal, policy, and research expertise, coupled with a love of rivers and wetlands. She is taking on both new and continuing projects, external and internal. Anna Renkert, our Development and Engagement Coordinator, supports our membership and development work, including events and social media. Mikayla Hopkins, our new bookkeeper and office manager, rounds out the team, keeping our books and producing financial reports. We're delighted to see what we can accomplish with this larger team!

Our interns: where are they now?

This year, we were delighted to have Caleigh McLaren and Clem Doucette join our team as Stormwater Technical Assistance Interns. Caleigh (Spring Intern) and Clem (Summer Intern) assisted Technical Program Director Sarah Bower with developing and implementing Mass Rivers' Stormwater Financing Workshop Series hosted this past summer.

Now, they're off to a great start furthering their professional careers in the environmental field! In June, Caleigh joined the Blackstone Watershed Collaborative - an outstanding partner of Mass Rivers - as the new Blackstone Watershed Restoration Coordinator. This fall, Clem will continue as a graduate student at Tufts University in the UEP M.S. Program in Environmental Policy and Planning, and serve as Graduate Intern with the City of Medford in the Office of Planning, Development, and Sustainability. We are thrilled to continue working with them in a new way!

Caleigh McLaren

Clem Doucette