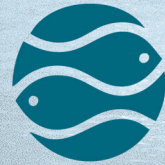


Spring 2018

# THE Voice

OF THE RIVER



IPSWICH RIVER  
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

& 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

*Sustainable Landscapes are Key #4ourRiver: by Rachel Schneider, Outreach Coordinator*

2018 arrived with severe storms and the damage they bring. This followed just a year after the most devastating drought and within a few years after the worst flood in our river's history. This destructive swinging between floods and drought looks increasingly like the new norm. There is another flood we are working hard to address: one of legislative and regulatory activity that could impact the future of the Ipswich River, forever. This flood includes the renewal of 20-year water withdrawal permits, attacks by the federal government on landmark environmental laws and other legislation which could mean new threats and great opportunities for our river. There is on-the-ground work that can be done, by everyone in the watershed, to protect our river and increase its resiliency to our ever-changing climate. It starts on a very small scale, no further than our backyards. If done collectively, our actions will result in a massive positive impact.

This past year marked the completion of the Great Marsh Adaptation Plan, which we wrote for our coastal communities. Its regional recommendations make this point clear for all communities: nature-based solutions are the most cost-effective and impactful way to address the challenges of weather-related threats. Natural spaces help to mitigate flooding, reduce erosion, retain and filter water and lower the impact of heat islands. More than 40% of the land in the Ipswich River watershed is conservation land, but while our population remains roughly steady, new development continues to chip away at the remaining land. How that land is cared for will determine the future fate of our river.

Our urban and suburban areas are where the benefits of open spaces are most needed. The potential to create more natural areas and build a stronger and more resilient watershed for our river is in the hands of our watershed communities. Citizens, businesses, municipalities and local groups, in utilizing eco-friendly sustainable landscape methods, can multiply the amount of open spaces within the watershed and minimize the impacts of how we use the land.



We are launching a campaign to help with our 2018 goal of increasing the awareness and implementation of sustainable landscapes within the Ipswich River watershed: #4ourRiver.

If we work as a community to expand the natural places in our watershed, then from street to street and yard to yard we'll have more support for pollinators, more habitat for wildlife, more filtration for groundwater, and less water taken out of the river. We have the power to determine the future resiliency of our watershed. The opportunity to make our river healthier starts one piece of earth at a time.

Learn more about the campaign at  
[ipswichriver.org/4ourRiver](http://ipswichriver.org/4ourRiver)



[ipswichriver.org/4ourRiver](http://ipswichriver.org/4ourRiver)

1

Be Water Wise by reducing outdoor water use, making the most of rainwater and helping to recharge groundwater.

2

Go Native with native drought-resistant plants to help wildlife and create a more resilient landscape.

3

Cut Out Chemicals in lawn care by using only organic pest control and fertilizers.

4

Grow Together using social media to spread the word about the benefits of eco-friendly sustainable landscaping.





## Young Voices Advocate for the River

Last summer, two Wilmington Middle School teachers, Karen Strazzera and Theresa Fisher, participated in a week-long summer institute run by our Greenscapes Coalition partner, Salem Sound Coastwatch. The course teaches about watershed ecology through field work and hands-on science. In the fall, Strazzera and Fisher encountered an opportunity to take their lessons about watersheds to the next level.

"We had just finished teaching our students a unit on [the Ipswich River watershed] which included a place-based lesson out to the headwaters," says Fisher, "when a colleague saw an article about the drought legislation bill soliciting community feedback and informed us. We decided to add a civic action piece to our watershed unit."

As residents impacted by the effects of over-withdrawals, the students wrote formal letters to the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture expressing their feelings about the bill. "The toughest part was that we only had a few days before the deadline so it was a quick lesson and turnaround to get them done. All of our 7th graders in the school participated, over 250 students," explains Fisher.

"Most people would agree that the effect that is put on towns within the watershed today is not distributed properly and is unfair, and the inconsistency of water usage is affecting every town within the Ipswich watershed," wrote student Nikhitha Biju. "Our residential consumption [increases significantly] in the summer months when we are in more danger of a drought," Emily Provost added in her letter. As Nikos Koss pointed out, "Six towns that have no state-regulated outdoor watering restrictions during drought are in the same watershed as six more towns with state restrictions."

Sofia Skye Almeida summed up the students' call to action: "We know you have a choice to make, that is why we ask you to really think about how if this bill passes, the river will continue to flow and we will all have enough water."

These amazing teachers not only showed and taught their students about their watershed, but imparted in them the knowledge that they have a say in what happens to it. Fisher says, "They were surprised that as kids they could have a voice in government and have become very interested in the status of the bill and river as a result. This process was very satisfying as teachers, going beyond any old lesson taught in the confines of a classroom."

*In 2014 the State wrote new rules to govern water withdrawals. During this process, they determined the Safe Yield for every watershed in the Commonwealth. Safe Yield is the maximum amount of water that can be legally removed from a river each day. For the Ipswich, it was set at 29.4 million gallons per day which is roughly equal to current authorized withdrawals. This means it is illegal to take any more water from our river, forever. Thus, additional demand for water from new growth and development will have to come from reducing existing water use somewhere else.*

*This year, new rules will go into effect requiring our cities and towns to act in compliance with the Clean Water Act and reduce the amount of pollution entering our river in order to make it swimmable, fishable and drinkable throughout its entire length. By far the number one source of pollution preventing us from meeting these standards today is stormwater runoff from our developed landscapes. As our climate becomes more and more variable, both of these issues will become even more challenging to address in the future. But it doesn't have to be that way.*

*Thankfully, we have the tools and know-how to fix these problems. These practices are known by many terms including climate-smart, eco-friendly, nature-based, sustainable landscaping and the like. All are part of a suite of low impact development (LID) methods and behaviors that mimic natural systems as closely as possible which can dramatically reduce our collective impact on the environment. By implementing these measures on both our existing and newly developed areas, we can create a more resilient future.*

*While our organization has advocated for LID for decades, the time has come to dramatically increase the pace of adoption of these low cost, healthy, beautiful and nature-enhancing techniques. Please join us in our efforts to spread the word about the need to take care of our watershed—our future depends on it!*

WAYNE

Wayne Castonguay,  
Executive Director



Fantastic Wilmington Middle School students Emily Provost, Nikhitha Biju and Sofia Skye Almeida (left to right) wrote letters on behalf of the Ipswich River. As Sophia sums up, "If this bill passes, the river will continue to flow and we will all have enough water."





**IPSWICH RIVER**  
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

# Portrait of A Successful Year

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



**17,853** Reached through Paddle-a-thon **1,800** Water Samples Tested

**872** Youth Attend River Education Program **665** Attend 40th Anniversary Events

**38** Comment Letters Written **1** 229-page Climate Adaptation Plan Released



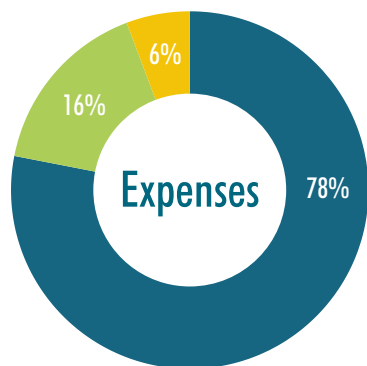
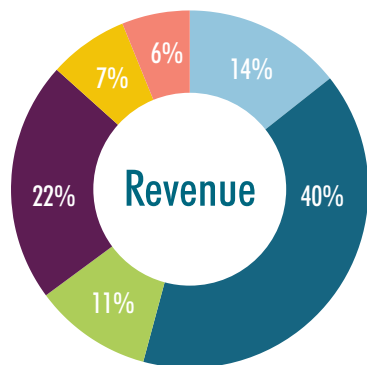
**ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY**  
**RIVER HEALTH**  
**PARTNERSHIPS**  
**LEADERSHIP**  
**SOLUTIONS**  
**CONNECT YOUTH TO RIVER**





# 2017 Financial Summary

Thanks to the generosity of our members and individual donors, the Ipswich River Watershed Association ended our fiscal year 2017 in a strong position. A negative bottom line resulted from planned one-time charges to advance strategic priorities expensed from prior assets. A copy of the complete audited financial statement is available at the Riverbend office in Ipswich.



Revenue	TOTAL
Member Dues .....	\$79,927
Contributions .....	\$221,795
Grants .....	\$59,525
Fee for Service .....	\$121,177
Special Events .....	\$40,105
Other Income .....	\$34,245
<b>Total Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$556,774</b>

Expenses	
Program Services .....	\$472,411
Support Services .....	\$98,050
Depreciation .....	\$34,744
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$605,205</b>

**Change in Net Assets** **[\$48,431]**

## Balance Sheet

Assets	
Current Assets .....	\$572,927
Property and Equipment .....	\$1,342,762
<b>Total Assets .....</b>	<b>\$1,915,689</b>

## Liabilities and Net Assets

Liabilities .....	\$13,463
<b>Net Assets .....</b>	<b>\$1,902,226</b>

The Ipswich River Watershed Association is the voice of the Ipswich River. Our mission is to protect water for fish, wildlife and people for generations to come. Together with scientists, the community and volunteers, we come up with solutions to the river's problems and provide opportunities for people to connect to the river.

## 2017 Staff

Wayne Castonguay, Executive Director  
Trish Aldrich, Development Director  
Kristen Grubbs, Environmental Planner  
Brian Kelder, Science and Restoration Director  
Ryan O'Donnell, Programs Coordinator  
Rachel Schneider, Outreach Coordinator  
Gail Sorenson, Bookkeeper

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# Protecting Our Water for People and Nature



Ipswich River planner Kristen Grubbs works with the Town of Essex and other regional organizations to facilitate a Community Resilience Building Workshop. By convening a diverse group of stakeholders, the community was able to work together to identify areas vulnerable to weather-related hazards and to prioritize actions to make the town more resilient to future threats. Our organizational mission is to protect our water, for people and nature, which is why we lead these planning events. Water is the resource that will be most impacted by climate change, whether by drought, storms or flooding. We bring our expertise and local knowledge to these planning sessions to help North Shore communities plan for the future.



# Supporters 2017

# We are grateful for each and every gift you make.

## River Stewards

Each of these leadership donors provides \$1,000 or more in support through Membership, Annual Appeal or other gifts. Your leadership support makes a world of difference!

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Members of the Ipswich River Legacy Fund have our everlasting thanks for providing for the Ipswich River through their will or other planned gift.

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## Tributes

We are honored to protect the Ipswich River in tribute to these members of the river community.

In tribute to Laura & Spencer Abbot  
Bill & Hatsy Shields

In tribute to Linda Fates  
friends on Great Neck  
John & Virginia Walsh  
In tribute to Bob & Kathy Gravino  
Barbara & Dick Russell  
In tribute to Susan Foster  
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## One Person Can Change the River

Growing up near a small river in western Massachusetts started my life-long love of rivers. I even focused my graduate studies on water resources. Shortly after I moved to Reading, there was an Ipswich River event nearby and I wanted to find out more. Reading's beautiful Town Forest borders and protects the Ipswich River. For 75 years it also hosted Reading's water plant and wells which pumped groundwater from the river basin. The Town Forest is a great place to walk, but seeing the effects of pumping groundwater, a dry river bed and dead fish, just about every second or third summer, was a real call to action.

I began helping with the RiverWatch program at the Route 28 bridge in the 1990s and moved upstream to Mill Street around 1999. It's a nice spot where you can hear the birds and see evidence of beaver activity. Unfortunately, one thing that always amazes me is the amount of litter each month. Oddly, for two or three months a number of years ago I would find several pairs of clean white ankle socks rolled up and tossed over the bridge. The insult to the river and wetlands of tossing stuff into a stream is unconscionable. One of the easiest things people can do is NOT LITTER.

I first joined the Ipswich River board in 1995 and, with our Reading/North Reading Stream Team, we raised awareness on water conservation issues and petitioned to get MassDEP to coordinate clean up efforts on the groundwater pollution. It all culminated in Reading's switch to the Quabbin Reservoir for its water supply in 2006. It was great to see the result of all the work that went into limiting groundwater withdrawal; water was in the river during a year that had less rainfall than ten years previously when the Reading segment dried up for the last time.

The next big issue is stormwater. There's been a lot of development in the watershed, and there is a lot more pavement sending pollution right into the river. People can help by implementing greenscaping. For example, installing dry wells for downspouts and putting in rain gardens where they will capture runoff from impervious surfaces really makes a difference. These actions reduce pollution and provide valuable recharge to groundwater which can feed the river when there's no rain. *by Gina Snyder*



Gina Snyder, now serving her second term on our board, paddles a once habitually dry section of the river in Reading. She advises members of the watershed community to "Conserve water!"

## Leave a Legacy for What You Hold Dear



Noelene Martin (*third from right*) was an avid birder and gardener with a strong interest in environmental protection. Ipswich locals may remember her as a member of the Wednesday Walkers and the steward for a local trail.

Born in New Zealand, Noelene received her training in library science in New Zealand. She and her husband Murray, both librarians, came to the United States when they were both offered jobs in the library at Penn State. When they bought a home in Ipswich, Noelene kept her job at Penn State and became an intrepid commuter, back and forth between Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. Even after she retired, Noelene would drive to Penn State every few weeks to see friends, continue in her book club, and attend concerts and university talks.

Noelene loved the water. In her home, she had a high perch that allowed her to look across the marshes toward Plum Island. This view sustained her even when health problems slowed her down. Noelene died peacefully on Thanksgiving Day, 2017, after celebrating the day with her Seaview Avenue neighbors. She had wanted to remain in Ipswich as long as she could, and we're sure she wanted to leave behind a legacy which would help protect the beauty and waters of her adopted home.

In 2016, Noelene updated her will to include a gift to the Ipswich River Watershed Association. Her generosity and commitment to environmental protection and stewardship will live on for years to come. We are very grateful and honored to safeguard the Ipswich River for future generations in her memory.

You too can leave a legacy for what you hold dear. It's easy to include the river in your will. Contact Trish Aldrich at 978-412-8200 or [taldrich@ipswichriver.org](mailto:taldrich@ipswichriver.org) or visit [ipswichriver.org/Leavealegacy](http://ipswichriver.org/Leavealegacy) for sample language and more information.





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WATERSHED ASSOCIATION**

*The Voice of the River*

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## Paddle-a-thon 2018 REGISTER TODAY!



Whether you love paddling as a family, powering through a race or simply having fun on the river, the Paddle-a-thon is for you! We are paddling to raise funds and awareness for the Ipswich River, named one of the most endangered rivers in the nation because it dries up. Together, we'll change that. Paddle for clean water! To register or get more info, visit [ipswichriver.org/paddle-a-thon/](http://ipswichriver.org/paddle-a-thon/).



## Spring Calendar

**Garden Days** April 26 at Riverbend, RSVP appreciated, not required.

**Annual Meeting** April 26, Boxford, RSVP required.

**Show Me Your River** May 3, Riverbend, RSVP required.

**Rain Barrel Workshops** May 5, North Reading, RSVP required, \$20

**Dock Opening** May 6, Riverbend, RSVP appreciated, not required.

**Fireside Advocacy Chat** May 15, Riverbend, RSVP required.

**Save Water Workshop** May 27, iFarm, Boxford, RSVP required, \$35

**Riverwide Clean Up** June 2, Multiple locations (details at [www.ipswichriver.com/support/event-calendar](http://www.ipswichriver.com/support/event-calendar)), RSVP required.

**Birding Festival** June 9, Multiple locations (details at [www.ipswichriver.com/support/event-calendar](http://www.ipswichriver.com/support/event-calendar)), RSVP required.

**Paddle-a-thon** June 16, Topsfield Fairgrounds, Route 97 field, Sign up today!

**Beginners Paddle** June 22, July 11 & 25, August 8 & 22  
Riverbend, Limited to 20 boats, including guide. RSVP required.

**Greenbelt/IRWA Paddle** June 24, RSVP required

Details for all events can be found at:  
[www.ipswichriver.org/support/event-calendar/](http://www.ipswichriver.org/support/event-calendar/)