

Spring 2016

THE VOICE OF THE RIVER



IPSWICH RIVER
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

& 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Ipswich River: The Next Five Years *by Wayne Castonguay, Executive Director*

What are the current challenges facing the river? What do we want to achieve for the river in the coming years? What do you want your association to do for you? How much will it cost? These are just some of the questions we asked as part of our five-year Strategic Planning process which is winding down this month. Over a year ago, we embarked upon this journey with our members and staff to set a path for the next five years for our organization. Led by our highly skilled and committed Board of Directors and President Christine Sandulli, our new Strategic Plan will be presented to you at our Annual Meeting on May 5th. Thanks to expert professional guidance from long time member Amy MacNulty, we kicked off the process with a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis which served as the foundation for our planning. With this information in hand, we then established overall goals, identified strategies to achieve these goals and determined specific tactics to implement the strategies.

So, where are we headed? Basically, we concluded that we were already on a solid path and didn't need to make dramatic changes. This said, we decided that we need to strengthen our organization so we can increase the pace of river restoration and connect to many more people.

We will achieve this through five broad goals:

1. Protect and restore the river for people and nature;
2. Make Riverbend a thriving center for people to learn about and have fun on the river;
3. Bring more partners together to protect the river;
4. Engage many more people in our cause;
5. Make our watershed association the best it can be.

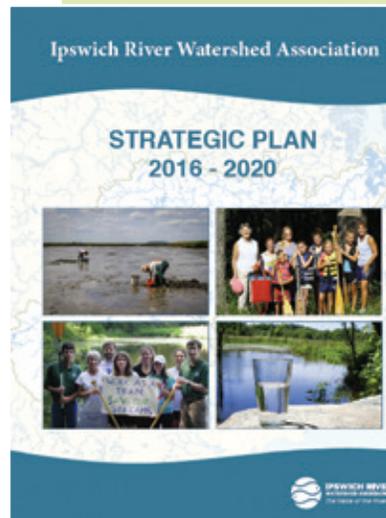
Thanks to your continued support, we can make this happen, together. Please check out the new plan on our website and let us know what you think!



The Ipswich River Watershed Board and staff gather for a day long retreat at Riverbend to develop the Strategic Plan to guide our next five years.

Some Strategic Plan Highlights

- Recruit 500 new members or more
- Expand to better serve the upper watershed
- Build a classroom and laboratory at Riverbend
- Work with towns and partners to remove dams and repair many more culverts
- Add staff and volunteers
- Increase the number of native fish returning to the river
- Offer more educational programs and create an annual signature event
- Increase the amount of clean water flowing in the river
- Protect our world-class shellfishing industry



Pipeline Shelved! See page 9



Our Next Five Years

I was thrilled to be able to work with so many of you over the past year to plan our next five years. Perhaps my biggest take away from the process is how much you thought we were already on the right track and that we have a solid foundation in place. When we looked back, our achievements have been extraordinary for such a small organization. Partly due to our leadership, the state developed some of the most progressive water withdrawal regulations in the country. Our membership has grown to over 1,000 families. Our RiverWatch Program is one of the longest running citizen scientist water quality monitoring programs in the country. We are highly thought of amongst our peers as one of the best watershed associations in the Northeast. What a nice position to be in!

This said, it is clear that we still have a lot of work to do. Progress has been steady but too slow, particularly on the water withdrawal issue. We still have over 1,000 dams, culverts, and bridges that are damaging the river and preventing native fish from returning to their former habitats. We are facing new threats such as climate change, a major increase in the use of unregulated private wells, new pipelines, and a dramatic increase in the use of toxic road salt. And, we still have 349,000 people and businesses that rely on the river every day that are not yet members! Our new Strategic Plan sets an ambitious yet realistic path forward for us to tackle these issues and many more. With your continued help and support, we will leave a healthy, clean, and beautiful river to our children and theirs.

WAYNE

Wayne Castonguay
Executive Director



Great Marsh Resiliency Planning Project Task Force members from Ipswich discuss adaptation strategies.

Working Towards Climate Resilience

In 2015 the Great Marsh Resiliency Project municipal task forces from each of the six coastal towns (Salisbury, Newburyport, Newbury, Rowley, Ipswich, and Essex) in the region identified areas in their communities that are most vulnerable to flooding, storms, and sea level rise. After public input from the Great Marsh Symposium and additional community meetings, Ipswich River staff are working with project partners at the National Wildlife Federation to revise the coastal communities' vulnerability summaries.

The project goal is RESILIENCE, defined as the long term capacity of our communities and landscape to deal with change and to continue to develop and adapt, while retaining a satisfactory quality of life.

In addition, consultants from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) have run an analysis on the risks that certain elements of the communities are facing, including economic impacts to businesses and employees, to roads and other infrastructure, and to open space and recreational areas. The analysis used highly detailed flooding data produced in 2015 – the same data the state is using for their risk analyses.

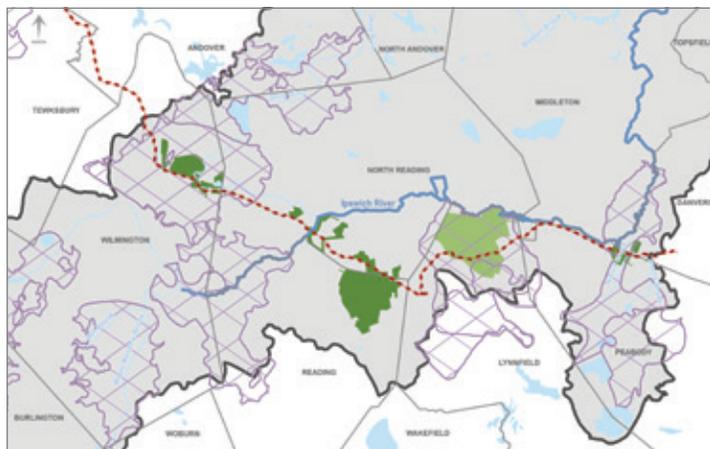
As the planning project continues through 2016, we will identify myriad ways to best address our communities' vulnerabilities and to move towards stronger climate resilience. We will look at what kinds of strategies are being used by coastal communities across the country, and which of these will be best suited for our needs in the North Shore. What tools should we use to adapt to climate change and to best prepare for the future? Community workshops will present the task force's resiliency plans in the fall, with a regional implementation workshop to be held in January 2017.



As our RiverWatch monitoring program enters its 20th year, the new strategic plan calls for it to be expanded to improve our knowledge of the health of the river. As part of this effort, Ryan O'Donnell (Program Coordinator) works with volunteer monitors (including Kathie Dixon, left) to measure chloride levels to document the impacts of the increasing amounts of salt being applied to our roads. Road salt is extremely harmful to aquatic life.

We Won! Pipeline is Shelved!

"We are beyond ecstatic that we were able to help stop this ill-conceived project from ruining our river and we could not have achieved this without the incredible outpouring of support from our members who contributed time and money towards the fight as well as our regional partners who really led the charge," says Executive Director Wayne Castonguay. The April 21 announcement by Kinder Morgan to suspend the pursuit of the proposed Northeast Energy Direct Pipeline is a major victory for the Ipswich River. The proposed Lynnfield and Peabody lateral which would have traveled for 11 miles along the river would have had permanent devastating impacts on the river and the public drinking water supply for 350,000 people and businesses. Wayne continues, "Despite the company's assertion that the project cancellation was due to market conditions, we feel the more important reason was due to the huge opposition from the environmental community and affected property owners including municipal water supply officials. Our small organization and river were truly instrumental in the decision since all the major environmental, property owner, municipal and demand-related issues with the project were best exemplified along the 400-mile plus route in our watershed and we were extremely successful at getting those specific impacts into the larger oppositional movement. The photo of Meghan (see Portrait of a Successful Year page) standing along the 3-mile stretch of riverbank in Peabody which would have been permanently cleared says it all and its going viral was one of the most effective tools we had in the battle." To quote Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Thanks to you, we did it!



The proposed pipeline shown here in red would have travelled 11 miles through the watershed including the 7 public water supply protection areas (purple hatched areas) and 10 permanently protected conservation areas (green areas). Together we are River watchdogs.

Connecting the River



Wayne Castonguay stands atop the Ipswich Mills Dam at the upstream end of the tidal portion of the Ipswich River. The Town of Ipswich is leading a study exploring options to restore this section of river by removing the dam.

Healthy river systems contain diverse and well connected waterways. Our habitat restoration program's primary focus is simple: to connect the Ipswich River with itself.

The Ipswich River and its tributaries are dotted with man-made barriers, including dams and some inadequate bridges and culverts. Over the past ten years, with the help of a wide range of partners, we have made great strides toward improving connections. Proactive efforts are underway to completely remove or improve fish passage at all three of the dams on the mainstem Ipswich.

- **Ipswich Mills:** A new study to investigate the feasibility and costs of removing the dam is underway. The study will be complete in 2017.
- **Willowdale:** The MA Division of Marine Fisheries is working with the dam owners to replace the existing, deteriorating, poorly designed ladder with a new ladder by 2017.
- **South Middleton:** MA Division of Ecological Restoration and the dam owner, Bostik, have secured funding for the removal of this dam, which will reconnect 57 stream miles above the dam. Bostik has begun the permitting process, and the project team plans to have the dam out and the river restored at this site by 2017.

As we continue to help move these three big projects along, we do so with an eye on improving habitat connections to historically important alewife spawning waters such as Hood Pond and Martins Pond. Our efforts will be bolstered by a regional inventory and prioritization of problem bridges and culverts, which will help us build our list of priority sites to restore as we move toward a healthier, better connected watershed.



**IPSWICH RIVER
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION**
The Voice of the River

PO Box 576
Ipswich, MA 01938-0576
(tel) 978-412-8200
(fax) 978-412-9100
www.ipswichriver.org
irwainfo@ipswichriver.org

 Printed on FSC-certified paper containing 50%
post-consumer waste, using vegetable-based inks.

Raise Your Paddle for the River!

Join Our First-Ever Ipswich River Paddle-a-thon:
Saturday, June 18th

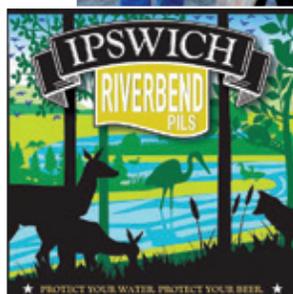


Join the fun on Saturday, June 18th and register for the Paddle-a-thon. Each paddler raises funds and awareness to keep the Ipswich River clean and healthy. You may paddle one of our suggested routes or put in and take out where and when you like.

Paddlers and volunteers are invited to a Ipswich River Paddle-a-thon after-party with the newly released Riverbend Pilsner from Ipswich Ale Brewery, local music, great food and fabulous awards at our Riverbend headquarters.

Each registered paddler receives a free t-shirt, map, food and drink tickets. Tickets for paddlers' guests can be purchased for \$25 when you pick up your registration packet.

Visit our Paddle-a-thon 2016 page to register or find out more. www.ipswichriver.org/paddle-a-thon-2016



The volunteer-powered Paddle-a-thon Committee invites you to raise your paddle for the river. Limited to the first 50 boats. Register today!

Summer 2016

THE VOICE OF THE RIVER



**IPSWICH RIVER
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION**

Beloved River, Kindred Souls *by Trish Aldrich, Paddler & Development Director*

Vikings, early morning mist, 15-hour paddle, 1,202 Facebook video views, low flow up close and personal, and well-deserved Riverbend Pilsner. Paddle-a-thon 2016 had all this, and more! On Saturday June 18, we held our first-ever Paddle-a-thon and thanks to many dedicated and passionate people, the day was a resounding success! Seventy-five people paddled the river in canoes, kayaks and stand-up paddleboards. From those 75 people and 18 corporate sponsors, we raised over \$34,000, with gifts still coming in, which all funds our Clean Water Program.

Aaron Mearns won the Ripple Award for reaching the most people with his posts, Instagram photos and videos. His great Facebook videos alone had 1,202 views! Aaron paddled the long-haul route, going 26 miles. The journey took him almost 15 hours but he was all smiles when he finally arrived at Riverbend around 7:30 pm. Eric Brissette won the Iron Man Award as the first long-haul paddler to arrive at Riverbend.

Dan Heiter, another long-hauler, won the award for most money raised (\$1,325, with gifts still coming in).

For some, the day began at 4:45 am, with long-haul paddlers on kayaks and stand-up

Octogenarian and Ipswich River Board member Paine Metcalf wins the Inspirational Paddler Award for his 4-hour paddle from Route 97 to Asbury St and enjoys a well-deserved Riverbend Pilsner (thanks to Ipswich Ale, a lead sponsor).



Long-haul paddler Dan Heiter gets on the river in North Reading in a magical early morning fog. Photo: Suzanne Sullivan.

paddleboards getting on the river in North Reading in a magical early morning fog. Most of them arrived at Riverbend by 4:30 pm. Throughout the day, paddlers began their journeys in various watershed towns, including Middleton and Topsfield, and the popular Route 97/High Street put-in. Closer to home, others put in at Winthrop Street, navigating five shallow spots and two dams on their way to Riverbend and experiencing low flow up close and personal.

Perhaps Middleton Stream Team paddlers Pike Messenger and Katharine Brown put it best, saying "Once off the highway, all thoughts of traffic, party, money, and any kind of "thon" disappeared. Within a few minutes we had left asphalt for an ever turning path of quiet water bordered by lush water plants. The logistics of getting to the start were over and all were at peace. We were again on our beloved river among kindred souls."

"We are so appreciative of the amazing and inspiring outpouring of support for the river," says paddler and Executive Director Wayne Castonguay. Thanks again to everyone, near and far, who supported the Paddle-a-thon!

- 18 Corporate Sponsors
- 75 Paddlers on the River
- 115 Paddlers, Guests and Volunteers at the Party
- 265 Paddler Sponsors
- \$34,000 (net) raised for our Clean Water Program
- 1 TON of FUN

Andy Desilets and Heather Aizley from the 1634 Meadery won the best decorated boat award, for their canoe turned into a Viking ship for the Paddle-a-thon. They are two of 75 paddlers on their beloved river among kindred souls. Thank you one and all!



The Power of Members

Thanks to you, we recently celebrated the achievement of our long-standing goal of 1,000 members. Although membership dues are needed to fund the organization, your active involvement in our cause is just as important to protecting the river. At perhaps no time in our history has your participation had as much positive impact on the river as seen over the last year. In this issue, you can read about how your efforts were so instrumental in defeating the pipeline, which would have been the most devastating development project in the history of the river. Through the hard work of our members and our partners, we were able to help defeat several efforts to weaken river protections at the state level. With your eyes and ears out in the communities and in city and town halls, we reviewed and improved 22 development projects that may have otherwise negatively impacted the river. And, the outpouring of support that made our inaugural Paddle-a-thon such a success was truly inspirational! At 1,000 strong, we are able to do more for our river than ever before.

WAYNE

Wayne Castonguay
Executive Director



Students from The Governor's Academy prepare for an afternoon of educational activities and river exploration at Riverbend. After performing a dissolved oxygen test, an important indicator of the river's health, they used Ipswich River Watershed's boats to travel upstream, experiencing the beauty and adventure of the river for themselves.

Watershed Students Discover the River

"We had such an amazing time! Can't wait for another adventure!" That was the comment of Lisa Borgatti, science teacher at The Governor's Academy in Newbury, after twelve of her students accompanied her to our Riverbend headquarters for a field trip and river outing. Their adventure was part of our new river and watershed education program, aimed at getting local youth groups out on the river while educating them about the river at the same time. After brief introductions, Lisa and her students, from a wide variety of places, including towns in our watershed, followed Ipswich River staff down to our dock. Environmental Planner Kristen Grubbs led an informal class session, discussing our watershed, drinking water supplies, the Parker-Ipswich-Essex River Partnership and the power of collaborations. Kristen was followed by Education and Outreach Apprentice Rob Barossi, who led the students in a test of the river's dissolved oxygen content. This allowed the students to examine the quality of the Ipswich River's water for themselves, along with their teacher, who provided insights related to what they had learned in class. Following the discussion of watersheds and water quality, the students selected canoes and kayaks, grabbed their paddles, and jumped into boats. It was a beautiful day to be on the water as they journeyed upstream, along what is arguably one of the most beautiful stretches of the Ipswich. Attempting to navigate shallow areas provided them with an in-person encounter with concerns regarding low flow and intense public water withdrawals. These kinds of direct experiences have the potential to shape young people's connection to the river and provide a lifelong appreciation for nature and the outdoors, all while having an amazing time exploring the Ipswich River.

New Materials Promote Resiliency Efforts

Thanks to funding from the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, an array of new outreach materials about Great Marsh climate resiliency are now available at www.greatmarshresiliency.org. Recently developed maps from the National Wildlife Federation are helping coastal towns identify the communities that are particularly vulnerable to coastal flooding. Educational brochures describing the resiliency planning project are available online, and are in your local libraries, municipal offices, and coffee shops. If you would like a copy of the brochure mailed to you or to be available at a public meeting, please contact Kristen Grubbs at 978-412-8200 or kgrubbs@ipswichriver.org.



You Did it!

On May 23rd, The Texas-based Kinder Morgan Pipeline Company withdrew its application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to build the 400+ mile long NorthEast Energy Direct natural gas pipeline from Pennsylvania to Danvers, Massachusetts, effectively killing the project. Little did we know when the project first surfaced two years ago that the Ipswich River would turn out to be ground central for the project and that our membership would be so instrumental in its defeat. Thanks to you, we did it! Imagine this: 163 of you donated over \$35,000 to support our pipeline defense fund and even more of you wrote letters and provided testimony against the project, which, if built, would have been devastating to our river. Because of your support, we collectively:

- Provided critical funding to support the legal work of our partners Pipeline Awareness Network for the Northeast (PLAN-NE) and the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) in the courts.
- Generated over 500 comment letters and official testimony.
- Organized 16 public meetings and presentations in nine communities.
- Participated in 38 public hearings, meetings and strategy sessions.
- Invested 421 hours of staff time and countless hours from our members and volunteers.

In the end, we were able to help make a strong case that the pipeline's environmental impacts and unprecedented threat to public drinking water wasn't worth the risk, and pipeline proponents could no longer justify the project.

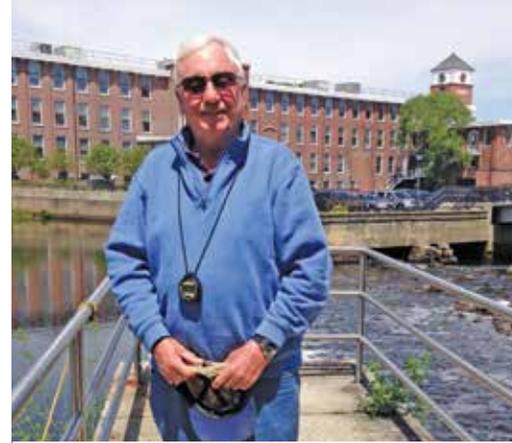
Local Rivers Show Signs of Recovery

The Ipswich, Parker and Essex Rivers once thrived with large runs of migratory fish. The Ipswich River, in particular had millions of herring, shad, salmon, and other ocean fish swim as far upstream as Wilmington to spawn every spring. Native Americans called the river Agawam, meaning "place where fishes of passage resorted," a testament to the rich fish populations it once supported.

The Ipswich River has been used in the past to power mills and, in modern times, to supply water. Due to efforts to control the water with dams and reservoirs, migratory fish can no longer reach traditional spawning areas, contributing to population decline. Today, small numbers of river herring, American eel, and sea lamprey are all that remain of the region's once bountiful migratory fish runs.

On the other hand, things are looking up in 2016. Early reports from river herring counts for the Parker, Ipswich and Essex Rivers are about 3 times larger than in 2015, a hopeful sign of improvement. The river herring population estimate for the Ipswich River is around 1,100, compared to 320 in 2015. Video monitoring of fish in the Parker River is expected to show more than 65,000 herring, compared to about 20,000 in 2015. Also, an electronic counter in the Essex River is expected to show about 43,000 herring compared to 14,500 last year.

We are encouraged by these results, but we do not know if it is the beginning of an improving trend. We need the support of volunteers, partners and the community to continue the monitoring and restoration work needed to open the river to migratory fish and restore the vitality of our local rivers.



Bruce Amazeen and other volunteers make a huge difference by performing invaluable and essential herring counts.

Introducing Our New Outreach Manager



Join us in welcoming our new Outreach Manager, Kara Campbell. Kara is a watershed resident from North Reading who is familiar with the river and the kind of work that goes into protecting it. Kara is looking forward to working with everyone and can be reached at kcampbell@ipswichriver.org.



This photo of Megan and Rio, standing in the river next to the 3-mile stretch of riverbank in Peabody that would have been cleared forever by the pipeline, went viral, helping to seal its fate. Photo: Suzanne Sullivan



IPSWICH RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
The Voice of the River

Name _____

Address _____

Town/City _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Enclosed is my tax deductible donation of:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> River Steward \$1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Senior \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Individual \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

For: Where needed most Defending the River New Membership
 Renewing Membership In honor of _____

You may make check payable to IRWA and mail to: **IRWA, PO Box 576, Ipswich, MA 01938-0576** or click "Donate Now" at www.ipswichriver.org. **Thank you for your support!**



**IPSWICH RIVER
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION**
The Voice of the River

PO Box 576
Ipswich, MA 01938-0576
(tel) 978-412-8200
(fax) 978-412-9100
www.ipswichriver.org
irwainfo@ipswichriver.org



Printed on FSC-certified paper containing 50% post-consumer waste, using vegetable-based inks.

Please Join Us!

Summer Beginner Paddle Series

Mondays, July 25, August 8 & 22
5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Guided Paddle in Topsfield with Souhegan Watershed Association

Saturday, August 13: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Estuary Paddle

Saturday, September 17: 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

Trails & Sails Beginner Paddle at Riverbend

Saturday, September 24: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Estuary Cleanup

Saturday, October 8: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

To RSVP and for more information,
contact us at rsvp@ipswichriver.org.
And for up to date event information &
notifications, sign up for our free monthly
E-News on our website.

The Summer Beginner Paddle Series is back! Join us at Riverbend for a free, leisurely evening paddle. See event calendar for dates and times.

Paddle-a-thon 2016: Thank You to Our Sponsors!

River Watchdogs

Cell Signaling Technology
Graystone Consulting
Ipswich Ale Brewery
Ipswich Investment Management
Meridian Associates
New England Biolabs Foundation
New England Biolabs Inc.
Zumi's

River Herring

BDO
Brick Ends Farm
Coast to Coast Paddle
Dick's Sporting Goods
Ellen Rose, CPA
Essex County Co-Op
Foote Brothers Canoe Livery
Ipswich Inn
Ipswich River Provisions
Ipswich Shellfish Fish Market

Jacqueline's Gourmet Cookies
Seacoast Tent
Sorrento Dental
The Bicycle Shop of Topsfield
The Ipswich Center, Inc.
Tick's Auto
Trout Unlimited, Nor'East Chapter
Ugone-Johnson Insurance Agency
Windhill Realty
Zwicker Press



Fall 2016

THE VOICE OF THE RIVER



IPSWICH RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

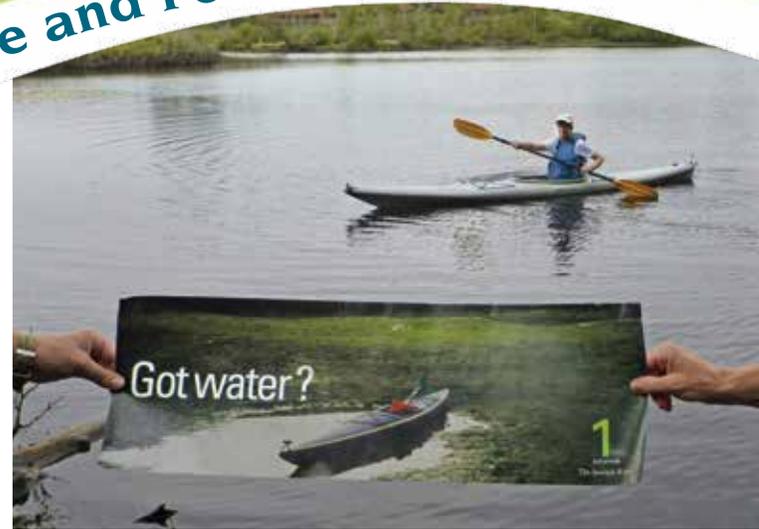
It's Time to Fix the River, Once and For All!

by Wayne Castonguay, Executive Director

Although we've made good progress towards our vision for a clean and healthy river, this year's unprecedented drought has shown that more progress needs to be made. Consider this: our river recorded its lowest flow ever on each day starting on May 20th. Several stretches are completely dry and many of the river's major tributaries are dry also. Never before has the river's flow been this low for this long. Needless to say, the river's ecology has been decimated and it will take many years for it to recover. Interestingly, the dry stretches are mostly adjacent to town water withdrawal locations and the stretches with water are mostly away from withdrawal locations. In fact, even during this severe drought, there's still water today in the places that used to regularly go dry adjacent to the Town of Reading's and Wilmington's recently shut-down wells. These observations clearly demonstrate what scientific studies have proven: the 30 million gallons of water being pumped from the watershed every day is too much for the river to safely produce.

These studies have also proven that the real culprit is non-essential water use, water that we don't need for our everyday lives and economy which includes lawn watering, leaky pipes, car washing, long showers and other unnecessary uses. In fact, there's more than enough water to meet our needs and the needs of the river, even during droughts, if we manage it more wisely. Unfortunately, 87% of the water pumped from the watershed each day is exempt from any state regulation. Many cities and towns are not required to enact conservation requirements and several towns have none at all, even during what may become the worst drought in our history.

It does not have to be this way. We have shown that basic conservation measures can save a lot of water. We have also shown that there are less-damaging sources of water readily available to most of our communities if we paid just a bit more for our water. Unfortunately, the exemptions and largely town-by-town



Water remains in parts of the watershed in Reading that once went dry every year, as seen in the "Got Water?" photo within the larger photo, taken this September, during the drought. This is due to Reading's switch from wells in the watershed to water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, proving that fewer water withdrawals for public water supplies directly leads to more water in the river.

approach is not working to effectively reduce water consumption except in the relatively few towns in the watershed that are required to follow the state water conservation standards. In fact, if we all worked together and pursued a regional approach to this challenge, we could free up enough water to keep the river flowing and even get rid of the water bans in some of our towns, a win-win.

This is perhaps the best opportunity we've had to finally address the river's low flow problem. Please call, email or write to your elected state and municipal officials and ask that they:

- Resurrect the Ipswich River Task Force to implement regional solutions that will both fix the river's problems and make our local water supplies more secure from the impacts of future droughts;
- Work with the Ipswich River Watershed Association and others to implement enhanced water conservation programs in our town and support basic conservation measures in every town that uses Ipswich River water;
- Consider the environmental impacts of water withdrawals and create a rate structure that eliminates the financial incentive for municipalities to sell non-essential water.

With your help, we can turn this drought crisis into an opportunity to make a lasting difference for the river.

Ipswich River Board members and their children stand in the dry riverbed of Martin's Brook at the North Reading/Wilmington town line, during a tour of the devastated upper river.





Kids from the Creighton Pond Day Camp, operated by the Boys & Girls Club of Lynn, get ready to jump into canoes and kayaks and explore the Ipswich River from Riverbend.

350 Kids Connect With the River

"An experience many of them will never forget," said Leland Boutlier, Director of Creighton Pond Camp, describing the time his campers spent at Riverbend as part of our new educational river outing program. These kinds of comments, along with the many excited faces and smiles as kids got into boats on the river for the first time in their lives, were just a few of the many wonderful things that happened during the successful first year of this new program.

As of late September, we hosted ten educational river outings here at Riverbend, attended by a total of 122 kids, ranging in age from 6 to 18 years old. We also brought our mobile education program to local youth groups 12 times over the season, at Green Meadows Farm, Joppa Flats Education Center, the Salem Rec Department Summer Camp program, and other locations. At those visits, we engaged with another 182 kids, ranging in age from 6 to 13. We also visited 14 different farmer's markets and other community events, which gave us the opportunity to reach another 40 kids from area communities. These combined events delivered educational programming to 344 kids and 181 adults.

A huge thank you to the funders who made all of this possible through their one-time grants: New England Biolabs Foundation and the McCarthy Family Foundation, Bank of America, N.A. Trustee. We are thrilled to bring the joy of the river to so many children and hope it fosters in them a lifelong appreciation for and love of the river and the natural world. We also hope to build on this success and expand our education programs into the future, as funding allows.

Volunteers Build Peatfield St. Kiosk

Volunteering is a great way to make a difference for the river and we are pleased to work with many dedicated and motivated individuals in many different roles. Our volunteers are the eyes and ears of the river through monitoring and help make Riverbend a welcoming destination with vibrant gardens and a user friendly experience for hikers and paddlers. Due in large part to our volunteers, paddlers will now have an educational kiosk at the Peatfield Street landing in downtown Ipswich, on land owned by the town. Volunteers Don Ruzecki, Bruce Reilly and Will Holton built the kiosk and have been a fixture at Riverbend on Tuesday mornings, building the property's signs and a canoe rack, among many other projects. Thanks to our volunteers and supporters, we are able to enhance the river experience. Even during this drought, canoeing is still possible on sections of the river and we encourage you to get out and enjoy what the river still has to offer.

Bruce Reilly, Don Ruzecki and Will Holton, our Tuesday volunteers, build a new kiosk for the Peatfield St. canoe landing in Ipswich.



As I pass the four year anniversary of my time at the helm of our Association, the happenings of the last year in particular emphasize the importance of our work. First, we faced the Kinder Morgan pipeline, which, if built, would have been the most damaging development project in the history of our watershed. Its defeat was a monumental victory for the river and demonstrated what a small group of individuals and partnerships can do when we work together on a common cause. Second, this year's unprecedented drought and its devastating impacts on our river have changed my perspective. Despite years of slow but steady improvement, this drought has told us that we still have a long way to go to fully achieve our vision of a healthy river. Thankfully, our new strategic plan is timely, calling for us to "significantly increase our capacity to protect and restore the river". Now that we have everyone's attention, we must take advantage of this rare opportunity to fix the river once and for all. With your help, under the guidance of our new plan, I'm confident we can.

WAYNE

Wayne Castonguay
Executive Director



A Different View of the Ipswich Mills Dam

Most people reading this have seen the Ipswich Mills Dam countless times, owing to its prominent location in downtown Ipswich. Most have likely heard about the ongoing effort to explore the feasibility of removing the dam. Many have strong feelings on whether the dam should stay or go.

Almost all of us have questions about the dam and how removal would affect the river. These questions surround topics including the dam's history, river ecology, flooding, downtown infrastructure, what the restored river would look like and what the project would cost. These are all questions we will have better answers to as a result of the Ipswich Mills Dam Removal Feasibility Study which is underway.

The field work itself provided a view of the dam that few had seen before. Beginning in August, passersby saw the man-made pond with a lower than normal water level. While it was a shocking sight to many, this lowering safely exposed parts of the EBSCO building, the dam and the riverbed that had not been seen in decades, allowing for survey and inspection.

The field work is complete and the consulting team is analyzing the results. Public meetings will be scheduled to share the results when ready. The Town has made no decision about whether or not to remove the dam. That is a question for another day. Right now, thanks to this study, people on all sides of the dam fate debate will have more information for making their own judgments on what is the best path forward.

Professional divers from Pepperell Cove Marine excavate test pits in the Ipswich River upstream of the Ipswich Mills Dam. The divers dug down 8 feet to investigate the soil and foundation characteristics of the 100-year old EBSCO building.



Ipswich Receives \$63,000 Grant to Protect River

Coastal communities in the Great Marsh are taking steps forward in their climate resiliency work. Both the Town of Ipswich and the City of Newburyport, members of the Great Marsh Resiliency Planning Project, were recently awarded a Coastal Resiliency Grant from the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management to implement on-the-ground projects.

The Ipswich River Watershed Association will join the Town of Ipswich in the project, identifying vulnerable areas along the Ipswich River between the Ipswich Mills dam downtown and the Town Wharf on Water Street. A team of coastal geologists and engineers will be hired by the town to inspect erosion and areas that have deteriorated due to both tidal and inland flooding. The focus of the study will be areas of the river bank adjacent to town infrastructure such as water, sewer and roads. The project will consider the long-term impacts of climate change, including sea level rise and heavier storms, in its recommended improvements, prioritizing nature-based solutions to combat the erosion and provide long-term stabilization of the bank.

Advancing public education on river sustainability and climate resiliency will be an important part of this project, with enhanced signage along the popular Ipswich Riverwalk and public presentations next spring. Additionally, the team will assess the feasibility of constructing a public access area for launching non-motorized boats behind Ipswich Town Hall.

The City of Newburyport will work on dune restoration on Plum Island's barrier beach with their grant funds.

The public is invited to learn more about these projects and the work of the Great Marsh Resiliency Project (www.greatmarshresiliency.org) at the 2016 Great Marsh Symposium, to be held November 17th at Woodman's in Essex, MA. Visit greatmarsh.org or contact Kristen Grubbs (kgrubbs@ipswichriver.org) for more information.



Ipswich Public Works Operations Manager Frank Ventimiglia inspects erosion along the bank of the Ipswich River near Green Street.



Name _____

Address _____

Town/City _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Enclosed is my tax deductible donation of:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> River Steward \$1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Senior \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Individual \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

- For:** Where needed most Defending the River New Membership
 Renewing Membership In honor of _____

You may make check payable to IRWA and mail to: **IRWA, PO Box 576, Ipswich, MA 01938-0576** or click "Donate Now" at www.ipswichriver.org. **Thank you for your support!**



IPSWICH RIVER
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
The Voice of the River

PO Box 576
Ipswich, MA 01938-0576
(tel) 978-412-8200
(fax) 978-412-9100
www.ipswichriver.org
irwainfo@ipswichriver.org

 Printed on FSC-certified paper containing 50% post-consumer waste, using vegetable-based inks.



Stand Up for Water

Because of the public attention on the drought, we have a once in a generation opportunity. **The Ipswich River needs your help now more than ever before.** Please contact your local and state elected officials **NOW** and ask them to help work with us to find long term solutions that benefit the river, the watershed, its people and wildlife. Specifically, ask them to work with us on developing an enhanced local conservation plan in their community and to participate

in the regional effort to bring readily available, less-damaging sources of water to supplement local supplies during dry periods.

You can also help by staying closely connected with us over the coming months as we mobilize to solve this problem and by asking people in your networks to join us and become a member or make a special donation to our River Defense Fund at our website at **www.ipswichriver.org**.

EVERY DROP COUNTS!



The Annual Fall Appeal is our biggest and single most important fund-drive of the year. This may become the worst drought ever. We know what the problem is. While concern for the plight of the river is at an all-time high, we have the opportunity to make real and lasting change. Your gift has maximum impact this year. Please include the Ipswich River in your year-end giving and give as generously as your circumstances allow. Thank you from Ipswich Brownies and Ipswich River Staff!