

THE VOICE OF THE RIVER

Spring 2020 Newsletter / 2019 Annual Report



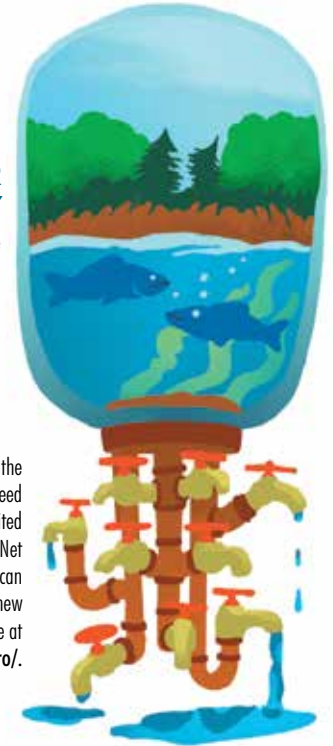
Town Partnership Yields a Plan for Water Neutral Growth

Water conservation is a complicated and sometimes contentious issue that involves many stakeholders. However, water withdrawals are severely stressing the Ipswich River, and the problem is growing due to the climate crisis and increasing rates of development. The 2016 drought was a heartbreaking example of this, but even outside of extreme drought conditions recent town studies indicate that communities that depend on Ipswich River water are at risk because of the lack of water supply resiliency. The urgency of addressing water management in Ipswich River communities was recently made clear when the state set a fixed Safe Yield on withdrawals from the river, which means we must live within existing limits forever.

Communities that rely on the Ipswich River for their water are now in a position where they must provide enough reliable water to their residences and businesses without exceeding the Safe Yield. This daunting task is made easier thanks to a grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission's Climate Resiliency grant program and the Town of Ipswich. Acting as the model, Ipswich has worked with us to develop a toolkit that can be used across the region to keep water withdrawals at or below existing levels in perpetuity. This Net Zero toolkit will first guide municipalities to minimize new water use to the extent feasible and then offset additional demand by finding water savings elsewhere.

Developing this toolkit has made it apparent that there are significant water savings to be had in most towns, and that water neutral growth is possible if we work together. It's all about minimizing discretionary water use. Towns can take advantage of our Greenscapes Coalition and other regional efforts to achieve these changes at little or no cost. The full Net Zero toolkit is now available and we will be working with cities and towns to implement these measures. Please help us in your town!

By adopting a **NET ZERO WATER USE POLICY** towns can minimize water demand from new development.



Communities that depend on the river for their drinking water need to plan for a future with a limited water supply. By adopting a Net Zero water use policy towns can minimize water demand from new development. Learn more at ipswichriver.org/net-zero/.

Please check our website, enews and facebook page for updates in this fluid, evolving situation with the coronavirus.



Former Ipswich River Environmental Planner Kristen Grubbs (far left) has been a key player in moving Net Zero planning forward. Kristen now helps lead implementation of the project in the Town of Ipswich and is saving water where she can and educating others! We are pleased to welcome Patrick Lynch of Reading (left) as our new Environmental Planner. Patrick has a strong background in watershed management and will lead our river advocacy and policy programs.

Are you a water saving expert like Kristen and Patrick? Join the effort by starting a conversation in your community about water neutral growth and setting a good example on your own property. Learn more at ipswichriver.org/greenscapes.



Ipswich River to Build a Water Quality Road Map for the State

Through an innovative pilot program run by the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (DER), and with the help of consultants from Eastern Research Group (ERG) and Action Research, we are studying our existing water quality programs, goals, and organizational capacity so that more organizations can implement new, effective actions to restore and protect aquatic ecosystems. As part of this effort, DER and ERG are helping us identify targeted audiences and effective actions to advance our goals and evaluate our successes in real-time. This feedback will better guide implementation of new programs that will meaningfully improve water quality.

Executive Director Wayne Castonguay says, "We are proud to be selected by DER to partner in this important project which will become a model for the state." Creating a Water Quality Road Map is also an opportunity for us to learn about and test new grassroots approaches, such as community-based social marketing, which uses behavioral science to figure out the best way to encourage folks to make environmentally friendly decisions. Eventually, DER will use this program to help build the capacity of nonprofits and municipalities to effectively and measurably improve water quality across the state. As the pilot partner, we get to provide important insight and input into how this exciting program takes shape!

Dear Friends,

Our thoughts are with you and yours as we collectively navigate the challenges associated with coronavirus. Many things have changed, but our mission is still relevant and our commitment unwavering. Like you, we're adapting to these challenges and are working as tirelessly as ever (apart for now) to protect and restore the river we love. As we adapt to the seemingly new world around us, being able to get outside for a streamside hike and fish for trout in our beautiful river has been my most treasured coping mechanism of late and I'm thankful for that. I'm hopeful that our river can do the same for you.

I am also buoyed by getting lost in our exciting and transformational work as exemplified by the major new projects highlighted in this issue. We are working with cities and towns, with our Net Zero project, to provide the tools to accomplish the imperative task of accommodating new growth while also lowering the demand for water. As we work to reduce the impact of water withdrawals on our river, we are increasing the pace of habitat restoration projects up and down the watershed. The Howlett Brook sub-basin restoration project will dramatically increase the rate of restoration and be a model for other landscape-scale projects throughout the watershed. When coupled with our ongoing dam removal and culvert upgrade projects, we expect to take big strides this year for the river's future. Thanks to being selected by the State to help overhaul our longest running program, RiverWatch, we will position our signature river monitoring program for another successful 20 year run. All of which will allow trout and the river that sustains them to thrive into the future. Given the challenges facing the river, including climate change, increasing the resiliency of the river is more important than ever.

Please check our website and facebook page for updates in this fluid, evolving situation. May you find comfort in the healing power of nature.

WAYNE
Wayne Castonguay
Executive Director

Do your part to improve water quality, register for Paddle-a-thon and raise funds for our Clean Water program!

■ Check for updates at ipswichriver.org/paddle-a-thon.



Left: Keeping water clean is something that we all can take part in, as the students reached with the Greenscapes 5th grade education programs learn. Using the enviroscape model, students and their parents learn what stormwater is, how it enters our waterways, and what they and their families can do to mitigate stormwater pollution.

Right: RiverWatch volunteers, including former board member Gina Snyder, are the heart of our water quality programs. When the program was launched in 1988, it covered only eight sites. Today, it includes over 50 volunteers monitoring a total of 35 sites each month. Thanks to the funds raised annually at Paddle-a-thon, we added chloride tests to the program.

Ocean of Rivers: Reconnecting People and Water

Thanks to a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), we are working with Trout Unlimited National and Nor'east Chapter and municipal partners to restore the Howlett Brook watershed. A subwatershed of the Ipswich River in Boxford, Topsfield, and Ipswich, Howlett Brook supports one of the last cold water habitats and has the most potential for herring restoration in the watershed. To create awareness of this and other restoration efforts we have partnered with Boxford resident, Ipswich River member, and Co-Artistic Director of Fort Point Theater Channel Anne Loyer on the Ocean of Rivers project.

The Ocean of Rivers project is supported in part by grants from the Boxford, Ipswich, and Topsfield Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. The scope of the project includes a series of walks, presentations, workshops, paddles and performances at which attendees will learn both about ongoing restoration projects to improve river connectivity, as well as the migratory species that this work will benefit.

The goal of the project is to strengthen bonds between the Ipswich River communities, reforge connections with nature and demonstrate the need for collective stewardship. Representative of this goal, the public is invited to participate in a live public performance of dancers and puppets at the Town of Ipswich's Local Color festival on May 30th.

You're invited to join the Ocean of Rivers Project!

River Migration Workshop and Talk

*4/18 Sat. 11:00 AM – Noon

Long Haul Paddle, a Paddle-a-thon Event

*5/9 Sat. 11:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Herring Cafe on World Fish Migration Day

*5/16 Sat. 3:00 – 5:00 PM

Ipswich Local Color, Ipswich River Walk,

*5/30 Sat. 1:00 – 4:00 PM

See all the project events & learn more:
ipswichriver.org/oceans-of-rivers.

***Event dates are tentative.**



Kristen Thiebault completes one of the more than 100 assessments done using the new Tidal Stream Crossing protocol. The protocol was developed in 2019 in collaboration with Scott Jackson and the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative thanks to the Massachusetts Environmental Trust Grant program. Along with other data, the new protocol is a better model for assessing accessibility for fish passage in tidally influenced sites. Learn more ipswichriver.org/tidal-crossing-protocol.



Millions of herring once performed a dance of renewal in the Ipswich River watershed. Today, that dance is down to only a few performers as dams, outdated culverts, overgrown streams, and other barriers-to-flow prevent herring from returning to their spawning habitats. Hopefully, restoration projects will bring the herring back and we can celebrate their return, maybe with a herring themed canoe like the one Brian Kelder and Trish Aldrich paddled at Ipswich River's 40th anniversary party.

Donate Now at www.ipswichriver.org



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 Email _____ Phone _____

Enclosed is my tax deductible donation of:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> River Steward \$1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

For: Where needed most Paddle-a-thon Membership

You may make check payable to IRWA and mail to: **IRWA, PO Box 576, Ipswich, MA 01938**

Thank you for your support!


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The Voice of the River

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

Have a Little Fun & Make a Big Difference on June 20th.... **Paddle-a-thon!**



Dreaming of Warm Days on the River?

This event takes all the pain out of raising money for a good cause — you'll enjoy warm weather, cold beer, good food, bad jokes, and live music along the Ipswich River. There will be paddle routes for all ages and abilities.

The weather will be perfect. Pinky swear!

REGISTRATION will open in late April.

In the meantime:

- Mark your calendar: June 20th
- Dates are tentative, please watch for updates.
- Visit: ipswichriver.org/paddle-a-thon.

