Planting Seeds of Hope by Jacob Garland

When confronted with mounting global problems, hope becomes a very fragile species. The intense heat of challenge not only withers hope that once thrived but also threatens little seeds long before they sprout. That is, unless communities prioritize the awareness and involvement needed to germinate those seeds.

As the 2021 Kerry Mackin Summer Educator, I spent my summer teaching youth within the Ipswich River watershed about the importance of the river as well as the ways we can protect it. I loved creating lesson plans, scheduling a curriculum, and connecting with these kids who so clearly wish to become stewards of our environment. But if there’s one thing I’ve come to realize, it’s that the challenges we face in protecting our river and our water are extreme—intense droughts, excessive water use, water pollution, and habitat destruction—and they’re not going anywhere any time soon.

But I refuse to believe in a future in which our seeds of hope no longer exist. After reaching over 500 kids from Lynn, Marblehead, Salem, Beverly, Danvers, North Andover, Andover, North Reading, Lynnfield, Peabody, and Lawrence, my hope for the future is more alive than ever.

These kids possess a vitality stronger than any challenge we face. They are eager to learn and help, and it is precisely that kind of energy that supports our tiny seeds of hope in the face of our greatest challenges. They deserve our attention and support.

And yes, it’s no secret that our Ipswich River, one of the most endangered rivers in the country, is also in need of attention and support. But we have plenty of hopeful seeds: they’re planted not only in the next generation of river protectors—who I’ve been so privileged to teach—but also in all members of the communities that benefit from the river.

We can nourish these seeds through community awareness and involvement, critical thought about the impact of our actions, and deep concern for the well-being of future generations. With help from us all, these seeds we have planted will flower into a future better than we ever could have imagined.

Jacob Garland, shown here leading an IRWA Floating River Classroom program, is an undergraduate student studying at Dartmouth College with a prospective major in environmental studies and psychology. He’s worked with nonprofits, school communities, and peer groups to educate individuals about the impacts of environmental issues and their solutions.

I can only hope that I’ve managed to inspire my students as much as they’ve inspired me. Thank you to them, and thank you to the Ipswich River Community for giving me this opportunity. Here’s to a brighter future!

Jacob’s article appeared in the Newburyport News as part of a continuing series coordinated by the Alliance of Climate and Environmental Stewards (ACES) about fostering environmental stewardship and the well-being of future generations.
Time to Shift Into Overdrive!

It’s still hard to believe the Ipswich River is one of the Most Endangered Rivers® in America. Excessive water withdrawals continue to be a challenge. But you didn’t let this keep you down. The river community rallied together in a big way to leverage this dubious designation and take the Ipswich River off the endangered list for good. Launched in April 2020, the #EndangeredIpswich advocacy campaign is our plan to save the river with support from community members, town and city officials, and state legislators. Over the course of two years, this action plan aims to improve water management practices at all levels.

For state officials, we recommend a series of policy solutions to change the existing outdated and unfair water management system. For municipalities, we developed a Recipe for Resiliency as an easy-to-follow guide to achieving net-zero water use while meeting community needs. Becoming water neutral ensures communities have enough water for now and well into the future. Solutions include the pursuit of readily available, less damaging alternative water sources. And each of us can reduce our water use in simple ways. Outdoor water use is the biggest culprit of strain on the river, particularly in the summertime. The Lawn by Lawn campaign aims to make the actions many of you already take, like not watering grass, the norm in our communities.

Year two of the campaign is underway, and it’s time to move into higher gear. After years of advocacy, the Drought Bill, which would regulate all outdoor water use during droughts, was reported favorably out of committee, and the legislature is actively considering it. A win here will send a clear message that, like many other states, Massachusetts is facing more and more droughts well beyond what current drought management policy can manage. Now, statewide river advocacy partners are formulating a shared strategy to update current water management and help restore depleted rivers like the Ipswich.

Guided by the Recipe for Resiliency, every city and town that uses Ipswich River water will be working on updating their bylaws, ordinances, and regulations to both reduce water use and increase groundwater recharge. The Ipswich River team and partners will facilitate discussions and offer support to find solutions at the watershed scale. In its first year, the #EndangeredIpswich advocacy campaign also helped secure $250,000 from the state for a series of studies led by Senator Tarr’s Water Supply Resiliency Task Force. These studies will determine the feasibility of securing alternative water supplies for communities in the lower watershed and will wrap up by summer.

Community awareness and engagement have always been key to saving the Ipswich River. Digitas, one of the world’s largest multinational marketing firms, has committed to a year-long pro-bono partnership to develop and implement an outreach campaign to bolster all these efforts. Keep reading our emails and following our social media to learn how you can take action for the river, and please join us at events throughout the watershed. Together, let’s make sure 2022 is the year that signals the end of the Ipswich River’s low flow problems.

Thank you for all you do to save the #EndangeredIpswich.

Wayne Castonguay
Executive Director
Getting Kids Outside More Often

A love of nature is often at the core of environmentally conscious habits. You remind yourself to do all sorts of little things until they become second nature, like turning off the tap, picking up litter, carrying a reusable water bottle, or choosing native plants. Like any habit, getting out in nature has to be actively cultivated. Our region is abundant in green spaces, but not everyone can easily access them. For many people, there are structural impediments to spending time in nature. It’s easier to take a walk in the woods if you have things like a steady salary, affordable rent, and reliable childcare. If you’re working two jobs and are on food stamps, you’re less likely to take up paddling. And too often, engaging outdoor education is a privilege for only some. Being in or even near natural areas is beneficial to physical and mental health. A watershed community that has equitable access to green spaces will be healthier and more resilient. And more likely to nourish the next generation of river defenders.

That is why we are very excited to partner with Pathways for Children (Pathways) out of Gloucester this year to lead indoor and place-based environmental education during winter, spring, and summer. We have always offered our Floating Classroom education program at no cost to participants as part of our commitment to accessibility. This partnership means we can expand access to the river and help children and families thrive by creating experiences that instill a love of nature and respect for the environment. Rather than single-day programs, Pathways children and families will participate in multiple outings throughout the year, exploring the natural world and learning new things along the way. “For some of the younger kids especially, their exposure to nature has been pretty limited,” says Outreach Manager Rachel Schneider. “But they have been curious and excited to learn. Frog eggs were especially enticing, and the kids can’t wait to visit vernal pools this spring.”

We’re looking forward to a year full of excursions and exploration. This partnership will create experiences that foster a lifelong love of nature that these kids will carry far beyond this summer into their roles as the scientists, policymakers, and advocates of tomorrow. You can help our Floating Classroom program achieve this outcome and more by volunteering or making a gift today. When you invest in our education programs, you empower the next generation of climate leaders.

Volunteers from the Middleton Stream Team and Outreach Manager Rachel Schneider engaged kids at Pathways in conversations about where their water comes from, where it goes, and how they interact with it. “It’s always rewarding to see a kid grasp a new concept,” says Rachel, “I’m looking forward to really getting to know these kids and getting outside together this spring.”
A dancer mimics fish migration for an Ocean of Rivers performance and installation at the Ipswich Mills Dam. We’re seeking volunteers to help with the Ocean of Rivers project. If you’d like to help or are interested in collecting data for CLEAR, please contact irwainfo@ipswichriver.org.

Program Coordinator Ryan O’Donnell checks out the undersized culverts at the Pond Street crossing in Topsfield, slated to be fully upgraded this spring to meet MA stream crossing guidelines.

The stream outlet at Hood Pond crosses under Pond Street, which is considered the highest priority barrier along the entire Howlett Brook watershed migratory pathway. Upgrading this barrier is critical to the success of reestablishing a local herring population.

### Celebrating Fisheries Restoration

A study of nature reveals the intricacies of ecosystems and the vital role keystone species play in the health of our environment. The Howlett Brook Watershed Restoration Project focuses on returning river herring by addressing stream continuity challenges in an entire subbasin. According to Executive Director Wayne Castonguay, “If you restore healthy, native fish populations, everything else comes with it.” A grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has funded the Howlett Brook watershed design plans, cost estimates, and site surveying for priority sites. Removing these current barriers to flow will significantly improve access for migratory fish. Thanks to the Foundation’s support, Hood Pond is home to herring again for the first time in nearly 150 years!

For fish enthusiasts like Howlett Brook project partners Trout Unlimited, the benefits of fisheries restoration are clear. But stream flow restoration projects often require community buy-in to move forward. What factors can make a community rally behind a little fish with huge importance? That question is the focus of our new partnership with Northeastern University’s Cognitive Laboratory of Environment and Arts Research (CLEAR). CLEAR explores how interaction with and participation in art can increase the public’s support for environmental stewardship. Clear Cognitive Psychologist John Coley explains, “Information dumps don’t change behavior.”

In Plymouth, CLEAR partnered with local advocates to build awareness of the Town Brook herring run using projected installations. This spring, they will participate in our joint Ocean of Rivers event series with Fort Point Theatre Channel. Building off last year’s success, we will hold five events in which performance and installations interact with the surrounding environment. By surveying and engaging event participants and key community stakeholders, CLEAR will take a deep dive into Ocean of Rivers to investigate how to keep restoration efforts swimming forward.
We’ve said it before, and we’ll say it again: Our work would not be possible without generous and consistent support from enthusiastic individuals who jump right into taking action. You found ways to come together despite a world of challenges. When we learned that the Ipswich River was ranked one of the 10 Most Endangered Rivers® in America, you rose to the occasion—as quickly as this year’s uncommonly high water level.

The river called, and you answered.

Paddle-a-thon participants biked, walked, kayaked, and more to raise awareness of their endangered river. Over thirty local businesses and companies, led by 2021 River Heroes New England Biolabs and Institution for Savings, showed their support as Paddle-a-thon sponsors. Together, sponsors and teams raised more than $100,000 for the Ipswich River—a record-setting effort!

River advocates called their legislators and sent comment letters to encourage better statewide water management and common sense water restrictions more in keeping with the realities of the climate crisis. Volunteers made everything possible, from improved data collection, restoration progress, and badly needed in-person events. In support of an ambitious 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, donors increased their giving, making the 2021 year-end appeal the most successful ever.

Whether increasing community resilience, getting more people outside, or supporting relevant, accessible environmental education, you’ve shown your deep dedication to our mission. Thank you!
As a lifelong angler and conservationist, I have always held the values of watershed management close to my heart. My early days on the Blackledge River in CT and the Connecticut River in NH were precious times with my family and for the peace the water gave me. Later years were enriched with canoe trips across parts of eastern Canada, exposing me to the Cree and Inuit cultures.

I came to the picturesque coastal community of Ipswich in 2006 and soon after became an Ipswich River Watershed Association member. While serving as the Ipswich Fire Chief, I took great pleasure and peace in counting herring for IRWA. When I learned that water allocations exceeded the supply, I felt compelled to do more and joined IRWA’s Board. I am also a member of Rotary International, whose motto is “Service Above Self.” With this motto resonating through me, I thought, how can I translate it to my work with IRWA? Despite its small size, IRWA has successfully advocated locally and regionally for effective watershed management. With increased support, I believe that solutions to the river’s woes are within reach.

Concurrently, I was updating my will and saw an opportunity to both serve others in need and demonstrate for my children a sense of philanthropy towards causes near and dear to my heart. I was so pleased to include IRWA and Rotary in my revised will. Adding a legacy gift is nowhere near as complex as you might think. You name the percentage or exact amount, no one else. You are in control. I feel grateful to share a small part of my assets with IRWA upon my death and know that this small but mighty organization will be wise stewards of my dollars.

~Art Howe

Happy Trails on the Water

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~Art Howe

Already included IRWA in your estate plan? Let us know. Doing so will allow us to appropriately thank you for your gift and keep you updated on our work.
Every friend of the river is special to us. Thank you.

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Artists: (top) Marion Hall; (bottom) Linda Lee Bertrand *deceased

Scenes from source to sea.

The North Shore of Massachusetts is filled with iconic areas of natural beauty including the Great Marsh and the Ipswich River. Like many places across the world, these local treasures are facing uncertain futures. The Flowing River Art Show is organized by the Ipswich River Watershed Association to celebrate local artists and highlight the wetlands, rivers, streams, wildlife, and clean water that make this region so special. A portion of the sales from the show will be donated by the artists to protect the health and beauty of the Ipswich River. Thank you to all the talented artists participating in the show, and to our show partner, Cell Signaling Technology, for making this incredible event possible. You can see examples from the show in our Annual Report, and view the entire gallery at ipswichriver.org/artshow22.
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Mark Voiles
Beth Voiles
Carlo Villa
Audrey Waldinger
James Waldinger
Bill Whiting
Bobbi Whiting
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Kathy Whitmore
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Dave Williams
Lindsey Williams
Susan Winthrop
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Artists: (top to bottom) Ginny Olibien, Anne Carroll, Corinne Cammoss-Abercrombie, Cynthia August, Stever Carr
Growing Healthy Communities

The way we think about building and engineering our environment must adapt at the local level. For example, the old solution to flooding was to divert stormwater through gray infrastructure directly to waterways with minimal or no treatment. But for rivers like the Ipswich, stormwater is a source of pollution that is made worse by this old solution. Stormwater is a nonpoint source of pollution caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground and carrying pollutants into rivers, wetlands, and other water bodies. Due to its impacts on water quality, the Clean Water Act was amended in 1987 to establish a national nonpoint source pollution control program. Still, stormwater continues to be a challenge for many rivers. New solutions need to be implemented to prevent untreated water from flowing directly into our rivers and streams.

As you know, conditions can change from floods to drought in a flash. Communities must plan with both extremes in mind. Together with a team of policy, land management, and water quality experts, we have created a report—The Recipe for Resiliency—to help cities and towns prepare for any condition or challenge. The Recipe for Resiliency is full of tested policies, management plans, and community engagement resources. While The Recipe is primarily a guide to protecting the future of water, it goes beyond safeguarding the river’s future. Implementing its solutions will make our communities healthier overall.

While your municipal officials collaborate to map a water resiliency plan, you, too, can take action. Many of you already refrain from watering your lawns. You use rain barrels and have established native plants—You’re walking the walk. By making the Lawn by Lawn pledge, you can talk the talk. Pledging to Grow Healthy Communities, Lawn by Lawn, means more than the core pledge. A proudly displayed lawn sign helps set a norm in your community, one front yard at a time. It says, “We believe in conserving water and keeping it clean.”

Research shows that neighborhoods tend to stick together when it comes to lawn maintenance. Be the first in your neighborhood to show your commitment to green spaces and clean water. Visit ipswichriver.org/endangered today to take the pledge:

- I will not water grass;
- I will hand water gardens, shrubs, and trees;
- And I will cut out chemical use.

Then swing by Riverbend to pick up your free lawn sign.

We love enjoying nature with our furry friends, like at last year’s Dog Day of Summer event. Our pets roll, walk, play, and chew in our outdoor spaces, meaning whatever is on the ground will get on them too. Along with saving water, the Lawn by Lawn pledge asks community members to cut out chemicals, keeping our pets and family healthy.
2022 IPSWICH RIVER EVENTS

April
- 4/2 – Vernal Pool Walk with the Middleton Stream Team
- 4/9 – Pond Meadow Rookery Walk
- 4/16 – Ocean of Rivers Topsfield Walk
- 4/21 – Fireside Chat with Wayne
- 4/23 – Ocean of Rivers Hood Pond Walk

4/28 – Annual Meeting

May
- 5/7 – Ocean of Rivers Boston Brook Walk
- 5/14 – Ocean of Rivers Norris Brook Walk

June
- **6/18 – Paddle-a-thon 2022**

July
- 7/9 – Sawmill Brook Walk
- 7/20 – Colors of Summer: Plein Air on the Ipswich River
- 7/23 – Wildcat Forest Walk

August
- 8/6 – Skug River Reservation Walk
- 8/20 – Stearn Ponds Watershed Walk

September
- 9/10 – Strawberry Moon Riverbend Paddle

October
- 10/9 – Blood Moon Riverbend Paddle
- 10/16 – Fall Family Walk with the Middleton Stream Team
- 10/22 – Colors of Fall: Plein Air on the Ipswich River
- 10/29 – Halloween Nature Walk

November
- 11/3 – Fireside Chat with Wayne
- 11/12 – Miles River Walk
- 11/26 – Get Outside Walk

December
- **12/1 – PIE-Rivers Annual Meeting**
- 12/10 – Holiday Walk

More events coming soon!
- Community Paddles with Ipswich Community Yoga Collective
- Mindfulness Paddles
- Dog Day of Summer
- Trails and Sails events

Join our email list to be the first to know about our latest events.

Find event details and register at ipswichriver.org/calendar.
The Ipswich River is the lifeblood of the North Shore.

As children across the watershed learn through our education programs, we all have an impact on water. Just as water moves through the ground and to our rivers en route to the sea, each of us makes daily choices that will ripple into the future.

Thank you for making the good choice to be a friend to the river. Whether you’ve only just discovered the Ipswich or you’re a life-long advocate, your extraordinary generosity and consistent support are vital to the health of the Ipswich River. Over the last two years, many of you went above and beyond, increasing your gifts of support and bringing new people to our community of river enthusiasts.

Keep making a difference for the river.

Join or renew your membership, donate, or volunteer today.

► ipswichriver.org/membership
► ipswichriver.org/donate
► ipswichriver.org/volunteer

On behalf of our board and the entire Ipswich River team, thank you for all you do to make the river more resilient!

A big thank you to all our donors from (l-r) Deborah Moules, Gail Sorenson, Amber Redmond, Claudia Johnson, and Kim Hadlin, our amazing fundraising team.

You Make A Difference!