

15th Anniversary!

Annual Meeting Sunday, January 25th

Joan Kimball, Director of Massachusetts Riverways Program, will be the keynote speaker for the 15th anniversary Parker River Clean Water Association annual meeting on Sunday, January 25, 2009 of the. The meeting will be from 1 – 3 PM at the Newbury Library on Lunt Street in Byfield. (I-95 exit 55 west to Lunt) The Parker River watershed has long benefited from the assistance and knowledge of the Riverways Program. The public, and all who may be interested, are welcome to attend.



Joan leads the Riverways Program which promotes the restoration and protection of the ecological integrity of the Commonwealth's watersheds and their rivers, streams and adjacent lands. Riverways believes local action is the key to river protection. Staff members work side-by-side with local citizens, town officials, watershed-based groups and other partners, helping in the following ways:

Protect and restore water quality

Protect healthy stream flows

Protect land along rivers and streams

Improve habitat for wildlife and fish in river corridors

Promote public access to and along rivers and streams consistent with resource protection

By protecting our watersheds, we also protect the unique character and livability of our communities. Everyone will find Joan's presentation about the Riverways Program relevant and interesting.

Greenbelt Opens Platform to Public

Sunday, November 3, saw another step forward in the Common Pasture Open Space project with the opening of a new observation platform, open to the public, at the Essex County Greenbelt Association's Wet Meadows Reservation along Scotland Road in Newbury along Scotland Rd. The recent success in protecting much of the Common Pasture is the result of a strong coalition of organizations, local communities and private citizens, including Parker River Clean Water Association and Greenbelt who actively worked to obtain donations to purchase the Wet Meadows parcel. The land was acquired by Greenbelt in 2007, and is part of the historic Common Pasture, over 650 acres of land in Newbury and Newburyport with extraordinary ecological, scenic and historic value.

The roadside that borders the Wet Meadows property is a popular viewing spot for birders from throughout the region. The new platform provides a safe and stable place off the road to set up telescopes for viewing a variety of bird species, including shorebirds, wading birds, waterfowl, raptors and many others. The new observation deck was dedicated to two well-known birders and Greenbelt supporters, the late Judge Lawrence Jodrey and Gerald Soucy. Photographers, artists, and the general public will enjoy using the platform to further their appreciation of this beautiful open space. You can locate the platform just a few steps off Scotland Road at the western boundary of the Greenbelt Wet Meadows marked by a Greenbelt sign. It is just a little west of the street sign for Scotland Heights Road.

Further west on Scotland Road, east of the Salter School Bus Office, is Coffin Island Conservation Area, another Common Pasture parcel with a trail and open to the public. Look for the farm gate with a pedestrian entrance beside it. Parking is across the street. Visit Coffin Island or the new Wet Meadow viewing platform soon – bring a picnic and enjoy the historic landscape of the Common Pasture, little changed in hundreds of years.



The Athenaeum - Newburyport Marshes. Painting by Alfred Thompson Bricher – 1876 who was born in Portsmouth, NH and educated in Newburyport. This painting is probably of the Little River as it flows through the Common Pasture. Thanks to PRCWA member Tom Horth who brought the painting to our attention.

NEW SIGNS FOR THE LITTLE RIVER NATURE TRAIL

Elegant new signs will soon be installed at the Storey Avenue entrance to the Little River Nature Trail, across the street from the Park and Ride, and also on Hale Street at the south end of the Trail. These signs have been funded through grant programs sponsored by the Essex National Heritage Commission and the Newburyport Community Preservation Commission. They follow the easily recognizable brown format of the Essex National Heritage Area signs seen throughout the Area. Members of Parker River Clean Water Association have contributed time and effort known as “in-like” as part of the agreement for the grant funding. Additional time has been generously donated by JenWright Sign Company of Newbury who prepared the signs and will supervise their installation. Parker River Clean Water member, Jerry Mullin, has taken the leadership role in the sign project which will finally replace the dilapidated “temporary” sign. The sign has received the support of the Newburyport City Council, particularly Councilor Brian Derrivan whose ward contains this area, and at-large Councilor Tom Jones.

The Trail begins at the headwaters of the Little River watershed just off Storey Avenue and moves south toward the Common Pasture. To enjoy the trail, follow the worn cart path from Storey Avenue several hundred yards south to the small Nature Trail signs marking the way. The Little River meanders through the area which includes the abandoned old Route 95. A surprising number of mammals, birds, butterflies, and plants can be found in the diverse habitat along the trail. It is unusual to find so much wildness so close to developed residential areas. There is an observation platform near the end where wetlands and wildlife, including recent beaver activity can be viewed. About 2/3 of the way down the Old route 95 hard top hikers can cross the Little River and connect with the Crow Lane path. If you walk east along the Crow Lane path hikers will come to the Cooper North Pasture open space parcel and from here they can walk south through it to reach Hale Street or continue to the end of Crow Lane where it meets Low Street.

Don Bade Plans to Retire

Don Bade, long time president of Parker River Clean Water Association will be hosting his final annual Parker River Meeting January 25, 2009, as he moves towards retirement from local volunteer work

upon his 80th birthday and the 15th anniversary of Parker River Clean Water. A special benefit for Parker River Clean Water and a thank you event is planned to honor Don sometime in February or March. More details will be announced after the first of the year.

DON BADE HONORED BY ESSEX NATIONAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

Parker River Clean Water Association president, Don Bade, was honored with a Pioneer in Partnership Award by the Essex National Heritage Commission (ENHC) at their recent meeting. Each year ENHC honors people whose efforts have contributed to the mission of the Essex National Heritage Area. The award was presented by Commission President Emeritus Thomas M. Leonard, and recognized Don's work with the Parker River Clean Water Association and the Great Marsh Coalition. Congratulations Don on this well-deserved award!

The Essex National Heritage Area is one of 37 heritage areas nationwide affiliated with the National Park Service. Conceived as a park-beyond-park-boundary, the Essex National Heritage Area covers 500 square miles, 34 communities, two National park sites, hundreds of historical sites, miles of intact landscapes, coastal regions and lifetimes of rich experiences that chronicle the history of our region and of our national heritage resources.

For further information regarding places to visit and activities in the Essex National Heritage Area see their website: <http://www.essexheritage.org/visiting/index.shtml>

Georgetown Safe Yield Study Completed with Mass Riverways Grant

This past summer, the Horsley Witten Group completed its stream-flow analyses of the upper Parker River in Georgetown. The "safe yield" study was funded by a grant from the State agency Mass Riverways, a division of Massachusetts Fish & Game. Among other data, the study showed a negative recharge of -53 percent occurring in the vicinity of the Georgetown well fields. A review of Georgetown's Annual Statistical Reports showed that summertime usage exceeded the recommended amount determined by the Department of Environmental Protection Agencies for summer/winter ratio volume.

The Horsley Witten Group suggested a stronger focus on conservation measures to prevent river desiccation and to restore aquatic base flow in the upper Parker River. The Georgetown Water Department has instituted higher water rates in an effort to satisfy DEP requirements and to remind people to conserve water.

We would like to thank the Town of Georgetown officials who helped in the processing of this study. Special thanks goes to Mass Riverways ecologist Margaret Kearns, who spearheaded the effort on behalf of Mass Fish and Game. The full report can be viewed on the Mass Riverways website at: http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/river/programs/rifls/sustainable_flow_projects/sustainable_flow_home.htm

New Alliance Formed To Protect Rivers

Parker River Clean Water Association recently became a voting member in a newly formed non-profit organization called the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance. The Alliance was formed with the intention of becoming an effective advocacy group that would address the many issues currently facing our rivers and streams.

The Alliance brings together a vast spectrum of environmental organizations and statewide watershed associations. We would like to give special thanks Kerry Mackin, Director of the Ipswich River Watershed Association, for her hard work and dedication to this new organization. For more information you can visit the website at: <http://www.massriversalliance.org/index.html>

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