

PARKER RIVER CURRENTS

Volume 19

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April 2010

Volunteers Needed – Please Help Massachusetts Turtle Roadkill Monitoring Project Call PRCWA Office 462-2551 to volunteer!

PRCWA will be participating in a Turtle Road-Crossing Study project initiated by MassWildlife and MassDOT to identify, monitor, and upgrade “hotspot” crossing locations in order to lessen road kill mortality and improve road safety. Each year, thousands of turtles are killed on highways in Massachusetts as they are moving between wetlands or seeking nest sites. Turtle protection has been an especially important part of PRCWA’s work and your help will be greatly appreciated. Call Marlene at 978-462-9062 to volunteer. We need many volunteers.

Adult volunteers are needed to walk a section of road identified as a “roadkill hotspot” looking for turtle fatalities as well as living turtles. The data will be recorded and sent to the State Project Coordinator. The surveys will be done 4 times – the last week in May, the second week in June, the last week of June, and once during the first two weeks of September. Volunteers will wear vests with reflector tape and walk in pairs for safety.



They will have photos of the commonly seen turtles to help them identify any species seen. The likely possibilities are snapping turtles, common painted turtles, musk turtles, spotted turtles or Blanding’s turtles.

Our survey will focus on these roadkill hotspots: West Street in Georgetown, Route 97 in Georgetown where the Parker River crosses under the highway, Scotland Road between Rt. 95 and where the Little River passes under the road near the Newburyport Industrial area. If there are sufficient volunteers, we may be able to cover additional roads. If there is a “hotspot” that you think should be added, please let us know.

The Turtle Roadkill survey is part of a much larger long-term and multifaceted effort by MassWildlife and MassDOT to minimize the impact of roads on nongame wildlife. They are currently requesting information on general wildlife roadkills, vernal pool salamander migration roadkills, and turtle crossing hotspots. Read more about their proactive efforts to protect wildlife at <http://linkinglandscapes.info/roads/home.html>. Turtles appear to be declining in Massachusetts in part due to habitat fragmentation and resulting roadkill. Turtles are particularly sensitive to roadkill because they mature very late (in some species, around age 15-18) and have low reproductive potential. In the absence of roadkill and other anthropogenic sources of mortality, some species may achieve lifespans exceeding 100 years.

Dear Friends and Members,

Our sixteenth annual meeting was well attended by members and several State environmental personnel. The Board especially appreciated words of support for the mission of PRCWA given by Newburyport Mayor Holaday and Representative Michael Costello. The presentation by the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team was very interesting and well received.

Tim Purinton, of the Department of Ecological Restoration (formerly Riverways), gave an update on the proposed removal of the Larkin Mill dam in Byfield. Eric Hutchins of the National Marine Fisheries added his comments as to how the removal held potential for improving the annual migrating alewife herring runs. Mike Jones of the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program spoke about an upcoming project to monitor road kill hotspots for turtles by volunteers. A request for volunteers and details of the project can be found in an article in this newsletter.

Our February Vernal Pool Certification workshop was quite successful. There were many requests to repeat it next year. PRCWA member Michele Augeri organized efforts to assist migrating amphibians across Boston Rd in Newbury to the vernal pools on warm rainy nights. We hope that folks in other watershed towns will consider doing this next spring in order to lessen road kill numbers of frogs, toads, and salamanders.

The Flatbread Pizza fundraiser was very successful and lots of fun. Thanks to the Flatbread Company and many PRCWA members and friends who attended. Special thanks go to Fiddler's Loft whose music added to the festivities.

Thanks for your continued support – keep spreading the word about PRCWA.

Marlene Schroeder, President

Sadly –

Joseph Gryboski (1953 – 2010)

The family of the late Joseph Gryboski, who lived on the Parker River in Newbury, has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in his memory to Parker River Clean Water Association. This request reflects Joe's love of the River, and the pleasure he found being on the water with family and friends. We are appreciative of this thoughtful gesture.

I choose to listen to the river for a while, thinking river thoughts, before joining the night and the stars.

~Edwqrd Abbey

THE GREAT MARSH

Parker River Clean Water Association is a member of the Great Marsh Coalition along with Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Eight Towns and the Bay Committee, Essex County Greenbelt Association, Essex National Heritage Commission, Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's Area of Critical Environmental Concern Program, Parker River Clean Water Association, The Essex County Forum, and The Trustees of Reservations.

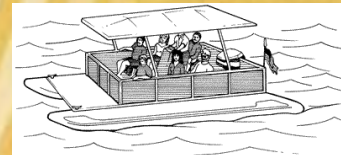
Tour the Great Marsh by Boat

Saturday, June 26, 2010, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Depart from Batchelder's Landing • Railroad Avenue • Rowley, MA

The Great Marsh Coalition offers an opportunity to view the Great Marsh aboard a comfortable, shaded pontoon boat and as you head out the winding Rowley River into Plum Island Sound. On this high-tide trip, you will gaze over acres of green salt marsh and blue water. Captained by the experts from Essex River Cruises, the boat's shallow-draft enables us to explore seldom-traveled creeks and rivers, look for birds and other wildlife and perhaps even make a stop to explore the marsh on foot. On board leaders include a Great Marsh historian, natural history experts and scientists.

Trip Information



Cost: Adult: \$20.00, 12 and under \$10.00. Pre-registration is required.

Registration: To register by phone, call Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center at 978-462-9998. Questions? Contact Kathy Leahy at (978) 927-1122 x2700 or [kleahy@massaudubon.org](mailto:k Leahy@massaudubon.org).

Weather: Cruise will take place rain or shine. The boat is covered and can be enclosed with transparent curtains. There is no rain date. Wear waterproof shoes as we may have a chance to explore the marsh on foot.

Launch site and Parking: Parking is at the Rowley Commuter Rail Station on Railroad Ave. in Rowley, MA. The launch site, Batchelder's Landing, is a 5-minute walk towards the river. Signs will be posted.



Drought Tolerant Landscapes Help the Parker River

One of the best ways to conserve water and also save money and energy is to cultivate a “waterless” lawn. This was the focus of a well-attended lawn and landscape clinic on March 31 sponsored by The Country Gardeners Georgetown (Barb Harrold, President) in conjunction with the Georgetown Water Department’s water conservation program, “Drop 10%.”

Mike Nickerson of Nunan Florist and Greenhouses of Georgetown gave a presentation about products that help homeowners achieve beautiful landscapes with less water. In particular, he demonstrated SoilMoist, which absorbs and retains moisture from rain and dew for slow release during hot, dry weather, minimizing the need for lawn irrigation as well as watering of plants and hanging baskets.

Jackson Madnick of Wayland talked about his drought tolerant grass, Pearl's Premium, which never needs water after getting established. It grows slowly, so it only needs cutting once a month. The 12-inch roots reach deep for moisture, and keep it better looking throughout the year. By eliminating the need for irrigation, this eco-friendly grass spares water for the Parker River in summer when it needs it the most. The seed comes in mixtures for full sun or shade. The cost of the seed is paid back quickly from savings in water and lawn maintenance.

Pearl’s Premium grass seed can be purchased at most Whole Foods stores, or by calling Jackson Madnick at (508-653-0800) The Company donates a percentage of every sale towards environmental education. More information, including a useful list of frequently asked questions, is available at <http://pearlspremium.com>.

Paul Lauenstein, who is assisting the Georgetown Water Department with its “Drop 10%” water conservation program, gave a presentation on water usage and conservation in Georgetown. His presentation showed photos of his beautiful waterless lawn. He said the key is building up the organic content of the soil to retain moisture. His presentation is available on the PRCWA website: http://www.businessevision.info/parker_river/LawnClinic.pdf.



Donations and Plants for Nature Trail Sign Garden

Our Little River Nature Trail signs on Storey Avenue and Hale Street are a public face for Parker River Clean Water Association (PRCWA). The Trail is a popular way to enjoy nature and wildlife just a few hundred yards from busy Storey Avenue and Route 95 at the north end of the trail or Hale Street at the south end. Gardens around the signs at the Trail entrances at Storey Avenue & Hale Street have been laid out through the generosity of Eastgate Designs (www.eastgatedesigns.net) with plans emphasizing native species.

At the PRCWA annual meeting people were asked to participate in sharing plant seedlings, young plants or monetary donations based on the list below of what is presently needed. Now that spring is here and you have plants to donate, please drop them off at Marlene Schroeder's home at 1 Anchor Way, Newbury, MA, 01951. Plants may be left just inside the garage door. (marlene.schroeder2@verizon.net or 978.462.9062 for directions/questions)

If you would like to donate money toward the purchase of the plants, please write a check to Parker River Clean Water Association, Box 798, Byfield, MA, 01922 and designate what plants the money is intended for.

YOUR DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE and greatly appreciated! If you would like to help with planting and care or have any questions about the gardens, please call Jerry Mullins at 978.618.9154 or send an e-mail at indyjerry@hotmail.com. **THANK YOU!**

Plants Needed for LRNT Sign Gardens

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Common Lilac (bush) | • Kim's Knee High Cornflower | • Autumn Joy Stormcrop |
| • Cornell Pink Azalea (bush) | • Gateway Joe Pye Weed | • Goldenrod |
| • Anthony Waterer Spirea (bush) | • Blue Wonder Carmint | • Pink Swamp Azalea (bush) |
| • Wine and Rose Weigela (bush) | • Husker Red Beard Tongue | • Compact American Cranberry (bush) |
| • Stella D'Oro Day Lillies | • Eva Cullum Flox | • Spotted Cranesbill |
| • Wild Columbine | • Goldstorm Black Eye Susan | • Lupine |
| • Swamp Milkweed | • Blue Hill Sage | • Zagreb Coreopsis |

REMINDER – Be on the lookout for the **Asian Long-horned Beetle**. If you spot one, report it to Jennifer Forman Orth of the Mass. Dept. of Agriculture. Jennifer.Forman-Orth@state.ma.us. Phone 617-626-1735. Adult Beetles are one to one and a half inches long, shiny black with white spots. They emerge in the spring through large 3/8ths inch holes. www.beetlebusters.info



FISH COUNT VOLUNTEER STILL NEEDED



The annual fish count of the migrating alewife herring at the Central Street dam in Byfield is about to begin. Many time slots throughout the day still need to be filled. If you are interested in participating, please contact fish count volunteer coordinator, Amy Madden (amymadden185@comcast.net or 978-465-9419 who will be glad to help you with easy instructions for doing the count.

Counters observe the fish ladder for 2 five minute periods and record activity seen as well as air and water temperature, and general weather conditions. Observation data can be recorded by phone, email or a website document. Typically the alewife run is about a month long.

PRCWA TO PARTICIPATE IN NEWBURY'S 375TH CELEBRATION On MAY 2ND

"The Mills on the River" will be the focus of the PRCWA exhibit at the May 2nd Newbury 375th celebration on the Newbury Lower Green from 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM. The old wooden cog wheel from the Larkin Mill will be on display. PRCWA director David Mountain, who has done considerable research on the mills, will give brief talks on the mills throughout the day. There will be a children's activity with toy gears to see how they work. We plan to have a canoe by our exhibit booth and do a "shore school" explaining the 5 basic strokes of flat water paddling. Bring your family and friends to enjoy this memorable day in history.

TURTLE NESTING PROTECTION TO BEGIN SOON

For the past several years volunteers, under the leadership of turtle researcher Susan Speak, have monitored turtle nest sites and turtle hatchlings. In the spring volunteers observe female turtles as they nest, and follow up by protecting the nest sites from predation. In late summer and early fall, volunteers assist with weighing and measuring hatchlings, before helping them safely to the water. If you are interested in helping with the nesting program, and are over 12, contact the PRCWA office 978-462-2551 and leave a message.



Following the Water *by David Carroll*

I'd like to tell you about an unusual book I've been reading – Following the Water by David Carroll, author, naturalist, and artist. Several years ago David spoke about his work with turtles at our annual meeting. He is a recipient of a MacArthur award given to talented individuals who show extraordinary originality and dedication in the creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction. This certainly describes David Carroll. His observations of Nature, as recorded in Following the Water, are very moving. I know of no writer since Henry Thoreau who is so in touch with his senses, so immersed in the experience of the moment, and able to convey this with such keen intensity.
~ comments by Marlene Schroeder

Paddle up and down with the tide on the Egypt/Rowley River Sunday, May 16th, 1 PM – 4:00 PM

This trip is suitable for boaters with some experience paddling in current. Public welcome. Must have own canoe/kayak and life jackets. Paddle upstream with the tide, on this lovely wilderness section of the Egypt River, named for reeds at the upper reach. To register or for further information/ directions call 978-462-9062 or email marlene.schroeder2@verizon.net

Political Corner

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Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s)

The Environmental Protection Agency will soon be issuing general stormwater permits, called MS4s, for the municipalities within the Parker River watershed. The EPA held a hearing on March 18th at the Tip O'Neil Federal Building in Boston and PRCWA was there to testify and later provide written comments in support of these new regulations.

PRCWA believes the new provisions will improve prevention of polluted runoffs into our waterways, public beaches, water supplies and shellfish beds. The new permit also offers more controls to prevent flooding. The EPA is now reviewing comments from municipal officials and watershed advocates before administering a final draft.

Whatever the outcome of the draft revisions, PRCWA looks forward to providing support to the municipalities upon the issuance. To view prior MS4 Annual Reports of your community, PRCWA has information available on its website at:

http://www.businessevision.info/parker_river/ParkerRiverMS4s.html.

We would like to thank all of our members who answered the call and submitted comments to the EPA. A special thanks goes out to Sue Beede and Julia Blatt of the Mass Rivers Alliance for providing much needed information and leadership in this statewide effort!

Governors Budget Proposal

The news is not very optimistic for funding many of the agencies that protect our environment in this year's budget proposal by the Patrick administration. The chart below produced by the Environmental League of Massachusetts (ELM) says it all:

Environmental Spending as % of the Entire State Budget ¹											
	FY2001 GAA	FY2002 GAA	FY2003 GAA	FY2004 GAA	FY2005 GAA	FY2006 GAA	FY2007 GAA	FY2008 GAA	FY2009 GAA	FY2010 GAA	FY2011 Gov
Total Environmental Budget	\$225.3 Million	\$209.1 Million	\$185.1 Million	\$169.9 Million	\$170 Million	\$187.1 Million	\$207.6 Million	\$217.1 Million	\$231.2 Million	\$196.6 Million	\$175.7 Million
Total State Budget*	\$22.4 Billion	\$23.3 Billion	\$24.7 Billion	\$23.1 Billion	\$24.1 Billion	\$25.1 Billion	\$26.2 Billion	\$28.3 Billion	\$27.6 Billion	\$29.9 Billion	\$28.2 Billion
Environmental Budget as % of State Budget	1.00%	0.90%	0.75%	0.73%	0.71%	0.74%	0.79%	0.77%	0.84%	0.66%	0.62%

The chart shows a steady decline over the years in the percentage of government allocations for environmental programs. The environmental budget has been reduced from 1 percent of the budget in 2001 to the .62 percent today. The Parker River Clean Water Association has signed on in support of ELM's *Green Budget* proposal. ELM's proposal aims to change the direction of funding priorities by recommending restoration of funding for important programs such as the Division of Ecological Restoration (includes the Riverways Program), Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Office of Dam Safety, Stormwater Management, State Parks service and many other agencies that make Massachusetts a safe place to live. Contact your Legislators today and tell them you support, "One Percent for the Environment!"

Parker River

Currents

Membership Dues - It's That time!

Yes, it IS TIME to RENEW your membership, or JOIN the Parker River Clean Water Association. You are on our mailing list because we believe that you are interested in what we are doing – and have participated with us in some of our programs – or have attended one of our annual meetings. Please use the form below to return with your contribution - - and THANKS!

Please mail to: PRCWA, PO Box 798, Byfield, MA 01922

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

_____ \$15 Individual

_____ \$25 Family:

_____ #Adults, ___ #Children ___

_____ \$50 Supporting

_____ \$100 Contributing

_____ \$250 Sponsor

_____ \$500 Patron

_____ \$1,000 Benefactor

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