

P A R K E R R I V E R CURRENTS

Celebration at the Parker River Festival

The Parker River Festival activities show what is endangered and celebrate what is extraordinary in the Parker River. Last year, everyone enjoyed working with the interactive model watershed, examining waterlife under a microscope, and viewing the aerial photos of the Parker River at the booth of the Parker River Clean Water Association. For the 1995 festival, the PRCWA has added a pool of fish indigenous to the river for toddler fishing at its display. Last year's festival was a smashing success with over 800 people attending and a post-festival, front page story in the Merrimac Valley Sunday paper, featuring the president of the PRWCA, Dave Mountain. This incredible festival is sponsored by the Trustees of Reservations-Old Town Hill Committee, Mass Audubon Society and Essex County Greenbelt Association.

What is a Watershed?

We all live in a watershed, the area of land that catches rain and snow that drains under or across the land on its way into a wetland, stream, river, lake or into groundwater.

You and everyone in your watershed are part of the same watershed community, including wildlife and plants. Everything we do in our watershed affects the soil, water, air, plants and animals. Some things you can do to keep the Parker River Watershed healthy are listed below.

On the farm, keep plant residue on the surface of sloping cropland. This reduces

runoff and prevents sediment, fertilizers, and pesticides from entering streams, rivers, lakes and ponds.

At home, landscape your yard with plants that need a minimum of water and fertilizer. Use only the amount of fertilizers and pesticides that plants need.

In your community, protect wetlands that serve as natural buffers against pollution, soil erosion and flooding.

Learn what else you can do to help protect the natural resources in the Parker River watershed community by joining the Parker River Clean Water Association. Call 462-2459 today for information.

Parker River Watershed Study Wins EPA Grant

A \$4,988 grant co-written by the Mass Audubon Society and the Parker River Clean Water Association was awarded to the Newbury Elementary School for studying the biological diversity of their watershed community. Fourth grade students will learn about the ecology of the freshwater portion of the watershed, fifth graders will concentrate on estuarine and marine ecosystems and sixth graders will learn about the socioeconomic of human-ecosystem interactions. The students will participate in community outreach activities by forming a student environmental club, producing a watershed video and creating displays for the annual Parker River Festival. Teacher workshops covering the history, conservation, biodiversity, industrial uses, and economic impact of watersheds will launch the project. The workshops include training in the use of scientific equipment for water quality testing.