



# Parker River Currents



## Headlines

**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Trails and Sails**

**Little River Nature Trail**

**River Herring – Endangered Species**

**Attacking the Aliens**

**The Bottle Bill**

**Stormwater**

**Protecting Open Space**

**There is no Planet B!**

## PRCWA to Participate in 10th Annual Trails and Sails Events Festival

**HEADS UP** - Registration for events requiring prior registration begins on September 9 at 9 AM online <http://www.essexheritage.org/ts/events.php> or phone 978-740-0444

This is the 10th anniversary of the Essex National Heritage Commissions' Trails and Sails program celebrating over 150 unique and exciting free events that showcase the heritage of Essex County. Trails and Sails spans two weekends September 16 - 18 and September 23 - 25. It provides a great opportunity to extend the summer's activities. Enjoy the many cultural, historic, and natural sites of Essex County during two weekends of FREE events featuring a variety of walks, guided hikes, sails, historical tours, and adventures! View and search all of the Trails & Sails events online at <http://www.essexheritage.org/ts/events.php>. Some events require prior registration. Registration begins at 9 AM on September 9th and can be made online at the website or by phone 978-740-0444.

Parker River Clean Water Association will sponsor two events featuring the Little River Nature Trail. Both events require prior registration, so register right away on September 9 if you would like to participate in either of these events.



### **Birding Little River Nature Trail**

Bird the Little River Nature Trail with Sue McGrath of Newburyport Birders. Adults only, no pets. The walk is 1 mile of easy terrain between Story Avenue and Hale Street in Newburyport. Park and meet across the street from the trailhead at the Park and Ride Bus Stop.

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED.** Reserve a spot online. Reservations available 9/9 at 9AM. **Event capacity: 12.**

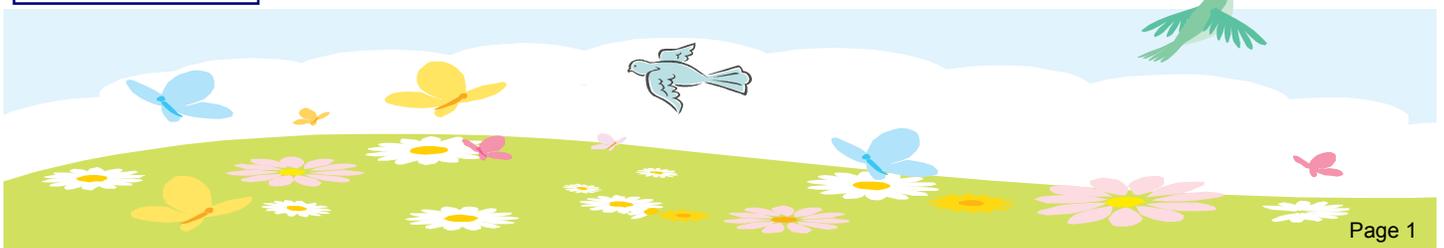
**Special Instructions:** *Dress: weather appropriate and bring comfortable shoes, binoculars, bird guide, and drinking water. Heavy rain will cancel.*

### **Walk the Little River Nature Trail**

Walk the Little River Nature Trail with naturalist and registered Maine Guide Bob Metcalfe of New England Discovery. Family friendly, children over 6 with an adult. 1 mile easy terrain between Story Avenue and Hale Street in Newburyport. Trailhead sign on Story Avenue across from Park and Ride Bus stop off Rt.95, exit 57 east (Rt 113). No pets.

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED.** Reserve a spot online. Reservations available 9/9 at 9AM. **Event capacity: 20.**

**Special Instructions:** *Dress appropriately, comfortable shoes, drinking water; a 1 mile walk over easy terrain - heavy rain will cancel.*



# Petition to list River Herring as an Endangered Species

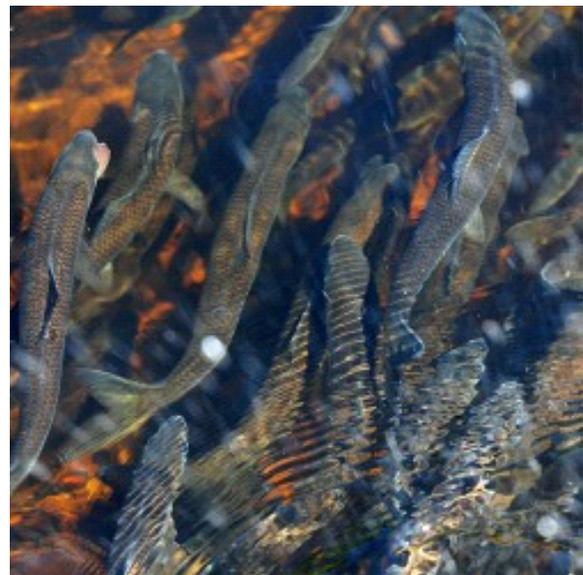


The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is petitioning the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to list alewives and blueback herring as a “threatened species” because of declining populations in states along the eastern seaboard. It’s estimated that the population is about 98% gone with very few numbers returning to spawn. PRCWA volunteers who monitor the annual migration of river herring returning to spawn in fresh water confirm this dramatic decrease. PRCWA members will recognize the river herring as the fish on our logo.

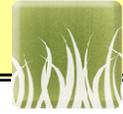
NMFS is required to respond within 90 days as to whether the petition presents sufficient evidence to warrant a listing. If NMFS determines a listing may be warranted, they will initiate a review of available information with public in. put. A final listing decision must be made within 12 months of receipt of the petition. For more information on the listing process, see <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/listing>.

NRDC is arguing that the once-abundant alewife and blueback herring — referred to as “river herring” — occupy an important spot in the food chains in the ocean and the freshwater rivers where they spawn. A wide variety of fish that people eat feed on river herring. The group proposed two options for federal regulators: either list all river herring as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act or list four specific population segments in southern New England and other mid-Atlantic states. Under the second approach, the petition does not request listing of a Maine subpopulation as river herring populations in Maine are in better shape than those to the south. The Herring Alliance and PRCWA support sustainable, small-scale fisheries (such as our smaller local fishing trawlers) for river herring in in-state waters and federal waters.

Old timers tell of immense spawning runs of herring when fish poured up rivers like the Parker in such numbers that, to the human eye, a river might seem to run backward. Unfortunately, after centuries of overfishing, dam construction, water pollution and now effects of global warming, and the recent, larger factory trawlers which scoop up significant numbers of river herring and discard them dead as “by catch” the annual river herring runs have slowed to a relative trickle.



## Attacking the Aliens!



Recently PRCWA directors George Comiskey and Yvonne Buswell, and member Laura Jones joined volunteers from Essex County Greenbelt and the NE Wild Flower Society in pulling invasive water chestnut plants from the Upper and Lower Mill Ponds in Rowley. Working from canoes and pulling by hand, they managed to pull a pile of plants about the size of a small station wagon in 5 hours of work.

At the latest PRCWA board meeting it was decided that PRCWA should take on this task as an annual project. We will be looking for volunteers to help next summer.

The invasive water chestnut is an annual, rooted aquatic plant with a leafy rosette that floats on the surface. Stems can reach up to 16 feet, supporting triangular leaves, 1 to 2 inches long, waxy with toothed edges. Leaf stems have a bladder-like swelling that provides buoyancy. Flowers are small, white, have 4 petals and bloom from mid-July to fall frost. The fruit is a one-inch wide woody nut armed with 4 stout barbs. The sharp barbs are a painful hazard to swimmers and bare feet. Note: This is NOT the water chestnut used in Asian cooking recipes like Moo Gai Pan!

The invasive water chestnut, originally from Eurasia, is well established in a few water bodies in northeastern states. Each rosette can produce 15 nuts per season which sink to the bottom and remain viable for up to 12 years. The seeds germinate in spring and each new plant can divide into 10 - 15 rosettes over the summer. One acre of water chestnut can produce enough seeds to cover 100 acres the following year. Dense mats of stems and floating rosettes can deplete oxygen levels, choke out native species and hinder navigation. Water chestnut spreads by seed, by rosettes that break apart and float to new locations, and by fragments that attach to boats and trailers. It prefers calm, nutrient-rich lakes or streams with slightly alkaline waters.



**CONTROL** - Infestations can be eradicated by hand-pulling or mechanical means, but sites must be monitored for many years to spot plants germinating from dormant seeds.

# Battle of the Bottle Bill



The Bottle Bill is the state's most successful recycling and litter prevention program. Since the Bottle Bill's inception in 1983, over 35 billion containers have been redeemed, contributing to a healthier environment, cleaner and safer communities, and a stronger economy. But to keep up with the times and consumer's tastes, the bottle bill must be updated.

An Updated Bottle Bill would expand our container deposit system to include "new age" drinks such as non-carbonated beverages, water, iced tea, juice, and sports drinks. It would decrease litter - and increase recycling. PRCWA has signed on as a supporter of the Updated Bottle Bill.

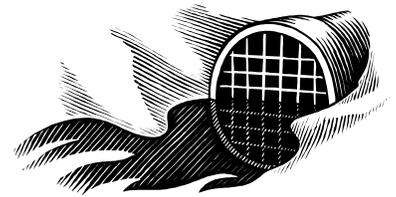
An estimated 3.3 billion beverages are consumed annually in Massachusetts, of which 1.3 billion are "new-age" (e.g. water, sports drinks, flavored teas), and this number is only expected to increase. As consumers purchase more of these beverages, an increasing number of containers are finding their way to landfills.

Efforts to update the law have been stymied every legislative session by the bottlers - who do not wish to be financially responsible for the empties once they're sold. Despite huge public support (77% of the general public supports the concept), the legislature has consistently let update bills die.

This year bottle bill advocates are approaching the issue from two directions. First, they have begun the difficult process of collecting signatures for a binding referendum question on the November 2012 ballot. This is being done in parallel with its journey through the legislative process.

By expanding the Bottle Bill to allow the 5-cent redeemable deposits to cover all kinds of bottles, from bottled water to sports drinks, we can recycle 1 billion additional bottles every year — that's enough to fill Fenway Park. After 14 years before the legislature for updating, this is a bill whose time has come.

# Stormwater - When It Rains It Drains The Good, The Bad, The Ugly



Stormwater is water from rain or melting snow and ice that flows across the ground and pavement. The water seeps into the ground, bodies of water and wetlands, or drains into storm sewers. Collectively the draining water is called stormwater runoff. Stormwater is sometimes called, "Good water gone wrong." Stormwater becomes a problem when it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt, silt, and other pollutants as it flows, or when it causes flooding, and erosion of stream banks. Stormwater may travel through roadside ditches or pipes that make up a storm sewer system, but eventually it flows to a lake, river, stream, wetland, or coastal water. All of the pollutants that are carried along empty into the waters too, because storm water does not get treated.

Communities are being asked by the EPA to develop a stormwater pollution prevention program. The program must address stormwater pollution from construction, new development, illegal dumping to the stormwater system among other things, and pollution prevention through Best Management Practices (BMP's). Community education is also part of the prevention plan.

Polluted stormwater runoff is commonly transported through Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), from which it is often discharged untreated into local waterbodies. The "S4" comes from shortening the four words that begins with S - Separate Storm Sewer Systems. To prevent harmful pollutants from being washed or dumped into an MS4, operators must obtain a **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)** permit and develop a stormwater management program. Developing a MS4 program is a challenge for small communities.



To help the communities in the Parker River watershed, PRCWA recently sponsored a free day long Stormwater Management seminar held at the Newbury Library in Byfield. It was attended by 25 local officials who will be responsible for developing and enacting the MS4 plans for their communities. Two PRCWA members, Yvonne Buswell of Newbury and George Comiskey of Georgetown, are volunteering on their community stormwater committees.

# Protecting Open Space Protects Water Resources

The State regards open space protection as a high priority item to help alleviate the stress in our Parker River basin. To that end, several parcels of open space in the Parker River Watershed have been protected recently.

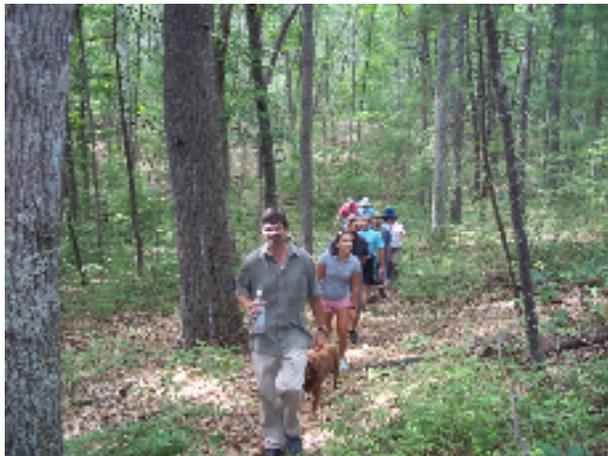
In Newbury on Middle Road, approximately 30 acres to be known as the Hans Morris reservation have been annexed on the south side of the Martin Burns State Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The land was purchased by Essex County Greenbelt and the Massachusetts Land Acquisition Fund with a CR being held by Mass Fish and Wildlife.

On the north side of Martin Burns approximately 24 acres were recently purchased by the Fish and Wildlife Land Acquisition Program with contributions by Essex County Greenbelt and a private individual. This parcel fronts Scotland Road across from the State Police Barracks and is partly in the Parker watershed and partly in the Merrimack watershed. During the dedication ceremony the Fish and Wildlife Commissioner, Mary Griffin, and the Director of Mass Wildlife, Wayne MacCallum mentioned PRCWA several times as being an ever dependable friend of the environment.

In Georgetown on the town line between Byfield/Georgetown, the 32 acre Driftway Farm has been protected following Georgetown Conservation Commission's application for a LAND grant after May's town meeting approved \$270,000 towards the purchase of Driftway Farm. ECGA also partnered in protecting an additional 6 acres of abutting land.



Protected open space parcel in Martin Burns off Scotland Road



Georgetown site walk explores Driftway Farm





## THERE IS NO PLANET B

If the earth were only a few feet in diameter, floating a few feet above a field somewhere, people would come from everywhere to marvel at it. People would walk around it, marveling at its big pools of water, its little pools and the water flowing between the pools. People would marvel at the bumps on it, and the holes in it, and they would marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and the water suspended in the gas. The people would marvel at all the creatures walking around the surface of the ball, and at the creatures in the water. The people would declare it precious because it was the only one, and they would protect it so that it would not be hurt. The ball would be the greatest wonder known, and people would come to behold it, to be healed, to gain knowledge, to know beauty and to wonder how it could be. People would love it, and defend it with their lives, because they would somehow know that their lives, their own roundness, could be nothing without it. If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter.

*author unknown*

**When there are seemingly endless attempts to ignore or dismantle protections for clean water, clean air, mountain tops, habitat, oceans and more, we need to remind our selves of the words of Edward O. Wilson, father of biodiversity – “We are a part of nature, not apart from nature.”**

Thanks to PRCWA friends for their faithful financial support and volunteer work that makes our organization so respected. We continue to be recognized and commended for our efforts – this happens because of you. Stop by the PRCWA booth at Georgetown Days, September 25 and on Labor Day weekend, Market Square, Newburyport.

Marlene Schroeder, *PRCWA President*



# Parker River Currents

Georgetown Days  
Sunday, September 25th

## 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  
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