

PIE-Rivers Partnership

Parker, Ipswich and Essex (PIE) Rivers
Watersheds of Massachusetts' North Shore

July, 2017



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Sagamore Hill Conservation Area Opens *Photo Credit: Ian MacLellan*



Land conservation, one of the four priority goals in the PIE-Rivers Restoration Action Plan, took a huge step forward recently when PIE-Rivers Partner Essex County Greenbelt Association officially opened the John J. Donovan Reservation within the Sagamore Hill Conservation Area in Hamilton. This 270-acre property features wide trails, open fields, dense forest and a hilltop with stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean, the mouth of the Essex River and Cape Ann. The new Reservation is flanked by six newly-protected private properties, which together comprise the 525-acre Sagamore Hill Conservation Area. Kudos to the community partnerships and the leadership of Greenbelt for making this

exceptional project possible.

Tackling Invasives Together

As invasive plants continue to threaten aquatic and wetland habitats in the region, PIE-Rivers partners have been enlisting volunteers to help combat them. The Ipswich River Watershed Association (IRWA) recently organized a training for citizens to identify and remove exotic invasive plants from local waterways. This program is part of the statewide Weed Watchers Program organized by MA Department of Conservation and





the weed watchers!

Recreation and will be part of IRWA's ongoing monitoring programs. On drier ground, Mass Audubon Society, IRWA and other partners continue to work to remove invasive pepperweed from wetlands around the Plum Island Sound. This ongoing effort is led by Mass Audubon's Liz Duff. IRWA staff led volunteer work crews in June to remove and dispose of the plant before it can go to seed, helping to prevent its spread. Want to help protect the marshes and the river? Look out for more opportunities to pull pepperweed and join

Where are the Beavers?



Know of a beaver pond, dam, lodge or any beaver activity in the Parker or Ipswich River watersheds? Report it here! As part of a graduate fellowship awarded to Chris Whitney, a PhD student at the University of New Hampshire, this research project aims to understand the role that beaver ponds and other freshwater wetlands have on surface water quality. For this crowd-sourcing project to be successful, we need your help! Report the locations of beaver activity in the watersheds here: <http://piebeaverponds.crowdmap.com>

Summer Rain Gardens



Despite the fact the the Environmental Protection Agency has delayed the effective date of the new federal stormwater permit (called MS4) until July 1, 2018, our communities' work to clean up stormwater in the North Shore should not slow down! Stormwater is the number one pollutant in Massachusetts waters. There are many ways individuals can help. Eliminating use of pesticides and fertilizers, picking up and properly disposing of pet waste, and reducing pavement and planting rain gardens on your property are a few. To learn more about rain gardens, check out



time with this feature on planting a beautiful garden that also acts a buffer between driveway runoff and the salt marsh.

this recent episode of “Ask This Old House.” *Mass Bays/8 Towns & the Great Marsh* Coordinator Peter Phippen hit prime

Great Marsh Resiliency Partnership

Partners Plan for Salt Marsh Restoration



The US Fish & Wildlife Service hosted a workshop in June to discuss efforts to restore salt marsh in the Great Marsh. Conservation partners in the region have noticed significant changes in the marsh in the past ten years, including a shifting of marsh grass composition and extensive impounding (flooding) of areas of the marsh. One professional described the marsh as turning into a “waffle” in places, with pools of water acting like syrup in the low-lying areas. These changes can have large and long-lasting impacts to the marsh, causing the surface to lower and reducing its resiliency to storms and sea level rise. Partners are investigating sites to understand the underlying cause of these changes and piloting some techniques for

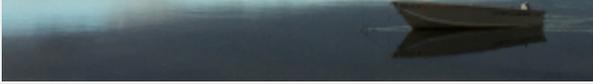
help restore natural tidal wetting and drying.

Save the Dates for the Great!



Before we know it fall will be here, bringing with it several opportunities to be engaged in discussions on the future of the Great Marsh. Now, more than ever, we need to think globally and act globally to protect our natural resources!

Great Marsh Management Summit
September 20th



Join the Town of Essex and other regional partners in thinking about the regional management of the Great Marsh Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Previous discussions among the coastal towns explored issues and recommendations of appropriate uses and activities, which can be read about [here](#). A summit to begin discussion of next steps will be held on September 20th in Essex, MA. For more information contact the Town of Essex.



Great Marsh Symposium November 9th

Remember this [video](#)? Five years ago the Great Marsh Coalition started holding annual workshops to focus our regional eyes and minds on what an extraordinary resource we live, work and play within. Celebrate how far our work in the Great

Marsh has come at this year's 5th annual Great Marsh Symposium on November 9, 2017.

Funding and Training Opportunities

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness

71 Massachusetts communities are now part of the *Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program* offered by the MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs. The program will provide municipalities with funding to develop Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Resiliency Plans and to update or develop accompanying Hazard Mitigation Plans. In the PIE-Rivers region, Newburport, Newbury, North Reading, and Essex were all awarded funding for this fiscal year 2018 planning project. For the full list of communities, please see the EOEEA [press release](#).

Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Program - The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) is seeking applications for funding for the repair or removal of dams, levees, seawalls, and other forms of inland and coastal flood control. The [Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Program](#) offers qualified applicants grants for final design and permitting, and grant and loan funds for repair, reconstruction, and removal. EEA encourages applicants to maximize restoration of natural systems. Projects that minimize or eliminate the use of hard infrastructure are eligible for a zero percent interest rate. To view the two Requests for Responses (RFR) and submit questions, see the COMMBUYS bid solicitations for [design and permitting](#) and [construction financing](#). Proposals for both opportunities are due by July 21.

Please visit our website at www.PIE-Rivers.org
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