



# WaterWatch

THE NORTH AND SOUTH RIVERS WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Protecting our Waters Since 1970



## The North River (Still) Needs Your Help

While we celebrate the many accomplishments from the past 50 years, we are reminded that the need for vigilance and advocacy for our rivers has never been greater. Perhaps the most chilling example is **the recent decision to defund the North River Scenic Protection Order, which has safeguarded the North River for the past 42 years.**

In 1978, the NSRWA was successful in petitioning the then Division of Environmental Management to adopt the North River as the first (and apparently only) river to be so designated under the 1971 Commonwealth's Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act. This feat was accomplished largely through the tireless efforts of our legendary founder Jean Foley. Since then, the order has been administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, which has suddenly decided to terminate funding to implement the order without any public discussion.

Why is the order crucial to the continued health of the North River? The North River Protective Order is the only mechanism to control unrestrained development along a 12-mile, tidally-influenced estuary that serves six South Shore com-



munities. Elimination of the \$50,000 annual budget leaves the North River Commission without any staff to enforce development regulations within the river corridor or means to provide consistent management of the recreational use of the river via a seasonal patrol boat. Without a boat and part-time staff support, the Commission will no longer be able to:

- Monitor the 300 ft. corridor that restricts future development, not unlike a zoning bylaw
- Enforce development regulations within the river corridor that maintain

its scenic and natural qualities

- Enforce No Wake Zone speed limits and allowed watercraft
- Render aid and assistance to recreational users
- Protect public and private property, wildlife, and freshwater fisheries

At the urging of NSRWA and other advocacy groups, the two state senators and four state representatives from towns in our watershed area wrote a letter to Commissioner Montgomery of the Department of Conservation and Recreation in support of continued and additional funding, but the funds have yet to be restored.

Here's what you can do to make sure the funding is restored:

- **Write**, call or email Governor Baker
- **Ask** your local legislators and town officials to sign on or send their own messages
- **Sign** our online petition by logging on to our website

Clearly, we need a grassroots effort to restore this signature achievement of our association. Thanks for your help!

## NORTH AND SOUTH RIVERS WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

*Our purpose is to Protect Our Waters.*

*We believe that an educated and engaged citizenry will result in healthy rivers and watersheds, thus  
Educate + Engage = Healthy Rivers.*

*Our goal for 2020 is to double the number of people we educate and engage.*

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Lead Pontoon Boat Captain - Willard Boulter

Yoga at the Rivers Edge and Columnist - Kezia Bacon

### NSRWA

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nsrwa.org and exploresouthshore.org

# Managing in the Covid-19 World

This past August, instead of taking part in our annual Great River Race alongside an armada of happy, determined racers, I found myself solo on the water, kayaking toward Couch Beach, one of the finish lines of the altered month-long virtual race. Covid-19 has changed so much of what we all do, but it has not stopped our community from getting outdoors, on the water, and in the field. Like the rivers, we're still moving along!

For now, most things are virtual, though my tired arms felt otherwise in my kayak. We held a successful virtual fishing tournament in June and launched board and committee meetings on screens. From home Sara Grady managed water testing and monitoring of eelgrass erosion; Lori Wolfe managed our website, social media and virtual events; Gabriela Silva invented new ways to connect with you and raise funds; Terri Birkeland managed the closed office to ensure that the staff and members had what they needed; and Brian Taylor engaged young people in distanced kayak and nature walks, meeting masked young people at launches and parking lots with enthusiasm and joy that defies the hard work that delivering, loading, and unloading kayaks everyday demands.

While much is changing, our commitment to protect the rivers and the watershed is not. The North River Commission (NRC) has been defunded, leaving our rivers open to unchecked development, pollution, and abusive boating behavior. All of us need to call or write Governor Baker and urge him to refinance the NRC. We need to get pump out service for boats on the rivers, and educate our boaters that speed and wakes destroy the marshes. And this fall we will remove the 3<sup>rd</sup> in a series of dams that have obstructed herring migration in our watershed. In short, we must stand up for nature now more than ever.

Although we were forced to cancel



our long-planned, in-person 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, Samantha Woods and a team of staff and volunteers has reimagined creative new (virtual) ways to mark this major milestone. We're celebrating our anniversary with a gorgeous short film by renowned filmmaker Cary Wolinsky and his son, Yari. **Don't miss the film showing on Friday, November 13, when noted biologist, wildlife conservationist, and television host Jeff Corwin will tell stories, along with five other locals, at a virtual event called "Campfire Stories – Nature: What Could Possibly Go Wrong?"**

As I paddled my own river race this summer, I reflected on our challenges and accomplishments, proud to support this great organization in a place still wild and protected. It's an honor to lead NSRWA, and I'm excited to continue our work to connect our community to protecting our waters. Please join us!

Peter Hainer  
NSRWA President

## Visit us online at [nsrwa.org](https://nsrwa.org)



### And connect with us on:

- **Facebook**
- **Twitter** @nsrwa
- **Instagram** northandsouthrivers





NSRWA's Brian Taylor takes a group to discover an active beaver dam on Jacobs Pond.

## Connecting Youth with the Outdoors and Helping Families During the Pandemic

Getting outside for meaningful outdoor activities has always been an integral part of our work. As we all emerged from the lockdown this spring, demand for Covid-safe outdoor activities increased and kids and their parents needed help! Our team was able to create several new partnerships and expand our own outdoor programs to help kids stay engaged, healthy and learning, and help parents cope during these uncertain times. Most notable was the new program entitled South Shore Explorers.

South Shore Explorers provided youth, ages 10 to 14, the opportunity to engage with the outdoors in a fun and safe way. Groups would hike, fish, and kayak at several locations

in and around the South Shore for three days a week, mornings and afternoons. The program was popular, incredibly well received, and overall a huge success.

**After encouraging our son and daughter over many weeks, they finally agreed to participate the last week. At pick up, they said they loved it and wished they did it all summer!**

~ The Hoch Family

By the end of summer, South Shore Explorers ran for seven sessions, engaging nearly 50 youth, many of whose families became members as a result.



## Get Kids Outdoors with Autumn Adventures!

Families with youth ages 10-13 that may be spending more time at home than usual during the week, may be looking for fun activities in an outdoor setting away from their screens. Kids can participate in multi-day adventures that take place in several locations throughout the month of October. Activities include fishing, hiking, wilderness survival skills, geocaching, and kayaking if weather permits. For more information, go to [nsrwa.org](http://nsrwa.org).



A group from Cohasset ready to begin an adventure on the North River with the NSRWA!

## Partnering to Get Groups Outside

Expanded and new partnerships, with Norwell Recreation Department and Marshfield's Ferry Hill Day Camp, provided further opportunities to meet the needs of families to get area youth outside this summer.

With Norwell Recreation we expanded from a one-week South Shore Explorer program offered last year to two weeks this year – getting 15 Norwell youth out paddling at Jacobs Pond and the Spit, fishing at Norris Reservation and hiking at Norwell Conservation areas.

Combining Ferry Hill Day Camp's exquisite location along the marshes of the South River with our outdoor educator and kayaking equipment allowed us to provide our Estuary Explorer program to over 100 Marshfield youth that were not able to attend traditional summer camp due to Covid-19. Exploring Little's Creek, Broad Creek, the South River proper, and the many islands in the area, allowed these young people to experience and appreciate the South River and offered a way for the community to connect during challenging times.

Thanks to the generous support of the Cordelia Family Foundation and the Michele E. Dufault Foundation, we were able to offer the Estuary Explorers program during the pandemic to over 200 South Shore area youth this summer!



Norwell friends ready to go fishing at Jacobs Pond





Dry pond bed on the South Shore, September 2020.

## Drought Increases Need to Reduce Water Demand In Summer

2020 certainly has been a challenging year, and this summer's drought added another layer of stress no one needed. Above normal temperatures (July was the 2<sup>nd</sup> hottest on record), combined with below-normal rainfall resulted in the state declaring a Significant Drought (Level 2 out of 4 Levels). And while the state can declare a drought, it has no power to require residents to stop using water outdoors. Only at the local level can enforceable water restrictions be enacted and many did.

### Rivers Running Dry and Fish Kills

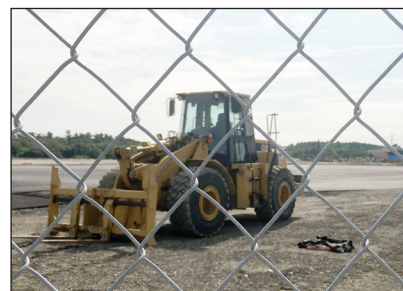
Besides our lawns, wildlife suffered too. In towns with water supplies located adjacent to rivers, the flow in the rivers in some cases was zero. In Hingham, downstream of the public wells, the Weir River has largely registered zero flow since August 1<sup>st</sup>. In Norwell and Hanover, fish were dying just downstream



of both towns' water supply wells on the Third Herring Brook. In Scituate, at the end of June with reservoir levels dropping, water demand increasing, and a well failure, the town enacted outdoor or "nonessential use" watering bans earlier than usual and later resorted to watering cans only. At the same time, Scituate stopped releasing flows from the reservoir to the First Herring Brook, preventing any outmigrating herring from returning to the ocean.

### Water Needed for People... Not Lawns

Over the summer, we provided input on local impacts to the State's Drought Management Task Force and outreach to residents to inform them about conditions and how they can save water. We launched a "Brown is the New Green" social media campaign. We hosted a WaterSmart Video Contest to engage people in helping us educate others. We hosted zoom meetings to raise awareness. But to be effective at preventing damage to wildlife and reducing stress on our water supplies, more action is needed earlier. We all need to stop using drinking water for nonessential needs like lawns. It is that simple. If we want life to be sustained... ours and wildlife... we need to act now to change our ways. We need water for people, fire-fighting, farms, and fish but not lawns.



The mall project is underway providing the opportunity to remove the nearby dam.

## When the Dams Come Tumbling Down!

What did the herring say when she ran into a wall? Dam! Herring on the Third Herring Brook won't need to tell this joke anymore since recently the NSRWA and MassBays along with the Hanover Mall redevelopment group - PREP - were successful in securing the last \$100,000 dollars needed from NOAA Habitat Restoration Center to start the deconstruction of the Peterson Pond dam on the Third Herring Brook. Other important funding partners in addition to the Hanover Mall and NOAA's Habitat Restoration Center include the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mass Division of Ecological Restoration and MassBays South Shore.

The Third Herring Brook is a tributary to the North River and the boundary between Hanover and Norwell. The Peterson Pond dam, owned by the Hanover Mall, is the third and final dam removal planned on this brook. Deconstruction will start in late October and be completed by December, allowing the reconnection of habitat for fish like herring and brook trout. Ultimately, the restoration of the entire Third Herring Brook will be complete when fish passage is restored into Jacobs Pond via a fish ladder. Stay tuned for a complete story next spring as we celebrate this long time effort to restore the Third Herring Brook and bring down the dams!



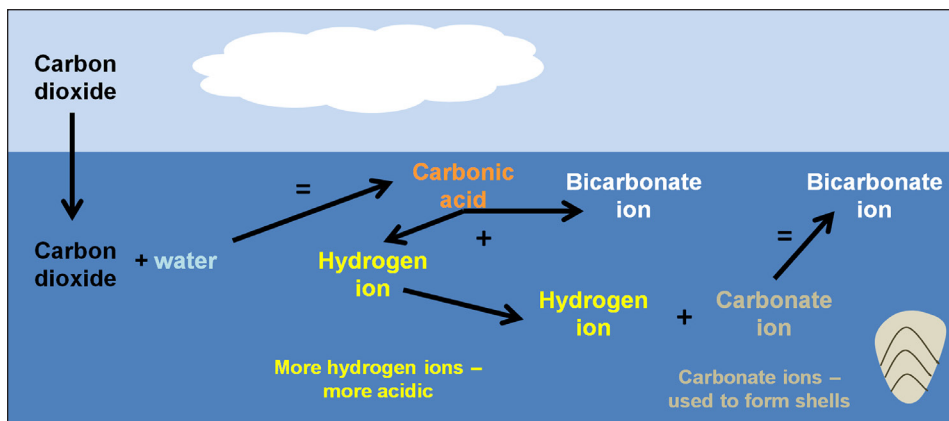


Illustration by Sara Grady.

## Monitoring Coastal and Ocean Acidification

Monitoring coastal and ocean waters is crucial to understanding how local waters are being impacted by stressors and to guide future management of those waters. Recently MassBays with funding from the US EPA installed a coastal acidification sensor in Duxbury Bay, one of a network of nine throughout the country. Duxbury Bay was chosen for its thriving oyster aquaculture industry that is vulnerable to acidification impacts.

### What is Ocean Acidification?

Ocean acidification (OA) is caused by increased CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, which dissolves into the water and causes a decrease in pH, making the water more acidic, and also reduces the amount of carbonate in the water.

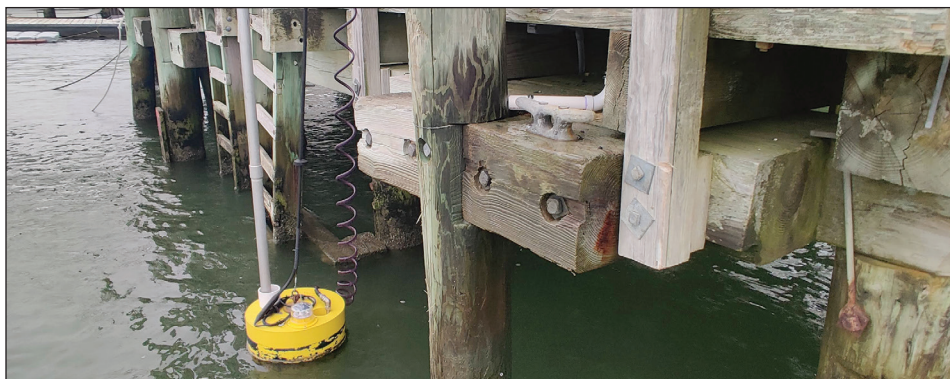
Acidification is intensified on the coast (coastal acidification, CA) by the input of nutrients from land. Increased nutrients lead to excess algal growth, and when those algae decompose, it adds additional non-atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> to the water. This decomposition also reduces oxygen in the water, leading to additional stress on animals. Increased water temperatures due to climate change also compound these issues.

Many marine and estuarine species use carbonate to build shells, including clams, oysters, crabs, lobsters, and sea urchins, and are particularly vulnerable when they are in earlier life stages during important biological processes like growth and shell formation.

In addition to having ecological impacts, OA and CA also have economic impacts, especially with the growth of aquaculture in our estuaries in recent years. In 2013, for example, the output of the shellfish industry was \$25.4 million, which generated \$45.5 million for the Massachusetts economy. At that time, shellfishing provided just under 1,000 jobs, with more added in recent years (Mass.gov). Oysters account for 61% of the revenue, according to the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension.

### What Can Be Done to Reduce Acidification Impacts?

There are innovative methods like co-growing seaweed that may help reduce impacts to aquaculture. You can help protect our coasts and their natural resources yourself by continuing to reduce nutrient pollution and stormwater runoff.



New acidification sensor installed in Duxbury Bay



Dr. Sara Grady, NSRWA Ecologist and South Shore Regional Coordinator for the MassBays National Estuary Partnership, being sworn in for the State Special Commission on Ocean Acidification.

## Serving on the Coastal Acidification Commission

The Massachusetts Commission on Ocean Acidification was created through the state legislature and sponsored by Representative Dylan Fernandes of Falmouth to “(i) identify the actual and potential effects of coastal and ocean acidification on commercially valuable marine species; (ii) identify the scientific data and knowledge gaps that may hinder the commonwealth’s ability to craft policy and other responses to coastal and ocean acidification; and (iii) prioritize the strategies for filling those gaps to provide policies and tools to respond to the adverse effects of coastal and ocean acidification on commercially important fisheries and the commonwealth’s shellfish aquaculture industry.”

Our Watershed Ecologist and MassBays South Shore Regional Coordinator Sara Grady was sworn into the commission in March 2019, and the commission has been meeting quarterly since November 2019 with the goal of producing a report by December 2020. Sara has served on both the Scientific Literature and Monitoring and Barrier Beaches subcommittees.







## Increase in Boating = More Support Needed

### No Wake Campaign and Pump Out Boat Initiative

This summer saw a big uptick in the numbers of people using the rivers and all water bodies for outdoor activities, which is great! However, the increase in activity has highlighted two threats to our waters.

This summer, boats have been spotted on the rivers going full throttle. Though the entire length of the North and South Rivers is designated a No Wake area, enforcement is difficult, particularly on the North River where the defunding of the North River Protective Order has eliminated a dedicated patrol boat (See front page related article). Waves caused by speeding are eroding

the already endangered marshes and putting swimmers and paddlers at risk. Through our No Wake Campaign, the NSRWA is raising public awareness about the importance of the No Wake area in both rivers. Have you seen new signs and buoys on the rivers or gotten emails about it? More are planned for the next boating season but we need your help. Please support this effort by making a donation today so we can raise awareness to keep people and nature safe!

In addition to excessive speed, discharge of untreated sewage from recreational boats is another threat to our rivers' water quality. The federal Clean Water Act prohibits such discharge into waters within three nautical miles of the

shoreline. Most coastal towns operate Pump Out Boats to offload boat sewage before it pollutes the shoreline and tidal rivers. Although both Scituate and Marshfield have pump out services, neither town can keep up with the summer demand on the North, South and Herring Rivers.

To address this problem, the NSRWA is seeking federal and private funding to increase pump out services dedicated to the North, South and Herring Rivers by next summer. The Herring River Marina in Scituate has agreed to generously partner to host the Pump Out Boat and to install a new dockside Pump Out Station at their marina. Stay tuned for more information on how you can support this exciting initiative!

## Help Protect Local Waters with Tax Strategies

### New Tax Benefits in the CARES Act

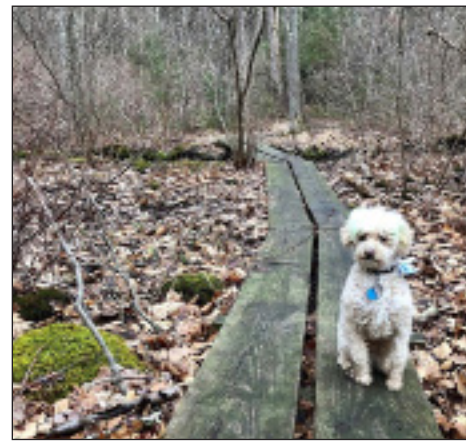
You may get an above-the-line deduction for donations up to \$300 for individuals who do not itemize and take the standard deduction for the 2020 federal tax year. For 2020 only, the Charitable Giving Deduction Cap is now up to 100% of adjusted gross income for those who itemize their deductions, while corporations may deduct donations up to 25% of taxable income.

### IRA Distributions

You may request your IRA custodian to make a distribution directly to the NSRWA if you are now required to take a minimum distribution (RMD) from your retirement savings account. That will count toward your RMD and won't be counted as taxable income (although it cannot be taken as a charitable deduction). Please reach out to your tax advisor and/or your IRA custodian for information specific to you. Our 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization tax ID# is 23-7181992.







Winning photos from our Explore South Shore Contest on Instagram by Alisa Allegrini, Abbey Knoll, and Christina Souretis.

## Turning To Nature During the Pandemic

By Kezia Bacon, Marshfield

Last spring, when the pandemic hit and our lives suddenly felt very small and stressful, we collectively turned to nature.

We turned to nature because it was the best alternative. Social distancing ruled out restaurants, meetings, theaters, and churches. Shopping was only for essentials, at a limited set of stores. Elbow bumps and face masks replaced handshakes, hugs, and smiles. We were asked to stay home, but we could still go outside! When the walls felt like they were closing in, we could step out for a breath of fresh air. We could take walks in our neighborhoods. We could visit local nature preserves and wander through the woods, or stroll around a pond, or alongside a river.

We turned to nature because it provided solace. It might have felt like our worlds were falling apart, but we could take comfort in the everlasting cycles of

nature. The tides continued to rise and fall, the seasons continued to change, the birds came back from their winter homes as they always do. Observing this brought calm and peace.

We turned to nature because it was there for us. Thanks to decades of diligence and forethought within our communities, we now have scores of public beaches, ponds, parks, and conservation areas. Our collective efforts to preserve open space paid off exponentially during the pandemic. There were hundreds of quiet, beautiful places to go, for a stretch of the legs and a shift in perspective.

As a nature enthusiast, you may have noticed the uptick in use of our public lands. You may have encountered more footprints on the trail, more fishing rods in the water. Here at NSRWA, we observed a 155% increase in the use of our website. Especially during the surge,

when some of the area's most popular nature preserves were shut down, our searchable Explore South Shore database of hiking, fishing and paddling spots provided lesser-known and less-crowded alternatives. Our 50 Places to Explore Contest featured at least one new location per week to visit on your own. Our Recreation Guide Map, distributed for free throughout the spring, showed you how to get there.

Now more than ever, we understand the importance of nature, and the need to protect it. As autumn arrives, and the pandemic drags on, remember what resources are available to you. Search our ever-expanding website for a new trail to hike. See if you can visit all of our 50 Places to Explore. Get outdoors every day if you can. Remember that turning to nature can make you feel less confined and more connected. Turning to nature can help you feel better.

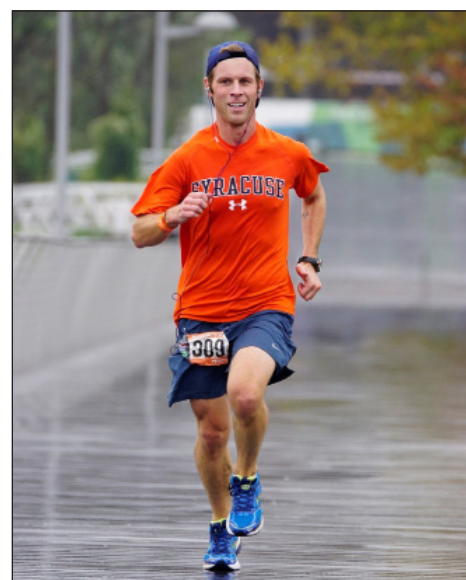
## Why I'm Running a Marathon for NSRWA

By Adam Duffy, Marshfield

"I decided to turn my upcoming marathon run on October 31<sup>st</sup> into a fundraiser for the NSRWA because you all have helped my family and I so much during this pandemic. Due to the pandemic, I made the decision to take a temporary break from D.C. and move back to Marshfield to be around family and to work from the house I grew up in – where my parents still live. One of the things that was a priority for me and my parents was to spend as much time outside as possible to alleviate some of the stress we were all feeling. When I last lived here during my high school

years, I didn't spend as much time outside, so besides the beach, I was not very familiar with outside activities that are available. Luckily, I came across your excellent website and social media posts that show the incredible opportunities we have to spend time in nature and explore the South Shore. I can honestly say we've used your resources to hike over 30 trails now in just about every town on the South Shore and every single one has helped us get through these hard times. My goal is to raise \$1,000 to help support your important work."

To support Adam's run visit [nsrwa.org](http://nsrwa.org) and search for Adam's marathon run.





# WaterWatch

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## Inside This Issue:

- **The North River (Still) Needs Your Help**
- **Get Kids Outdoors with Autumn Adventures**
- **When the Dams Come Tumbling Down!**
- **Monitoring Coastal and Ocean Acidification**
- **No Wake Campaign and Pump Out Boat Initiative**

## Campfire Stories with Jeff Corwin and Friends

### Celebrate our 50th Anniversary with us!

Join us for a special evening of virtual storytelling on November 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm. The theme for the storytellers is Nature: What Could Possibly Go Wrong? This is a FREE event, but registration is required to receive the Zoom link. Sign-up at [nsrwa.org](http://nsrwa.org).



## Save the Date

### NSRWA Annual Meeting

Friday, November 6, 2020  
Zoom Meeting  
7:00-8:30pm  
Register online

### Online Auction - Live!

Friday, November 6, 2020  
Find memorable outdoor  
experiences and nature-  
inspired art

### WaterWatch Lectures

Wednesdays  
January 13 - March 3  
Zoom Meetings  
Registration will be online