

Riverways Programs

2002 Annual Report – Executive Summary

FY2002 and Fall FY2003

The mission of the Riverways Programs is to promote the restoration, protection and ecological integrity of the Commonwealth's rivers, streams and adjacent lands.

All the Riverways Programs are based on the belief that local action is the key to river protection. Riverways staff work side-by-side with local citizens, town officials, watershed-based groups and other partners to achieve the goals of restoration and protection of the state's rivers and their ecosystems. Riverways Programs offer training, technical assistance, publications, funding and Special Programs.

The Riverways Programs helps local communities work to:

- ◆ Protect and restore water quality
- ◆ Protect healthy stream flows
- ◆ Protect land along rivers and streams
- ◆ Improve habitat for wildlife and fish in river corridors
- ◆ Promote public access to and along rivers and streams consistent with resource protection.



The Riverways Programs has developed several programs targeted to meet the needs of both river advocates and river resources. The programs strive to provide tools that citizens may use to protect and restore water quality and healthy stream flows, protect open space and river access, improve fish and wildlife habitats, enhance aesthetics and help reconnect people to their rivers. Each program is directed by one or two staff members and share the goal of providing assistance to citizens, citizen groups and communities. Riverways Programs include:

River Restore

Adopt-A-Stream Program

Urban Rivers Program

Technical Assistance Team

Small Grants Program

Lake/Watershed Stewardship Program-*pilot*

Heritage Rivers Program-*pilot*

Protecting rivers is good for our economic well being...

Riverways recognizes that by protecting rivers, streams and adjacent lands, we are also protecting the unique character and livability of our communities. Protected and restored rivers and streams bring tourists, anglers, hunters and hikers to Massachusetts destinations. In addition, healthy rivers provide high quality outdoor recreational opportunities close-to-home for Massachusetts residents, contributing to the high quality of life so essential for attracting and retaining top-notch employers and workers and providing clean water for human health.

Riverways' work across the state builds local capacity to achieve:

- ◆ Clean rivers – pollution prevention reduces costs of clean up—filtration, remediation—as well as protects the aesthetic value of the resource;
- ◆ Natural streamflows in rivers providing the needed water to support healthy fisheries, aquatic life, recreational uses and other community benefits;
- ◆ Greenways and open space along rivers reconnect people to rivers, facilitate access to and along the river, increase property values and encourage businesses to settle and revitalize waterfronts; and
- ◆ Protected wildlife habitat in and along rivers enhances native biodiversity while provides rewarding opportunities for learning about and interacting with nature.

Riverways Programs Achievements FY2002-03

Adopt-A-Stream - *Building partnerships within communities*

...Thanks to the training and technical support from the Adopt-A-Stream Program our Shoreline Survey has greatly improved awareness of the Assabet River and its tributaries in Northborough. We now have a core of concerned citizens—97 of them participated in the survey—working to restore and protect the waterways in town. Because Northborough realized the benefits from the Survey—including the town receiving credit toward requirements for storm water controls—the town government was very enthusiastic. Maggie Kosovsky, Northborough Stream Team Coordinator- Organization for the Assabet River

- ◆ Working with watershed associations, **Riverways' Adopt-A-Stream Program** created 17 Stream Teams in 9 watersheds, involving 400 volunteers and leveraging 4,300 hours of work on behalf of rivers and communities
 - ◆ **Adopt-A-Stream** Staff convened 17 steering committees, bringing together municipal officials and local citizens
 - ◆ **Adopt-A-Stream** staff conducted training workshops in 17 towns which resulted in Shoreline Surveys, data sheets, and citizen priority findings
 - ◆ **Adopt-A-Stream** staff facilitated 12 Action Planning meetings leading to implementation
- ◆ **Adopt-A-Stream** staff supported Stream Teams' actions, including:
 - ◆ identification and restoration of river water quality problems
 - ◆ identification and steps leading to protection of open space
 - ◆ protection of drinking water supplies
 - ◆ restoration of stream banks
 - ◆ habitat studies
 - ◆ increased public access
 - ◆ public education



River Restore - *Reconnecting our rivers and their communities*

...there are many agencies involved in this, both public and private. Without [River Restore's] involvement, the Town would be unable to address this project because of the cost. The person who has been responsible for putting together the agencies involved to date in this project is Karen Pelto, River Restore Coordinator, and she has done a great job. Richard Furlong, Town Administrator for Becket – Yokum Brook Restoration Project

- ◆ **River Restore** co-led the first coastal dam removal in Massachusetts, restoring passage for alewife in Plymouth's Town Brook. Project partners included local, state, and federal agencies, and private groups and foundations.
- ◆ **River Restore** is creating a model Index of Environmental Risk for dams (\$30,000 funded through MET) to assess current impacts to aquatic resources from dams and potential impacts to public resources from dam failure.
- ◆ **River Restore** provided oversight for a study to evaluate fish passage restoration alternatives for the Neponset River.
- ◆ **River Restore** raised over \$250,000 from foundations, corporate donors, and federal grant programs to restore cold water fisheries habitat in Yokum Brook, Becket.
- ◆ **River Restore** projects in Plymouth, Becket, Norwell, and Hanover were approved to receive donations of services and funds via donors to the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Program.

*Before:
Deterioration of the dam rendered this fishway impassable.*



*After:
Just weeks after removing the dam, juvenile herring moved downstream. Removal obviates the need to trap and truck adult herring upstream.*

Urban Rivers Program – *Revitalizing urban waterfronts*

- ◆ The **Urban Rivers Program** partnered with the local Fall River group Green Futures to organize the 4th Annual Urban River Conference in Fall River. Over 100 citizens and municipal officials participated in a series of workshops and field trips dedicated to providing models and inspiration for use in their communities.
- ◆ **Urban River Charrettes** in Waltham and Adams helped involve a diverse cross-section of residents, businesses and nonprofits in planning for their city's revitalized waterfronts.
- ◆ **Urban Rivers Program** provided an intern, coordination and technical assistance to the Chelsea Creek communities to create a brochure and map to help revitalize the waterfront. Funding from EPA.
- ◆ **Urban Rivers Fellows** provided technical assistance to Somerville, Lawrence, Holyoke, Seekonk and Millbury. Urban Rivers staff selected projects and students, managed projects and provided assistance to the Fellows. Funds were provided by MET.
- ◆ **Urban Rivers Grants** provided funding to complete projects in the cities of Adams, Lowell, Westfield, Waltham, Gloucester, and Lynn..
- ◆ **Urban Rivers Program** provided Technical Assistance on issues including those related to (1) water quality; (2) fish restoration; (3) wetland regulations; (4) local bylaw questions; (5) finding sources of funding to fourteen urban areas.



Rivers running through our cities are often the most degraded and ignored-communities have turned their backs on them. Having a program such as Urban Rivers, which understands the importance of community outreach as part of building new stewards for our natural resources and is dedicated to our special needs, is the kind of government we need. Marianne Paley, Executive Director; GroundWorks Lawrence

Small Grants Program – *Seed money for communities' rivers and waterfronts*

Small Grants Program (grants between \$500-10,000) results included:

- ◆ Volunteer fish counts in Lowell engaged 40 volunteers, (262 hours)
- ◆ Interactive CD program for North and South Rivers showing property maps
- ◆ Rain garden for storm water remediation in Great Barrington
- ◆ Streambank restoration in Manchester-by-the-Sea
- ◆ Charrettes in Lawrence for Brook Street Park, Arlington Promenade, City Riverside Parks
- ◆ Stream restoration projects including study by Trout Unlimited
- ◆ Habitat surveys including Alewife Brook Reservation



Technical Assistance – *Assisting communities and citizens*

Out here on the Housatonic River, we're seeing the huge economic and social costs of remediating a river poisoned with PCBs and other contaminants. If we've learned anything at all, it's the importance of raising awareness and protecting our rivers in the first place. With relatively modest state funds, Riverways has consistently provided essential technical assistance through its programs and technical assistance team, empowering local activists to do what they do best. Preventative activism makes sense and Riverways offers the means to do it. Rachel Fletcher, Founding Director-Housatonic River Walk

2002 Riverways Programs Technical Assistance included

- ◆ Water quality assurance for monitoring groups
- ◆ Explanations of environmental regulations, reports, processes
- ◆ Assistance in riparian restoration, trails, land purchases
- ◆ Assistance in identifying and securing funding for river-related projects
- ◆ Development of a Low Flow Inventory web page

Across Massachusetts, staff attended site visits to assist with:

- Water quality problems
- Instream flow problems
- Habitat threats and protection opportunities
- Sediment issues
- Assist sister agencies with grant review and technical issues
- Recreational trails
- Potential public access sites
- Bank restoration
- Recreational trails
- River restoration



Outreach and Education – *Serving constituencies with information they need and want*

Riverways Programs 2002: Outreach and education included:

- ◆ Workshops at MACC Conference, Lake Workshops, River Management Society, MA Historic Conference
- ◆ Data sheets/manuals and workbooks
- ◆ Newsletters providing river updates, “how-to” information, networking possibilities, available grants and resources include the *Riverways*, *Adopt-A-Stream*, *Urban Rivers Newsletters* and the *Rivers Month Calendar*. (now offered on-line)
- ◆ Web pages including Riverways, Adopt-A-Stream, Urban Rivers Programs, Low Flow Inventory
- ◆ June Calendar Listing all river events for June Rivers Month
- ◆ Five Community Presentation Institute Classes (taught by three staff members).

Lake Watershed Stewardship Program – *Involving communities in restoring lake watersheds*

... Through the Lake Stewardship Program survey we were able to identify more than 70 potential issues or problems areas and have already had more than half of these issues addressed and/or corrected through local and State agencies. We resolve to continue to create partnerships within the City to build on the work.- Michael Zylich, Indian Lake Watershed Association

Pilot **Lake Watershed Stewardship Program** involved 99 volunteers to determine causes of impaired lakes to plan and implement solutions (Funded by federal funds through the s. 319 Program through DEP)

- ◆ **Lake Watershed Stewardship Program** created 6 steering committees, provided training for 6 Watershed Surveys that studied 13 lakes and sections of 21 streams, created materials, facilitated Action Planning meetings and supported implementation for all surveys.

Watershed Initiative – *Communities connected by water*

Watershed Initiative: Riverways Programs projects included:

- ◆ the River Continuity Project in the Greater Connecticut Basin to evaluate stream crossings and improve passage and movement of fish, wildlife and other aquatic life
- ◆ a water conservation project for the Ipswich Watershed including the development of a regional water conservation plan, facilitation of several meetings with water suppliers and other stakeholders, and implementation of the media/ public relations campaign
- ◆ an outreach and education project for the Shawsheen Watershed resulting in the “The Shawsheen River Watershed: A Guide To Recreation”, a printed and interactive on-line recreational map
- ◆ Riverways staff actively participate on all twenty EOEAs watershed teams, helping to develop and implement annual watershed work plans while forging successful working partnerships with local business and community leaders.

Wild and Scenic Rivers – *Protecting nationally recognized resources*

Wild and Scenic: Riverways Programs staff, representing the Commonwealth, participated in:

- ◆ Review of projects on the SuAsCo Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council
- ◆ Proposed expansion of Westfield River Wild and Scenic designation sponsored by local towns
- ◆ Study and outreach for Taunton River Wild and Scenic study

Protecting the Environment is protecting ourselves. It's all connected; the environment, our health, the economy. The modest investment of state resources to the Riverways Programs and the services to citizen groups and communities they provide pay big dividends in river protection and restoration that are of direct benefit to human as well as natural communities. Deborah Cary, Director, Massachusetts Audubon Society's Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary, Worcester.

Governor Jane Swift, Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Bob Durand, Secretary; Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
David Peters, Commissioner; Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement
Joan Kimball, Director; Riverways Programs
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