



# Currents

A Publication of the Saugus River Watershed Council

Volume 14 No.2 , Summer 2005

## Rumney Marsh Canoe Trips

A quiet canoe ride is one of the best ways to enjoy the wildlife and natural beauty of Rumney Marsh. Please join the Saugus River Watershed Council this summer for one of our popular Rumney Marsh canoe trips where we will paddle along the Pines River in Saugus and Revere.

**Saturday, 23 July 2005**  
**12:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

*(Raindate Sunday 24 July 2005*  
*1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.)*

**Saturday, 20 August 2005**  
**11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

*(Raindate Sunday, 21 August 2005*  
*12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.)*

Trips depart from the Rumney Marsh entrance located along Route 107 South (look for the Saugus River Watershed Council banner on the day of the trip).

Reservations are required for these trips which last approximately two hours. Early registration is recommended as our canoe trips always fill up and are booked on a first come basis. Several canoes, paddles and life jackets are available by reservation. \$5 for adults, free for children under 18. You are also welcome to join us in your own canoe or kayak at no charge. For more information or to RSVP, please call 781-233-5046.

*Special thanks to volunteer canoe guide Fred LeBlanc for leading these trips, and to Boy Scout Troop 61 for use of canoes. ❖*

## **DEP Requires Saugus to End Illegal Sewage Discharges**



*Photo credit: Frae Saulenas*

*During some major rainstorms, the Town of Saugus has illegally pumped sewage into the Saugus River from the Lincoln Avenue pumping station shown above.*

This spring, the Town of Saugus entered into a Consent Order with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to end the long-time practice of dumping illegal sewage into the Saugus River.

In the Consent Order, DEP alleged the following -- 1) the Town of Saugus' sanitary sewer system is inadequate, 2) Saugus illegally installed a bypass pump used to discharge untreated wastewater directly into the Saugus River, 3) the Town did not report all sewer discharges, 4) the Town did not implement actions and sewer system upgrades identified by reports completed in 1997 and 1999, 5) excessive inflow and infiltration into the sewer system is contributing to sewer overflows, and 6) the Town's actions violated the Clean Water Act, the Surface Water Discharge Regulations, and the Operations and Maintenance Regulations.

Although Saugus is working to comply with the requirements of the Consent Order (see page 3 for detail), approximately 800,000 gallons of sewage was dumped into the Saugus River on 27 June 2005 due to a power failure and associated pumping station malfunctions.

*... Continued on page 3*

### **Inside this Issue**

*Fish Monitoring Project....Page 2*

*Around the Watershed.....Page 5*

*Water Quality Update.....Page 6*

*Saugus River Upstream  
Habitat Assessment.....Page 6*

*River Night 2005.....Page 7*

# 2005 Fish Monitoring Project



Photo credit: John Petrowicz

From left to right, SRWC Director Joan LeBlanc, GE Volunteer Lisa Beaulieu, and National Park Service Staff Daniel Noon identify and measure fish caught in the Saugus River.

## 2005 Catch Summary

Rainbow Smelt	141
American eel (adult)	8
American eel (juvenile)	420
Fourspine stickleback	185
Threespine stickleback	54
Mummichog	21
White sucker	38
Yellow perch	48
White perch	11
Redfin pickerel	4
River herring	<u>11</u>
<b>Total Catch</b>	<b>941</b>



Isabelle Pike (daughter of SRWC Director Joan LeBlanc) helped out with the fish monitoring one day this spring.

This spring, the Council worked in partnership with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, the Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site, and the Corporate Wetlands Partnership to conduct a 2005 fish monitoring project. During March, April and May, a fyke net was set and checked four days per week in the main stem of the Saugus River. The primary focus of the project was to identify the presence and size of smelt populations in the river.

Staff and volunteers set nets and traps, and identified and counted fish species. As shown in the 2005 Catch Summary (above right), 941 fish were caught and released during the project. Results indicate that there is a small smelt fishery in the Saugus River and that species diversity is greater than expected. The fish monitoring program also included using a trap to catch and release juvenile American eels five days/week during April, May and June.

Special thanks to Daniel Noon of the Saugus Iron Works, Brad Chase, Matt Ayers and other Division of Marine Fisheries staff for working in partnership with SRWC to conduct the monitoring project.

We also sincerely appreciate all of the volunteers from General Electric, Revere High School, and the Saugus River Watershed Council who helped with this project, including -- Lisa Beaulieu, Amy Curry, David Eatough, Lisa Capone-Condon, Linda Hutchins, Fred LeBlanc, Jim Murphy, Dave Parsons, John Petrowicz, Curtis White, and Kathy and Jim Wrynn. ❖



Above, volunteers Dave Parsons and Jim Murphy from GE help collect and count juvenile American Eels.

## Saugus River



### Watershed Council

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*Special Thanks to Our Project Partners: Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Saugus River Watershed Council, Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site, Corporate Wetlands Partnership - GE Foundation, and Massachusetts Environmental Trust.*

## **Saugus Sewage Discharges**

*Continued from Page 1*

Under the Consent Order signed by the Town of Saugus and the Department of Environmental Protection, the Town was required to pay a \$25,000 penalty and to implement a series of actions associated with upgrading its sewer and storm drainage systems. Requirements include:

- DEP shall be notified within 24 hours of any discharge at the Lincoln Avenue Pump Station.
- Saugus shall create a Sewer Bank that starts out with a ratio of 10:1, meaning that the town can add 1 gallon of flow to the Sewer Bank only for every 10 gallons of inflow and infiltration removed from the system. Once the town has removed 500,000 gallons of I/I the Sewer Bank ratio becomes 4:1.
- Saugus shall develop and implement a High Flow Management Plan to minimize overflows at the pump station including removal of solids and disinfection.
- Saugus shall develop and implement an Inflow and Infiltration Source Removal Plan.
- Saugus shall develop an Operations and Maintenance Manual and Staffing Plan to ensure proper operations of its municipal sewer system.
- Saugus shall develop and implement a Final Sewer System Facilities and Private Inflow Source Removal Plan. The plan will fully evaluate the current hydraulic conditions and wastewater conveyance system, and identify actions needed to abate sewer system overflows, reduce inflow and infiltration, and remove private inflow sources. The final plan must be submitted by December 2006, with implementation following approval by DEP.
- Saugus shall submit semi-annual reports summarizing progress in meeting the requirements of the Consent Order.
- Violations of the Consent Order will result in financial fines ranging from \$100/day to \$1,000/day depending upon the length of time of the violation. ❖

### **Right to Know Article**

In May, Saugus Town Meeting members voted unanimously to pass a Right to Know Article to provide the public with information about sewage discharges when they occur. Under the provisions of the article, the Town Manager is required to post information on cable television in Saugus and Lynn, send written notification to Saugus residents living within 100 yards of the Saugus River downstream of the Hamilton Street Bridge, and post signs at Vitale Park and the Town Landing. The article was drafted by Town Meeting member Peter Manoogian. SRWC Board Member Debra Panetta and Director Joan LeBlanc spoke in favor of the article at Town Meeting. ❖

## **Editorial:**

### **Hope for the Watershed**

The Saugus Board of Selectmen's recent vote to enter into an Administrative Consent Order with the state to solve the decade old problem of direct sewage discharges to the Saugus River is a sign of hope for the watershed. Solving this major environmental problem will reduce public health risks associated with bacterial pollution, improve water quality and aesthetics of the Saugus River, and address local flooding issues.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's Consent Order was triggered by long-time neglect of Saugus' sewer and storm drain system. Solving the problem now will require major increases in funding and sweeping changes in construction, operations and maintenance of the system.

While paying for major sewer system upgrades will likely mean increased sewer rates in Saugus, the reality is that this work is long overdue and most other communities in Massachusetts have already raised their rates to fund similar capital improvements needed to comply with the federal Clean Water Act. For example, the City of Lynn has spent more than \$60 million since 1995 to resolve the problem of Combined Sewer Overflows and upgrade its stormwater and sewer system.

Eliminating the problem of illegal sewage discharges in Saugus will significantly improve water quality conditions in the Saugus River watershed. Currently, during some heavy rainstorms sewage overflows are pumped from the Lincoln Street station in Saugus directly into the Rumney Marshes Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), a 2,634-acre urban salt marsh system extending into Saugus, Lynn, Revere, Boston and Winthrop. This region was designated as an ACEC in 1988 to preserve its critical environmental value as one of the most biologically significant salt marshes north of Boston. The marsh contains flounder, alewife, American eel, smelt, soft-shelled and razor clams, and a variety of native and migratory birds. As one of the few remaining 'wild' places, the marsh also provides a unique opportunity for canoeing, bird-watching and quiet reflection on the natural beauty of the Saugus River watershed.

Starting at Lake Quannapowitt in Wakefield, the Saugus River travels through Saugus and Lynn before emptying into the Lynn Harbor estuary. All or part of eleven communities — Wakefield, Saugus, Lynn, Revere, Lynnfield, Malden, Melrose, Everett, Reading, Stoneham and Peabody — include land that drains into the Saugus River. Actions now being implemented by these communities to reduce stormwater pollution, remove illegal sewer connections, and eliminate combined sewer overflows, will help protect important natural resources in the Saugus River watershed for future generations.

*SRWC Director Joan LeBlanc submitted this editorial to local newspapers earlier this spring. ❖*

## Best Wishes to Steven Kesselman

The Saugus River Watershed Council wishes Steven Kesselman all the best as he retires from his position as superintendent of both the Saugus Iron Works and the Salem Maritime National Historic Sites. SRWC Board Member Kathy Wrynn presented Steven with a River Stewardship Award at our recent 2005 River Night event (photo at right).



Photo credit: Dan Burgess

Steven has been a long-time advocate of expanded public access to the Saugus River. He has overseen countless education and history programs at the Saugus Iron Works and most recently worked to ensure future implementation of the Saugus River Turning Basin Restoration Project. Special thanks to Steven for his support as a long-time member of the Saugus River Watershed Council. ❖

## Mike Pietraszek

This spring, we were saddened to hear that Mike Pietraszek, a long-time employee of General Electric and friend to the Saugus River watershed, had passed away. For several years, Mike worked with the Council each fall to ensure the success of our major CoastSweep cleanup projects.

In addition to his skill at helping us figure out the right equipment and strategies for tackling even the most challenging illegal dumping problem, Mike was always cheerful and upbeat about making a difference in his community. We will truly miss working with Mike and would like to extend our sincere condolences to his family. ❖

## Shaw's Project, Wakefield

Site preparation work has begun for construction of the Shaw's Market in Wakefield. SRWC submitted written comments to the Wakefield Conservation Commission this spring noting concerns about lack of compliance with some of the requirements of the Order of Conditions during the demolition phase of the work.

The Council's primary concern is that all necessary environmental controls must be in place prior to commencement of the environmentally sensitive culvert relocation work. Before the market can be constructed, project proponents must first relocate a major culvert for the Wakefield Brook, which provides stormwater drainage for much of Wakefield before emptying into the Mill River.

SRWC will continue to work with the Wakefield Conservation Commission and the project proponents to ensure that stormwater management and erosion controls are implemented in accordance with the requirements of the Conservation Commission's Order of Conditions for the project. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of SRWC's comment letter on the project should contact [srw@shore.net](mailto:srw@shore.net) or 781-233-5046. ❖



## Birding News

During a May 2005 walk at Prankers Pond in Saugus, SRWC members and avid birdwatchers Dana and Inge Jewell spotted 48 different types of birds. Their results are highlighted below:

<i>Double-crested Cormorant</i> - 1	<i>Warbling Vireo</i> - 4
<i>Mallard Duck</i> - 5	<i>Nashville Warbler</i> - 2
<i>Red-tailed Hawk</i> - 1	<i>Northern Parula</i> - 3
<i>Common Screech Owl</i> - 1	<i>Yellow-rumped Warbler</i> - 7
<i>Mourning Dove</i> - 3	<i>Yellow Warbler</i> - 1
<i>Black-billed Cuckoo</i> - 1	<i>Black-throated Blue Warbler</i> - 1
<i>Common Flicker</i> - 2	<i>Magnolia Warbler</i> - 2
<i>Downy Woodpecker</i> - 6	<i>Chestnut-sided Warbler</i> - 2
<i>Eastern Kingbird</i> - 2	<i>Canada Warbler</i> - 2
<i>Great-crested Flycatcher</i> - 1	<i>Black &amp; White Warbler</i> - 6
<i>Chimney Swift</i> - 1	<i>American Redstart</i> - 4
<i>American Crow</i> - 2	<i>Common Yellowthroat</i> - 5
<i>Blue Jay</i> - 4	<i>Ovenbird</i> - 2
<i>Black-capped Chickadee</i> - 5	<i>Common Grackle</i> - many
<i>Tufted Titmouse</i> - 7	<i>Orchard Oriole</i> - 2
<i>White-breasted Nuthatch</i> - 4	<i>Baltimore Oriole</i> - 7
<i>Carolina Wren</i> - 1	<i>Scarlet Tanager</i> - 2
<i>Brown Thrasher</i> - 1	<i>Northern Cardinal</i> - 4
<i>American Robin</i> - 7	<i>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</i> - 2
<i>Gray Catbird</i> - 22	<i>Song Sparrow</i> - 4
<i>Wood Thrush</i> - 1	<i>Swamp Sparrow</i> - 1
<i>Swainson Thrush</i> - 2	<i>White-throated Sparrow</i> - 5
<i>Hermit Thrush</i> - 2	<i>Red-winged Blackbird</i> - many
<i>Solitary Vireo</i> - 2	<i>American Goldfinch</i> - 5

# Around the Watershed

## Lake Quannapowitt

Friends of Lake Quannapowitt recently funded a design study for the Col. Connelly Park located along Lake Quannapowitt in Wakefield. The following amenities are among those being considered for the plan: 1) new memorial to Col. Connelly, 2) redesign and relocation of tot lot, 3) reconfiguration of walking trails, 4) removal of unused bathhouse, 5) removal of chain link fence, and 6) shoreline restoration. Once a final master plan for the park is approved, the committee will focus on fundraising for implementation. Anyone interested in contributing to this project can call Karen Faler at 781-245-9093 or Mary O'Leary at 781-246-1916.

## Friends of Lynn Woods

Friends of Lynn Woods will host its first Bluegrass Festival on Sunday afternoon, 7 August 2005. Bring your lawn chair or blanket and find a comfortable spot in the amphitheater to enjoy an afternoon of bluegrass and folk music. Food concessions will be available. For more information call 781-593-7773.

## Prankers Pond Day

On Sunday, 21 August 2005, Saugus Action Volunteers for the Environment will host its Annual Prankers Pond Day from noon to 4:00 p.m. Bring family and friends, a picnic lunch, and enjoy a day at the Pond! SAVE will provide soft drinks and water. For more information, please call 781-233-6428.

## Landscape of Opportunity

SRWC Director Joan LeBlanc was a panelist at a conference in May, The Landscape of Opportunity, hosted by the Essex National Heritage Commission at North

Shore Community College in Danvers. LeBlanc participated in a panel focusing on strategies for addressing pollution problems in rivers and ponds. Panelists and conference participants discussed strategies for improving water quality, restoring river flow, improving habitat, dealing with invasive species, improving public access, and protecting the environment with limited financial resources. During the conference, several priority actions were identified, including the need to create guidelines to address pollution from road salt and illegal dumping.

## Saugus River Park

At its Spring River Night event, the Saugus River Watershed Council announced that the organization will contribute \$10,000 toward developing a conceptual plan for long-term use of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's 8.2-acre property (formerly known as the Bacon property) located along the Saugus River in Saugus. The plan will identify strategies for promoting habitat improvements and public access at the site currently owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The project is currently on hold due to transitions in leadership staff at the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

## Reedy Meadow Fire

A fire that raged through Reedy Meadow on 12 May burned wetland vegetation and waterfowl nesting habitat across approximately 100 acres in Lynnfield and Wakefield, according to Lynnfield Fire Dept. Captain Harold Hall. "During the fire, you could see them (ducks and geese) flying away. Their nests were probably destroyed," Hall said, adding that it took six hours for firefighters to extinguish the blaze. Fire officials suspect that children playing with matches on railroad tracks in the freshwater marsh may have started the fire. The 540-acre wetland is expected to bounce back, as it has from previous fires, since flames spread mainly across the top of the marsh and stopped short of burning into the ground. During Reedy Meadow fieldwork conducted in June, SRWC staff noted that significant new vegetation was already reestablished. ❖

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## Events at Breakheart Reservation

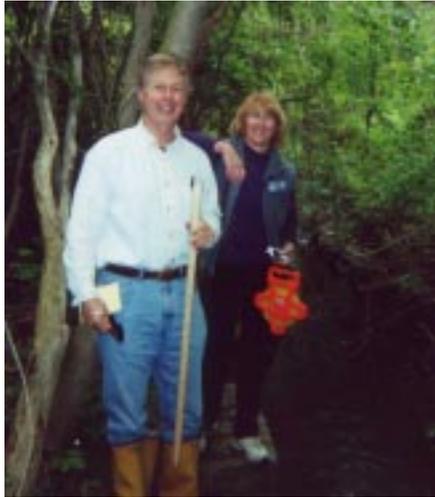
Night Hikes at Breakheart - Join a DCR Ranger for a short hike to the beach to enjoy hot chocolate and marshmallows toasted over a campfire. Dress for the weather and bring a flashlight. Meet at the Park entrance, Vocational School parking lot, Wakefield. Hike will take place on Sunday, 28 August, 8:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Friends of Breakheart Summer Concert Series - On Saturday, 20 August from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. the Backwoods Ramblers will play a blend of folk-rock, country, and bluegrass. Concerts will be held at the Visitors Center off the Lynn Fells Parkway, Saugus.

Discovery Hours - Join a DCR Ranger for exciting nature activities each Wednesday, 11:00 a.m. to noon, 13 July through 31 August. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

*For more information, contact the Department of Conservation and Recreation at Breakheart Reservation, 781-233-0834. ❖*

# Saugus River Watershed Fish Spawning Habitat Assessment



*SRWC Vice President Doug Heath and Friends of Lake Quannapowitt Board Member Alison Simcox assist with Reedy Meadow Habitat Assessment, June 2005.*

SRWC is working with the Saugus River Flow Restoration Task Force to conduct a habitat assessment of fish spawning and passage in the upper portions of the Saugus River watershed. The study includes field research to assess fish passage and a study to evaluate whether existing hydrology would support a fish ladder at the Lynn Water and Sewer Commission (LWSC) dam. With a grant of \$14,000 from the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment/NOAA Habitat Restoration Partnership, SRWC has hired Gomez & Sullivan Engineers to conduct the hydrology portions of the project.

In June, SRWC staff and volunteer Task Force members began evaluating spawning and migratory fish habitat upstream of the Lynn Water and Sewer Commission Dam. Field work included visits to the LWSC Dam and Headpond, the Saugus River inlet to the Headpond, Edgewater Park in Wakefield, Pillings Pond in Lynnfield, and Reedy Meadow in Lynnfield and Wakefield.

Despite high spring water flow, low dissolved oxygen levels were noted immediately above the dam (3.8 mg/l at 8:30 a.m. and 5.4 mg/l at 12:30 p.m.). A future site visit will follow the Saugus River upstream from the

Dam via canoe into Reedy Meadow. The potential for utilizing ponds located in Edgewater Park was considered, however, the high cost of culvert alteration and permitting conflicts with freshwater marsh protection would be prohibitive.

Habitat conditions and impediments nearly eliminate both Pillings Pond and Lake Quannapowitt as targets for river herring restoration. Access to both areas would not be possible without completion of the Army Corps of Engineers Section 206 proposed Reedy Meadow Habitat Improvement Project (dredging and culvert improvements). Project partners plan to conduct additional fieldwork to determine water chemistry and investigate potential spawning habitat in the mainstem of the Saugus River.

Special thanks to the following partners for supporting this important project:

*Department of Conservation and Recreation, Friends of Lake Quannapowitt, Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment/NOAA Habitat Restoration Partnership, Lynn Water & Sewer Commission, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Massachusetts Environmental Trust, Massachusetts Riverways Program, Saugus River Watershed Council, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. ❖*



*Rick Dawe of the Lynn Water and Sewer Commission and SRWC Director Joan LeBlanc inspect culverts in Reedy Meadow, June 2005.*

## Saugus River Watershed Water Quality Update

During June 2005, the Saugus River Watershed Council began its seasonal water quality sampling program. Volunteers and staff will test sampling sites throughout the watershed on a monthly basis for bacteria, dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, salinity and turbidity.

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*Water quality samples collected on Thursday, 30 June 2005, indicated that bacteria associated with the 800,000 gallons of sewage discharged from the Lincoln Avenue pumping station in Saugus on Monday, 27 June 2005 had already dissipated. Conditions in the Saugus River at and downstream from the pumping station met U.S. Environmental Protection Agency water quality criteria for boating.*

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At the same time, however, elevated bacterial pollution was identified at other watershed locations including the Mill River in Wakefield, Shute Brook in Saugus, and Trifone Brook in Revere.

This spring, SRWC published a report summarizing results from last year's water quality sampling program. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of last year's final water quality report, receiving monthly bacteria sampling results during 2005, or finding out more about volunteer sampling opportunities, should contact SRWC at [srw@shore.net](mailto:srw@shore.net) or 781-233-5046.

**REMINDER:** *remaining volunteer sampling dates for 2005 are: 17 July, 21 August, 18 September, 16 October, and 20 November.*

## River Night 2005 a Great Success!



Photo credit: Dan Burgess

*From left to right, SRWC Co-President Frank Ricciardi, SRWC Board Member Ann Farrell, and volunteer Auctioneer Bion Pike conducted an exciting live auction.*

*Below, guests bid on 71 silent auction items ranging from dinners, theatre tickets, sporting events and much more during River Night 2005.*



Photo credit: Dan Burgess

SRWC's 3rd Annual River Night dinner and auction was a great success. Approximately 150 members and friends joined us at Spinelli's in Lynnfield on 5 April 2005 for a delicious dinner and exciting auction. Thanks to very generous contributions from hundreds of event sponsors, item donors and guests bidding at the auction, we raised over \$17,000 to support our river restoration and environmental education programs.

This year's live auction included a Maine Windjammer vacation for two and several pairs of tickets to see the 2004 World Series Champion Boston Red Sox in action this summer.

Special thanks to the following River Night sponsors: Eastern Bank, General Electric, Roseland Property Company, Onyx Environmental Services, GeoSyntec Consultants, Inc., Central Centerless Grinding, Giannelli Management and Development Corp., Peter Rossetti Insurance Agency, New England Steeplejack Company, Seyfarth Shaw LLP, ATP Environmental, John's Oil Company, Saugusbank, Saugus Federal Credit Union, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin,

Weston & Sampson Engineers, and York Ford.

Special thanks also to our "Friends of River Night": Abigail's White Glove Clean-Outs, Steve and Dianna Babbitt, Kathleen Betts and Chip Lewis, Lisa and Will Condon, Friends of Lynn Woods, Dot and Joe James, Carl and Denise King, Debra and Mark Panetta, Joan LeBlanc and Bion Pike, John and Laura Walsh, and

Kathy and Jim Wrynn.

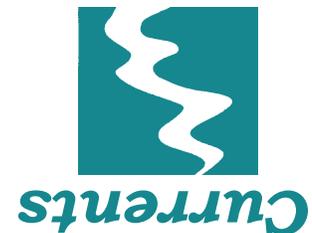
River Night was made possible by the enthusiastic efforts of our Benefit Committee, Honorary Committee, auction volunteers, sponsors, donors and guests at the auction. SRWC extends our sincere thanks to everyone who worked together to make this our most successful fundraiser yet! ❖



Photo credit: Dan Burgess

*From left to right, volunteers Michelle Brees, Jessie Zuberek and Amy Curry of the National Park Service helped run the logistics of this year's event. Special thanks to them and our many other volunteers!*

Saugus River Watershed Council  
P.O. Box 1092  
Saugus, MA 01906



## Making a Difference

The Saugus River watershed stretches from Lake Quannapowitt to the Lynn Harbor / Saugus River estuary, encompassing all or part of eleven communities.

The Saugus River Watershed Council is a non-profit organization founded in 1991 to protect the natural resources of the watershed. Our priorities include restoring water quality, expanding public access, restoring habitat for anadromous fish and other wild life, and protecting critical resources such as Rumney Marsh and Reedy Meadow.

Please consider adding your voice, as a member of the Council, to our efforts to protect the natural resources and beauty of the Saugus River watershed.

Summer 2005

## Join the Saugus River Watershed Council

Yes! I would like to become a member of the Saugus River Watershed Council.\*

New Member     Membership Renewal

Individual (\$10)     Family (\$15)     Friend (\$25)  
 Steward (\$50)     Patron (\$100)     Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

\* Corporations interested in joining the Saugus River Watershed Council should call (781) 233-5046 for additional information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Send check or money order to:  
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Saugus, MA 01906