

M A S S A C H U S E T T S

# SIERRAN

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Summer 2007

Reaching More Than  
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*Annual dues in the Sierra Club are \$39, of which \$1 is for a subscription to the Massachusetts Sierran.*

## MASSACHUSETTS POISED TO LEAD THE NATION IN ENERGY POLICY

Letter from the desk of James McCaffrey, Director

Whether it's high gas prices or high-profile documentaries, global warming is the hot topic these days. This mass epiphany is driving a newfound interest by politicians and policy makers to act quickly to curb the emissions of global warming gases. Not a moment too soon. Leading scientists now report the melting of Arctic glaciers is occurring much faster than predicted.

The federal government continues to dawdle, but states are acting. In Massachusetts, more than 100 bills were filed this legislative session to tackle issues ranging from renewable portfolio standards to regulating the efficiency of home appliances. Governor Patrick signed onto the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and House Speaker Dimasi has filed ambitious and sweeping legislation to reform how we manufacture, distribute and consume energy. State environmental officials accepted Cape Wind's environmental impact report. All these efforts raise the question: Will we get the mix right?

Sources like "clean coal" and liquefied natural gas (LNG) are sometimes described as clean, but are in fact non-renewable extractive resources derived from fossil fuels. Mountain-top coal mining decimates entire eco-systems, and LNG extraction in Peru wipes out huge tracts of Amazon rainforests and entire indigenous communities. We must transition away from these fuels.

Hydro and biomass? It depends. Large-scale hydro can cause wide-ranging devastation: Hydro-Quebec provides clean and renewable energy for the Northeast now, but construction flooded more than 11,000 square kilometers of boreal forest and forever disrupted the native Cree and their way of life. Currently Massachusetts is considering allowing the burning of construction and demolition debris in the biomass waste stream — a practice New Hampshire already tried and halted when arsenic from

*continued on page 13*

ON THE COVER: Watson's Pond in Taunton Ma *photograph by Emily Mozzone*

MASSACHUSETTS

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*Opinions, unless otherwise stated, are of the author only; positions adopted by the Sierra Club are identified as such.*

*Circulation of the Massachusetts Sierran is over 26,000 outdoor-minded, environmentally aware readers.*

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# Club Comments on State Forest Management Plans

by Elisa Campbell

In March, we commented on draft plans prepared by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) about state forests in the Berkshires and an overall plan for “High Conservation Value Forests” prepared by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP).

These plans are part of the process for the state-owned forest lands to maintain their “green” certification by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). We have published several articles about another part of that certification, the Forest Reserves. The Sierra Club recognizes the importance of this certification, and commends the DCR and Fisheries and Wildlife for having made the effort to be certified. We want to be sure that they maintain this certification by meeting the FSC’s standards for certification. We also are very aware that these agencies have suffered under what seems to be perpetual underfunding.

As a result of this underfunding, DCR has not been able to do the detailed planning for its forests and parks that are required under state law. The most recently proposed budget does not improve the situation. In this context, we are concerned that non-forestry values, including recreation, aesthetics, and attracting tourism, are not receiving adequate consideration. We suggested that a new “zone” in the overall planning process is needed for areas that are not intensive use areas nor ecologically sensitive areas but are socially very valuable, particularly in state parks and reservations. We also said “The state should engage the public in a process to understand what the residents of Massachusetts value in their state forests and parks system.”

We believe that State Parks should be treated differently than State Forests, and should not be used for “commercial” forestry. We also see a need for a clear definition of “commercial.” Another general concern is the stated goal of 20 percent in reserves and 80 percent in management. Those are arbitrary numbers, not based on an assessment of the resources.

We are most concerned that detailed inventories of DCR properties have not been done. In the “High Conservation Value” document, the Natural Heritage Program comments: “NHESP has not focused on existing conserva-

tion lands for inventory, therefore further inventory on state lands and reporting of natural communities on them would improve NHESP’s information about the occurrences of the different types, their condition, and their protection status.” Knowledgeable, interested, and concerned members of the public can assist in these inventories.

We also had comments on the details of cutting plans, which are done for a given “stand” in a particular forest. The description should include the relationship of this specific cut to the district plan and its goals. For treatments being done in Reserves, the cutting plan should include information about what problem is being addressed, how this plan will address it, what if any alternatives were considered, and whether there are any additional protections for habitat, etc.

We also questioned the proposed 105 year “rotation,” which we believe means that most trees would be cut at or before that age. Many of these tree species are capable of living several times that age.

We await DCR’s response to our comments, and their plans for other districts. ❖

*Elisa Campbell has been involved with state-owned public lands for decades, including representing the Sierra Club on the Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee, being on the former Department of Environmental Management Board of Managers, and creating the “Forest Guardians” program for the Chapter.*



Photo by Elisa Campbell

Catamount State Forest

# Streamlining Permits

by Alexandra Dawson

The new administration's "streamliners" are here — and they are concentrating on permits issued by environmental agencies that take more than 180 days to process. Specifically, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in a recent memo has identified several types of permits for immediate review. These include:

- The DEP "adjudicatory hearing" on appeals from DEP wetlands decisions
- Air quality permits
- Chapter 91 permits for development of filled coastal tidelands
- Permits for discharge of wastewater into the ground (package treatment plants for residential development)

The aim is to reduce permit timelines by 20 percent. The method is to establish review committees with technical knowledge, lawyers, and representatives of environmental and other groups. A lot of this process is already in progress and is expected to finish by late summer.

Heaven knows permit delays are all too common and efficiency does not necessarily mean a loss of protection. On the other hand, many of us not sitting on these cozy advisory committees worked very hard over many years to write the regulations now proposed for pruning. We have watched the DEP being shorn of its money and its staff. How can we ensure the agency will not be blamed for these forced deficiencies? The reasoning given in the memo discussed here as well as earlier memos — that the DEP will be freed up for more important tasks — rings increasingly hollow.

The memo targets several situations as problematical:

- permits associated with significant economic development and energy projects;
- permits with a history of complaints about delays;
- permits with a high volume of activity;
- permits taking over 180 days to issue.

Does this list really focus on environmental risk as it is supposed to?

Among the ideas that cause twinges in this memo are the following: smaller, "beneficial," "non-major" projects affecting air and ground-water quality should have a simpler review; the best way to solve delays at the Division of

Administrative Law Appeals (the administrative unit that conducts adjudicatory hearings on wetlands), is to abolish the hearing process for all except developers; the "environmental yield" of Best Available Control Technology currently required for all air quality permits should be measured against the cost to the applicants and to the DEP (especially targeting energy projects); Coastal Zone Management should be deprived of its formal role in deciding whether Chapter 91 tidelands should be licensed for commercial development.

Several of these suggestions would directly affect the public's right of review. For example, abutters, conservation commissions, and citizen groups would lose their right to appeal a DEP wetlands permit to an agency with judicial powers. Instead, those persons would have to petition the commissioner of the DEP for further review of the permit his branch office has just issued.

The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act office may well be heading in the same direction in its choice of projects requiring Environmental Impact Reports (EIR). For example, the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs recently decided not to require an EIR on complex plans to change access to Route 191 in Northampton and thus wiped out the only real opportunity for public review of four identified alternatives.

Changes such as those suggested above typically lead to mid-sized incremental effects: weakened standards for a project in wetlands along Route 495, easier installation of a package plant for a housing development in a country town, and shortcuts to construction of a biomass plant in western Massachusetts. These too are important losses in a state as crowded and polluted as ours. But even larger issues are involved when business interests meet in small rooms with state agencies. Citizens are in danger of a reduced role in government and a consequent isolation and demoralization of permit agencies in the name of efficiency.

Comments and questions should be directed to Ian Bowles, Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.❖

*Alexandra Dawson is an environmental attorney who lives in Hadley. Among other things, she writes environmental regulations and handbooks about them.*

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*Citizens are in danger of a reduced role in government and a consequent isolation and demoralization of permit agencies in the name of efficiency.*

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# Cape Wind Advances

by Erik Gehring

Earlier this spring Cape Wind received official state environmental approval, with Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles declaring that the project “adequately and properly complies” with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).

This state approval is limited in scope to the 7.6 miles of the 12.5 mile electric transmission cable in state waters. The rest of the 130 turbine project is in federal waters and is subject to the ongoing federal review led by the Department of the Interior’s Minerals Management Service. The federal decision is expected in late 2008. So while state approval clears a significant hurdle, there are several more hurdles to be jumped in order for Cape Wind to become America’s first offshore facility.

“Global climate change, sea level rise, dependence on foreign oil, and

the health impacts of local and regional air pollution create an urgent need for sustainable alternatives to energy produced from fossil fuels,” wrote Bowles in the MEPA certificate. “While new technologies are not without impacts themselves, these pale in comparison to the scale of impacts that continued fossil fuel emissions will have on the environment of Massachusetts.”

Bowles also addressed the concerns of opponents who argue that Cape Wind would industrialize Nantucket Sound. As reported in the *Boston Globe*, he pointed out that “the waterways have always been used for industrial and commercial purposes, from whaling to fishing to commercial sailing. ‘The idea that this is a pristine wilderness turns a blind eye to the history of the area,’ Bowles said.”

It was also announced that Cape Wind will pay the state \$10 million to

help mitigate impacts: \$780,000 for the restoration of Bird Island in Buzzards Bay; \$4.22 million for preservation, restoration, and enhancement projects around the Cape and Islands; and an estimated \$5.6 million for lease payments to be paid to the federal government over the 20-year expected life of the project — 27 percent of the total to be collected.

The Massachusetts Sierra Club gave its preliminary support to the project last year pending the resolution of certain conditions, one of which was appropriate compensation to the state and federal governments for the use of public waters. Others were the completion of risk analyses to birds and marine life with a finding of no significant threat; and the adoption of enforceable monitoring protocols overseen by a third party. ❖

*Erik Gehring is co-chair of the chapter’s Conservation Committee and is a member of the Executive Committee. You can view his writing and photography online at [www.erikgehring.com](http://www.erikgehring.com)*



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# A Solution to Global Warming: A Revenue Neutral Carbon Tax

by Philip Saunders, Jr



A reader of the *Sierran* does not need to be convinced that global warming is real. We know that global warming is causing the sea to rise, and if continued, parts of Massachusetts will be flooded. We also know that global warming is caused largely by increased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from burning fossil fuel.

We can reduce these CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in our state. One way is to increase the price of fossil fuels by instituting a carbon tax. We only have to look at the increase in average automobile fuel efficiency following the rise in oil prices in the 1970s to realize how effective changes in prices can be in modifying the way society behaves. Due to this oil price hike, people bought smaller

cars causing the average fuel efficiency of U.S. passenger cars to double in 10 years, using the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) measure.

To avoid hurting the Massachusetts economy or people's disposable income, the carbon tax needs to be revenue neutral. The money taken out of the economy can be put back via reductions of other state taxes, such as the sales tax, income tax, or excise tax. Also, in order not to penalize the poor, who pay few taxes of any kind but still need heat, some income transfers would be needed. All of this is immanently doable.

A revenue-neutral carbon tax would have three major benefits for the commonwealth.

First, it would reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, helping to combat global warming.

Second, it would give a boost to renewable energy technologies. Nothing helps a new technology more than making its existing competitor, in this case fossil fuel, less attractive.

Third, a carbon tax would help alleviate problems of sprawl, watershed deterioration, and respiratory diseases caused by air pollution. These problems are all made worse because relatively inexpensive carbon fuel encourages us to use the car rather than public transport, to drive further, commute longer, and to live in single family dwellings further out and farther apart.

A bill has been filed in the legislature by Senator Creedon to create a study committee to evaluate revenue neutral carbon tax options (Resolve to Establish a Study Commission on Tax Policy and Carbon Emissions Reduction, S. 249). The bill has been endorsed by the Massachusetts Chapter of the Sierra Club. It deserves our support and Senator Creedon deserves our thanks. ❖

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# Parks Protection Package

by Philip Saunders, Jr.

The Parks Protection Package (PPP) is designed to protect Massachusetts' thousands of wonderful parks, parkways, forests, and reservations.

## The Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA) (S. 542)

One might consider it a no-brainer that parks, playgrounds, conservation land, and other lands acquired for natural resource purposes, and therefore protected under Article 97 of the state constitution, should remain as such. The reality is different. The legislature routinely passes bills which convert such lands to other uses such as public facilities, schools, and private development. The bills pass with little scrutiny, less discussion, and no opposition.

The PLPA (a.k.a. the Article 97 bill and the No-Net-Loss bill) would establish a framework to guide legislators' decisions on whether to approve bills that would dispose or change the use of state or municipally owned Article 97 lands. The PLPA would require that public lands acquired for natural resource purposes not be converted to other uses or disposed of unless it can be demonstrated there is no feasible alternative. Land of equivalent value would also have to be protected.

The PLPA's sponsor is Senator Pamela Resor. Co-sponsors are listed on the chapter's website. The bill will be the subject of a hearing at the State House on Monday, July 30 at 1:00 PM.

If your senator or representative is on the list, pick up the phone and thank him or her for co-sponsoring. If your legislator's name is not on the list, pick up the phone and ask him or her to support the bill. In either case, ask the legislator if he or she will testify at the July 30 hearing in favor of the bill. If you have not received a response by the first week in July, follow up with him or her and request an answer.

For a legislator, testifying for the bill is a simple process. As a courtesy, legislators are recognized out of order, so the legislator walks into the room and says as little or as much as he or she wants in support of the bill, and leaves. Sometimes the legislator is not

there long enough to sit down. It may not seem like much, but it is important in demonstrating depth of support, and encouraging the leadership to bring the bill up for a vote. Keep in mind that you too can attend the hearing to show support.

For more information on the bill and the Parks Protection Package, including status updates, go to [www.sierraclubmass.org/issues/plpa.html](http://www.sierraclubmass.org/issues/plpa.html)

For your legislator's name and number, go to [www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php](http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php)

## Success on parkways guidelines

The Parkway Protection Bill, which was part of the last legislative session's Parks Protection Package bill, became indirectly successful when the Department of Conservation and Recreation completed the Historic Parkways Preservation Treatment Guidelines. The filing of the bill and the advocacy of a number of organizations, including the Friends of the Middlesex Fells, the Environmental League, and your Sierra Club, in partnership with the active support of legislators, provided the impetus for the department to complete the needed guidelines.

## The Public Input Bill (S. 739)

Currently, there is no requirement that Massachusetts state agencies and authorities provide advance notice or hold public hearings, before felling trees, clearing land, building structures,

or making other alterations to public lands. Abutters, walkers, joggers, and other users of parks and forests frequently find out about changes only when they see spray paint on trees or the backhoes rolling in.

The Public Input Bill (S. 739) would require public notice and input before significant physical alterations to state parks and other commonwealth natural resource lands take place.

## The Old Growth Forest Bill (H. 797)

This bill would require the Secretary of Environmental Affairs to inventory forests on state lands, identify old growth forest reserves thereon, and develop plans for the management and protection of the reserves. Old growth hemlocks were described in the Spring *Sierra* ("Old Growth Forest in Massachusetts: The Threat to Hemlocks").

Most, if not all, of the old growth stands have been included in the commonwealth's Forest Reserves program. In a perfect world, the Forest Reserves would provide the necessary planning and management for the old growth, in which case this bill would not be needed. The program is new; we shall wait and see.

Volunteer to work on passage of the PPP. Email [legislate@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:legislate@sierraclubmass.org) ❖

*Phil Saunders is a Sierra Club volunteer, working with the Legislative Action Committee to get the PPP bills enacted.*

[www.sierraclubmass.org/issues/plpa.html](http://www.sierraclubmass.org/issues/plpa.html)  
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Please send your donation today! To contribute by check or credit card, please visit [www.sierraclubmass.org](http://www.sierraclubmass.org)

# Essex County Group Protects Threatened Species Habitat



Photo by Mark Gregurovic

by Richard Peters

Blanding's Turtle

The Essex Group is helping preserve habitat for the rare Blandings Turtle in the Crane Pond Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The Crane Pond WMA consists of 2,000 acres, including a wetland area that feeds the Parker River, is home to several rare and endangered plant and animal species, and provides drinking water for local residents and adjacent municipalities.

Although the Crane Pond WMA is owned by the state, it is crossed by several town roads. One unpaved section of road is an old log road that was built approximately 300 years ago to allow pedestrians and horse carriages to cross the swamp between two adjoining towns. Today, even though alternative routes exist, commuters and truckers often use this road to save a couple of minutes travel time. Frustrated by the fact that the road would flood seasonally and had uneven grading, these drivers had been pressuring the town to pave this section of the road. After several years of hesitation, town officials caved in and approved the paving.

Several local residents grew concerned that this paving would lead to speeding traffic, road kills of rare species, and leaching of pollutants into the wetland. They appealed the decision to the state Wetlands Program and turned to the Sierra Club for support. We adopted a multi-pronged strategy of public education, consensus building, and administrative pressures. To educate the public about this issue, we organized a walk of the area, set up a

phone hotline and an email address, and wrote an opinion piece in the main local newspaper. We also joined the residents in their appeal to the state and teamed up with other local conservation and sportsmen clubs. In addition, we worked with the town selectmen to explain our position. While some opponents of the project wanted the road permanently closed, we took a more pragmatic position of keeping the road open, but asked for it to be unpaved and asked for restrictions to be placed on speed and road salt use. We also requested that the road be closed during certain seasons.

In addition, as it became apparent that the area was populated by Blanding's turtles, a rare and threatened turtle species in Massachusetts, we reached out to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. We asked that the Priority Habitats Map for state-protected rare species include the swamp and the road that traverses it. The town eventually agreed not to

proceed with the paving of the road and has installed "Slow, Wildlife Crossing" traffic signs after our urging. The concerned residents and members of our group are continuing to monitor the situation to ensure that the recommendations from the State Division of Fisheries and Wildlife for no road salt application and for closing the road during the breeding season of Blanding's turtles are implemented.

All of us involved feel proud of this result as we firmly believe that the resolution that was obtained will help ensure that this area is well protected and preserved now and hopefully for many future generations. This victory has also raised the visibility of our group in the region as an environmental group that achieves results by taking a systematic, practical approach to complex issues. ❖

*Richard Peters is the Conservation Chair for the Essex County Group.*

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# How to Lobby Your State Legislator

by Natalie Moore

Modern fairytales, from Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* to occasional feel-good stories at the end of the nightly news, teach us that with passion, commitment, and a willingness to engage the system, we too can make a difference. The tale of how a group of second-graders from Franklin successfully lobbied the legislature — with some help, of course — to pass a law making the ladybug the state insect of Massachusetts is a classic example.

These stories underscore an important point. According to Phil Sego, Chair of the Chapter Political Committee, the ladybug story “teaches the kids that the public process is not some gold domed building off in the distance but that this process is something that is tangible, it can be changed by ordinary citizens, and that being involved in the political process is fun.” On the other hand, he continues, “What it unfortunately teaches is that it's easy and it is so far from easy.... People think that a bill comes bubbling up and that a few weeks later a legislator has it typed up and brings it to the floor of the House of Representatives or the Senate and somehow everybody raises their hand in favor after listening to the data and the impassioned pleas by both sides — I don't even think that exists on television. It's definitely a fairytale.”

Successful lobbying can be undertaken by individuals or small groups, but it often helps to work collaboratively with others or within a larger organization that can, as Sego points out, “amplify your voice.” Spreading the workload and time commitment and sharing resources and expertise is invaluable.

The first step is to propose a piece of legislation — bearing in mind the filing deadline is in early January of every other year (the first annual session of the legislature). There are two methods of proposing legislation in Massachusetts. One is via the right of

free petition, which enables any citizen of the state to file a bill simply by bringing it to his or her legislator; that legislator is obligated to file it on behalf of the citizen. The second method is to have a bill sponsored by a legislator.

At this stage it is important to establish whether the idea behind the bill is new or whether there are other bills dealing with the same issue in the current session. The expertise of advocacy organizations like the Sierra Club can help enormously in this area. A bill is unlikely to be championed by a legislator if there are already similar bills floating around. Also, a legislator may not, according to Sego, “put a bill into play unless somebody is willing to do the work, to show up at the hearings, speak with the other legislators on the committee — and that's what the Sierra Club does.”


Supplying written testimony to be read by legislators at hearings is another way an advocate can further a bill. If the subject is relatively simple, the testimony could be as short as a few pages. For more complex subjects, the time commitment and research involved increase. A good rule of thumb for written testimony is that it should be the quality of a college-level paper, complete with citations and footnotes. This testimony enables legislators to quickly get a handle on the key issues related to a bill and enables advocacy groups to get their point across succinctly. As Sego points out, “They can refer to the support of the issue by the Massachusetts Sierra Club. They can have that document in their hand which looks good, reads well and is a very good summary of the Sierra Club's position.” This is one of the most valuable contributions an individual can make, along with signing up to speak at a hearing on behalf of a particular bill.

Then, of course, individuals can establish relationships with their legislators. As State Senator Pamela Resor, chair of the Environment, Natural

Resources and Agriculture Committee, suggests, “It's good to establish the relationship before a bill comes up and to take advantage of any opportunity to meet your senator or representative and that can include social occasions — go up and introduce yourself, get to know [them] and express what areas of interest you have so that they have a sense that you are involved in the environment.”

Even a small act such as writing a letter, making a phone call, or emailing one's legislator can be a vital way to make a contribution. It is important not to make assumptions about how a certain legislator is going to vote. Affirm the position of your legislator, even if you feel that they are already going to vote for a bill that you support. These small contributions really do make a difference. “Do all of these letters have an influence on my thinking?” asks State Senator Resor, “Yes. Absolutely.” ❖

*Natalie Moore is a free-lance writer and a volunteer with the Sierra Club.*



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# From “Trashed” to “Promise”: *Enjoying and Protecting Our Urban Rivers*

By Cindy Delpapa

You know we’ve come a long way when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can host a conference in New England called *The Promise and the Challenge of Urban Rivers* instead of *Friends of Trashed Rivers* (the title of a similar conference a decade ago).

While many urban rivers still bear the marks of past misuse, the federal Clean Water Act has done much to improve their look and smell in a relatively short time. This often amazing improvement has led many cities to incorporate river revitalization into their master plans for the city. Our neighbors in Rhode Island liberated the Woonasquatucket and Providence Rivers from buried pipes to create an impressive symbol of Providence’s resurgence. Throughout the summer tens of thousands of people attend *Water Fire*, a city-wide festival anchored by the river and lit by bonfires in special pyres floating on the river. While the act of “daylighting” (uncovering a buried, piped river or stream) a river is a long process, it is a rewarding one because a buried stream is a forgotten one.

River restoration is another long-term initiative for a city. The dams built by our early industries to harness water power prevent natural flow and migration. Some cities are looking at dam removal either to reduce the risk of flooding associated with a dam failure or to improve water quality and create a continuous path for boats and fish. A surprising number of urban rivers are sandwiched between high flood walls or have been straightened or otherwise physically altered. Even these challenges to restoration are being assessed for possible alternatives to improve conditions, access, and aesthetics.

There are many less ambitious possibilities for restoring or at least embracing an urban waterway. A simple start is to raise awareness that there is a river in your community.



A stream emerges at Sheldon Street, Fitchburg

Photo by Cindy Delpapa

Signs with the river’s name at bridges or improving views of the river are good ideas. Encouraging access to and activities on or near the river is another short term project. Schools are often big proponents of increased access so an outdoor classroom can be established to teach students about aquatic ecosystems.

Many communities are working to develop pathways and pocket parks along their rivers and are even working to adopt river overlays which will allow for additional protection and access to the riverfront as buildings

and lots get redeveloped. These riverfront paths can provide alternative transportation routes to allow people to get around the city or to just enjoy a stroll next to rushing water.

Have you seen storm drains stenciled with messages asking people not to dump because the pipe drains to the nearby river? Preventing pollutants from entering our rivers is a huge challenge because the pavement, buildings, and roadways provide plenty of surface area for pollutants to accumulate on. The pollutants can be drips of oil and anti-freeze from vehicles, litter, sand and salt, trash, pet feces, and so much more. The stormwater running off these surfaces washes all of this contamination into the drains that dump into the nearest waterway. Encouraging efforts to reduce both pollutants and the amount of runoff through low-impact development, good housekeeping, and treatment, can reap huge rewards. Even a small, individual parcel can implement these sorts of best management practices and be a positive example. It is

especially important because if the general public perceives a river as polluted it will always be an uphill climb to get people to value that local river.

The EPA Region 1 will soon be posting a list of resources specifically on urban rivers. If you are interested in getting involved in revitalizing your local river check the site <http://epa.gov/ne/urbanrivers> ❖

*Cindy Delpapa is a Stream Ecologist with the Massachusetts Riverways Program and a former chair of the Massachusetts Chapter.*

## BOOK REVIEW:

# Water Follies: Groundwater Pumping and the Fate of America's Fresh Waters

by Robert Glennon

Island Press, 2002

review by Ellen Frye

As Robert Glennon himself said: "Quite remarkably, no books or magazine articles have focused on the impact of groundwater pumping on the environment. Yet groundwater pumping has caused rivers, springs, lakes, and wetlands to dry up, the ground beneath us to collapse, and fish, birds, wildlife, trees, and shrubs to die." It is even more remarkable since more than half of the United States population relies on groundwater for their drinking water supply — not to mention other economic uses, such as irrigation.

Hence *Water Follies: Groundwater Pumping and the Fate of America's Fresh Waters*. And oh what follies! As you read (and often laugh) through chapter after chapter of pithy and wry chronicles of true-to-life groundwater pumping recklessness, USA-style, you have to wonder. When you read about the convoluted, Rube Goldberg approaches that are so often used to "fix" unraveled ecosystems and "rewire" water supplies sucked dry, your jaw just drops. You can't help but wonder what others of your own species were thinking. But you also might just wonder if you would have done the same thing if you had been them — and you didn't know better.

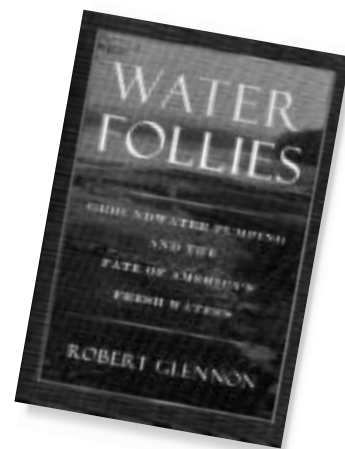
We should really know better about the critical role groundwater plays in the hydrologic cycle. As Glennon says, "Groundwater and surface water are not separate categories of water any more than liquid water and ice are truly separate.... ground- and surface water form a continuum."

Those of us in the water-rich corner of the US should not be cocky. Even in New England, the cavalier pump-



Photo courtesy of the Ipswich River Watershed Association

Portions of the Ipswich River occasionally go dry due to water demand from nearby communities as well as ground water withdrawal in communities adjacent to the river.



ing of groundwater can have disastrous consequences. Two chapters in Glennon's book describe water follies that have taken place close to home: one in the Massachusetts Ipswich River basin and the other in Down East Maine.

In 1995, 1997, and 1999, the Ipswich River, in an area that receives an average 45 inches of rain per year, dried up. As with so many water-use situations, the problems in the Ipswich River basin have old roots associated with water rights and more than a pinch of politics. In the early 20th century, four cities received permission from the state legislature to divert water from the Ipswich River. These cities are allowed to divert more than 50 million gallons a day from the river during the winter and early spring, when the river is full, to store in reservoirs for use year-round. More recently, however, other towns in the basin have been sinking municipal groundwater wells along the banks of the river — the straws that broke the river's back. The story is complex, but, as is typical of Glennon's narratives, the Ipswich River chapter is comprehensive and fraught with lessons to be learned about groundwater/surface water interaction, water budgets, politics, and, most important, advocates like Kerry Mackin and the Ipswich River Watershed Association.

The Down East story is about a conflict created by the need to pump groundwater to irrigate many thousands of acres of wild low bush blueberry fields at the same time that salmon are moving into the rivers and need adequate flow. It is also a story about how water law, in this case riparian rights, ignore the realities of nature's own hydrologic system, implementing "solutions" that create new problems. According to Glennon, the state of Maine did not have "an accurate picture of how much water is being used by whom and from what source." ❖

*Robert Glennon is the Morris K. Udall Professor of Law and Public Policy at the James E. Rogers College of Law at the University of Arizona. He is passionate about spreading the word about groundwater and has a trough full of suggestions about how we can do things differently so that we have the water we need to live as well as the ecosystems that are needed sustain us and all the other critters, and trees, flowers, and....*

*Ellen Frye is a Sierra Club member who has been working for over 30 years to wake up her fellow man and woman to the needs of the natural world and our responsibility to let it live.*

# The Key to Protecting Our Private Forests

by Kristina A. Ferrare

Seventy eight percent of the forested land in Massachusetts is owned by families, not the state, and not industry. Family-owned forest land provides critical resources to the public, such as wildlife habitat, clean water, timber products, recreation and beauty. Every day these landowners make independent decisions about their land. Taken together, their decisions have an enormous impact on the commonwealth and the benefits their land provides to the public. Massachusetts is losing 40 acres of forest per day to housing or commercial development. There are more than 46,000 family forest owners; many of them only consider their land periodically, when a decision about it must be made. How do we reach these critical landowners when they are making these decisions, and determining the fate of our state's natural resources?

In 1988, David B. Kittredge, State Extension Forester and Professor at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, founded a program that educates selected landowners and community leaders on the issues of conservation and good stewardship and encourages them to share this information with their neighbors and other community leaders. This peer-to-peer approach places people "on the ground" in communities all over the commonwealth, where decisions are being made. Originally called Coverts, now renamed Keystone, this program has trained over 325 people who have direct control of 17,391 acres and are involved with 169,000 acres through work with a land trust, local conservation commission, or sportsmen's clubs.

## Keystone Community Members

In nature, a keystone species is one with a disproportionate affect on its habitat. Likewise, the Keystone program selects those landowners and community members with a disproportionate impact and influence on

their community. They may be significant landowners, members of land trusts, watershed associations, civic organizations (for example fire departments) or municipal boards (for example select boards, conservation commissions, planning boards, or open space committees). "The selection of participants is key," says Kittredge. "Peer-to-peer education of this type has the potential to reach many more landowners than standard outreach due its cumulative effects. We try to select individuals who will not only apply the principles of good forest conservation to their own land or land they're involved with (land trusts for example), but also who will become agents of conservation within their community, spreading this information to others."

## Keystone Program

The program is an intensive three-day seminar on forest ecology and management, wildlife management, land protection, and community outreach. Topics include historical perspectives on land use, forest succession and ecology, wildlife habitat, land management and biodiversity, timber management, harvesting and relevant regulations, land protection tools, principles of successful communication and the development of outreach plans. The seminar raises landowners' and community leaders' awareness of forest conservation issues, and also provides them with the motivation and confidence needed to pass this information to others in their communities. Participants, called Cooperators, return to their communities and actively engage in outreach or educational activities, such as hosting workshops, helping local landowners with decisions about their land, writing articles, producing educational videos, serving on town boards, and becoming active in local conservation organizations.



Photo by Paul Catanzaro

Dave Kittredge discusses concepts of wildlife habitat.

## Networking Keystone Cooperators

In 2004, the program was able to add another leader, Paul Catanzaro, and therefore more networking for Cooperators. In addition, the Keystone web site has recently been updated and now features a tool to help landowners find Keystone cooperators and Keystone cooperators find each other. "All of this will continue to strengthen an already impressive network of motivated people working for the conservation of Massachusetts' forests," Catanzaro says.

## Interested?

For more information on the Massachusetts Keystone Program, visit <http://masskeystone.net> Questions may be directed to Paul Catanzaro at 413-545-4839 or email at [cat@umext.umass.edu](mailto:cat@umext.umass.edu) You can also go to <http://www.masswoods.net> and find the clickable map, where you can enter your town or zip code to find foresters and land trusts who serve in that area. ❖

*Kristina A. Ferrare is a graduate student in the Forestry Program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.*

## From the Director

(continued from page 2)

such debris was discovered in water supplies. Biomass must contribute to forest health, not worsen it, with sustainable harvesting according to silviculture plans that improve the diversity of species and ages of trees in the forest.

Clearly there are many challenges ahead, but one celebration is in order. A developer had proposed taking part of the Boston Harbor Islands National Park to build the nation's largest LNG storage facility. Citing opposition from a broad coalition of environmentalists, fisherman, and parks advocates, the company has formally withdrawn its proposal. The Sierra Club will continue working closely with the legislature to ensure similar proposals do not return, and to advance programs that increase our energy efficiency and our reliance on renewables. ❖

## Call For Nominations

All Massachusetts Sierra Club members are invited to submit their names for nomination to the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) and the executive committee of their groups (Greater Boston, Essex, to Cape Cod and Islands Group, Pioneer Valley, Thoreau, and Blackstone Valley). The ExCom of the chapter and each group serves as its board of directors, establishing priorities, goals, strategies, and policies. To submit your name to the nominating committee, please contact the chapter chair: [chapter-chair@sierraclub-mass.org](mailto:chapter-chair@sierraclub-mass.org); 617-423-5775 for copies of petition forms.

### The dates for the 2007 elections are:

Appointment of a nominating and election committee	July 29, 2007
Receipt of names for nominating committee consideration and ballot issue petitions	August 20, 2007
Qualification of a ballot issue	August 24, 2007
Nominating Committee report of names of nominees	August 31, 2007
Certification of ballot issue	September 16, 2007
Receipt of candidate petitions	September 18, 2007
Qualification of petition candidates	October 1, 2007
Production of eligible voter list	November 15, 2007
Printing and mailing of ballots in Massachusetts <i>Sierran</i>	December 1, 2007
Receipt of ballots deadline	January 7, 2008
Count of ballots at Sierra Club chapter office	January 7, 2008

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Wendy McIlre is pursuing a graduate degree in environmental management.



## New Paddling Guide for the Connecticut River

The Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC) has produced a new edition of *The Connecticut River Boating Guide: Source to Sea*. It is published by Globe Pequot Press. The authors paddled the 410 miles of the Connecticut during the summer and fall of 2005. The maps of access points and important landmarks are Global Positioning System (GPS) compatible. The book has a weather-proof cover and binding so that it is a real field book.

The book is currently available in outdoor stores and bookstores; if your store doesn't have it, you can order it from CRWC at [www.criver.org](http://www.criver.org) ❖



## Thoreau Group Awakens After 25-year Nap

by Dan Proctor

It happened rather quickly at a point in the early 1980s: Group Chair Gil Woolley moved to Newton, other executive committee (excom) members also moved out of the Concord area, and a few Sierrans passed away. With its core leaders gone, Thoreau Group subsided into a Rip Van Winklian slumber.

It was very likely that the rising global temperature ended 25 years of torpor. A re-awakened Thoreau Group debuted in March at Concord's first (and probably annual) Global Warming Symposium and Fair. The chapter's Group Development Committee, then chaired by Don Carlson, had brought its effort to bear as well.

Though the Thoreau Group has an acting executive committee, appointed by the chapter excom, and also has an energy committee, the group is not yet fully official. An election, tentatively scheduled for December, of an executive committee by the group's members will be the final step toward complete re-activation.

In the meantime, Sierrans in Concord and surrounding towns are urged to email [thoreau@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:thoreau@sierraclubmass.org) to learn more and to assist in getting their group off to a good start. You may also phone the chapter office: 617-423-5775. The acting excom members are Dan Proctor, chair; Dean Holden, vice-chair; and Jon Harding, secretary/treasurer. Other members are Pauline Oliver and John Terrell. ❖

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# Massachusetts Chapter Outings

"E" indicates educational content

## **WHITNEY THAYER WOODS HIKE, COHASSET, GREATER BOSTON GROUP (E)**

June 10

Time 10:00 AM

This is an easy hike with beautiful views from Turkey Hill, rhododendron tunnels, boulder gardens; it includes a visit to a sustainably operated farm. The leader will share information about the area's natural history, invasive species, and the role of migratory birds. Contact Jay at ecotourjay2002@yahoo.com

## **QUABBIN RESERVATION HIKE, PIONEER VALLEY GROUP**

June 10

Time 10:00 AM

Enjoy the mountain laurel in bloom. Bring your camera. We'll hike on old dirt town roads past stands of hemlock and mountain laurel; we'll enjoy lunch at the shore of the Quabbin Reservoir. Be prepared for mosquitoes. Sorry, no dogs. Contact Elisa at campbell@oit.umass.edu or 413-256-4247

## **WILD EDIBLES WALK WITH RUSS COHEN, GREAT BROOK FARM STATE PARK, CARLISLE, CO-SPONSORED BY GREATER BOSTON GROUP (E)**

June 14

Time: 6:00 PM (rain or shine)

This is a relatively flat three mile walk through a variety of habitats to learn to identify over two dozen species of edible wild plants. Contact Corey at coreymathews@yahoo.com

## **RECYCLING FACILITY TOUR, CHARLESTOWN, GREATER BOSTON GROUP (E)**

June 15

Time: 10:00 – 11:30 AM

Tour the country's largest recycling facility — right here in Charlestown! A Q/A session will follow the tour. Contact Deborah at holdtdj@verizon.net or 617-227-8898

## **WILD EDIBLES WALK ON THE SOLSTICE WITH RUSS COHEN, WESTON – CO-SPONSORED BY GREATER BOSTON GROUP (E)**

June 21

Time: 5:45 PM

Contact Deborah at holdtdj@verizon.net or 617-227-8898

## **WENDELL STATE FOREST HIKE, PIONEER VALLEY GROUP**

July 1

Time: 10:00 AM

Bring your camera. We'll hike on part of the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail and old dirt roads; we'll see where a tornado went through the forest last July and enjoy lunch at a scenic overlook from which we can see Mt. Greylock and parts of southern Vermont. Be prepared for mosquitoes. Sorry, no dogs. Contact Elisa at campbell@oit.umass.edu or 416-256-4247

## **TULLY LAKE HIKE, ROYALSTON, PIONEER VALLEY GROUP (E)**

July 28

Time: 9:30 AM

We will see Doanes Falls as well as scenic Tully Lake; possibly we'll see an eagle pair that nests there. Our co-leader will share information about the fight to stop a development proposed for above Tully Lake. Sorry, no dogs. Contact Elisa at campbell@oit.umass.edu or 413-256-4247

*Please note that an outing may be cancelled for insufficient interest up to three days before the scheduled date. If you are interested in an outing, do not wait until the last minute to contact the leader.*

### **ACTIVIST OUTINGS**

Join an outing to protect a wilderness. Go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national> select Trip Types, then select Activist Trips.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **WIND POWER CONFERENCE**

October 12 – 14, 2007

Camp Jewell, Colebrook, CT

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See our website for latest updates:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/rcc/northeast/index.asp>

Contact: mary.anne.jaffe@sierraclub.org, 518-587-9166

### **BIO-BLITZ AT ROBINSON STATE PARK**

June 21

The Friends of Robinson State Park are sponsoring this 24-hour intensive study of the Park.

For information, email Ray Weber at admin@ndws.com or call 413-883-8005



Quabbin Reservoir from the Enfield Overlook

## GROUP & CHAPTER MEETINGS

All meetings are at the Massachusetts Chapter Sierra Club Office, 100 Boylston St. Boston, unless otherwise noted. Committees are chapter committees unless otherwise noted.

### LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

June 7

Time: 12:00 PM

In our next meeting we'll be discussing which environmental bills to make our priority for this legislative session. Volunteers are needed to help write bill testimony. Contact Leslie Doyle, [doyleleslie@yahoo.com](mailto:doyleleslie@yahoo.com)

### POLITICAL COMMITTEE

June 13

Time: 6:30 PM

In the next election, we'll be endorsing in the state's major mayoral and city council/alderman races — and we need your input. It's crucial that Sierra members put significant effort into electing pro-environment legislators. Drop by our next meeting! For more information, contact Phil Sego at [cpc@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:cpc@sierraclubmass.org)

### ENERGY COMMITTEE

June 20; July 25

Time: 6:00 PM

The Energy Committee addresses environmental, economic, and educational issues relating to energy and its production and consumption. Current issues are wind energy, green power, power plants, and utility restructuring. All interested members are most welcome! Please contact R. Philip Dowds, Energy Committee Chair, at [rpdowns@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:rpdowns@sierraclubmass.org) for more information.

### TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE AND NORTH/SOUTH RAIL LINK SUB-COMMITTEE

June 21

Time: 7 – 9 PM

Come to our meeting to learn more about what we're doing, and how to become involved in the fight for environmental justice in public transportation planning in Boston.

Contact John Kyper at [jkyper@gis.net](mailto:jkyper@gis.net) or 617-445-8662

### GREATER BOSTON GROUP EXCOM

Meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month.

Contact us at [gbg2007@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:gbg2007@sierraclubmass.org)

### MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

June 24

All members welcome and encouraged to attend. Please call the chapter office for more information.

### ESSEX COUNTY GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

June 11 and August 16

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Groundwork Lawrence, 60 Island Street 2nd Floor, Lawrence, MA 01840

The Essex County Group has two sub-committees: Recycling and Local Food. Please contact Heidi Roberts, [heidiroberts@comcast.net](mailto:heidiroberts@comcast.net) or 978-317-1973

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