

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Local Watershed Group's Report Claims Stormwater Pollution is Causing Water Quality Problems in
Canton, MA**

Volunteers with the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA), a local environmental non-profit, have been monitoring water quality in Canton for more than 20 years. In their most recently published report, the watershed association claims that stormwater pollution is driving the nutrient and bacteria problems observed in the town's waterbodies. Chris Hirsch, the Association's environmental scientist stated, "Our 2018 results show that, across the board, bacteria and phosphorus levels in Canton's waterways were much higher, reaching harmful levels, when it had recently rained. At one site in Canton, E.coli levels were almost 25 times higher during wet weather. At another site, phosphorus levels were 4 times higher following rain. This is a big deal because E.coli can make streams unsafe for recreation, and excess phosphorus can wreak havoc on aquatic habitats and the wildlife that depend on them"

Stormwater pollution occurs when rain or snowmelt washes pollutants off of streets, yards, construction sites, etc. into our local streams and ponds. "It's a common misconception that the storm drains you see on your street lead to a treatment plant of some kind. In reality, the vast majority of those drains are connected to pipes that transport the rainwater directly to the nearest waterbody, completely untreated," Hirsch continued. This misconception, was made apparent by last year's "poop gate" incident, when the Canton Department of Public Works discovered a quarter mile long blockage of bagged dog waste that someone had been dumping into the storm drain system.

The Town of Canton has been working with the Association and neighboring communities through the Neponset Stormwater Partnership to comply with new requirements from EPA to reduce polluted stormwater runoff. Under the new requirements, which apply throughout eastern Massachusetts, the Town must implement numerous pollution reduction measures, such as more frequent street sweeping, new rules for land developers, and checking for and eliminating sewer and septic leaks. Public education about stormwater pollution is another major requirement. Mike Trotta, the Canton DPW director is charged with overseeing compliance efforts, and said "The EPA's permit requirements are a significant step up from the last permit, but we are currently on schedule and our greater stormwater efforts will greatly benefit the residents of Canton and the environment."

For the full report on the health of Canton's waterways, and for more information about how you can help reduce the amount of polluted runoff coming from your property visit the Neponset Stormwater Partnership website, at www.yourcleanwater.org.

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