

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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For further information contact:

Chris Hirsch, Environmental Scientist  
Neponset River Watershed Association  
Canton, MA 02021  
781-575-0354 ext. 302  
hirsch@neponset.org

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

Volunteers with the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA), a local environmental non-profit, have been monitoring water quality in Milton's rivers and streams for more than 20 years. In their most recently published report, the watershed association claims that stormwater pollution is driving much of 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 Milton's waterways were much higher, reaching harmful levels, when it had recently rained. At one site in Milton, *E.coli* levels were over 15 times higher during wet weather. Town wide, phosphorus concentrations were about 70% higher when it rained. This is a big deal because *E.coli* can make waterways 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.

The Town of Milton 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. Hillary Waite, the Milton Environmental Coordinator is charged with overseeing compliance efforts, and said "Milton is a leader in prioritizing water quality. Through our stormwater utility, we have been able to fund important projects, including the construction of treatment structures at the police station and our illicit discharge detection and elimination programs. Every step we take helps improve the health of our local streams and the Neponset River."

For the full report on the health of Milton'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](http://www.yourcleanwater.org).

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