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

Volunteers from Dedham, with the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA), a local environmental non-profit, have been monitoring the water quality of Mother Brook at Washington St in Dedham, for more than 20 years. In their most recently published report, the watershed association claims that stormwater pollution is driving much of the bacteria problems observed in Mother Brook. Chris Hirsch, the Association's environmental scientist stated, "2018 was a really bad year for Mother Brook at our sampling site. Bacteria levels were nearly 10 times higher than they typically are. During rain storms, *E.coli* levels sky rocketed to over 30 times their normal levels. This is a big deal because *E.coli* can make waterways unsafe for recreation."

Their report claims that, "discharges from the transfer station, a nearby goose colony, and stagnated flow during downstream dam maintenance may have caused a perfect storm of *E.coli* contamination." The Dedham transfer station has since been shut down, as of June 2019. The town cited, "serious structural and environmental safety issues" in a report posted on their website. "So far this summer we've seen *E.coli* levels that have been safe enough for swimming," added Hirsch.

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 Dedham 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. Joe Flanagan, the Dedham DPW Director is charged with overseeing compliance efforts, and said "[INSERT QUOTE ABOUT THE TOWN'S EFFORTS AND BENEFITS TO DEDHAM'S CITIZENS AND THE ENVIRONMENT]." For the full report on the health of Dedham'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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