

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

6/17/2020

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Stormwater Pollution Continues to be Problematic for Canton Streams

The Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA), a local environmental non-profit, recently published their annual environmental report on the health of Canton's streams and rivers. The report claims that while *E.coli* levels were generally lower in 2019, stormwater pollution is still a source of nutrient and bacteria problems in the town's waterbodies.

Chris Hirsch, the Association's Environmental Scientist explained, "We tested several of the streams and the Neponset River in Canton in 2019 and found that bacteria and phosphorus levels were highest after recent rainfalls. At one site in Canton, *E.coli* levels were almost 5 times higher. That's a big deal because *E.coli* can make streams unsafe for recreation."

Hirsch added, "These issues do not directly affect the Town of Canton's drinking water supply which depends primarily on local groundwater wells and meets strict treatment and testing requirements. Our testing investigates risks to people who might be wading or boating in local waterways."

Stormwater pollution occurs when rain or snowmelt washes pollutants off streets, yards, construction sites, etc. into local streams and ponds. "Many people think that the storm drains on your street lead to a treatment plant of some kind. Actually, almost all of those drains connect to pipes that transport the rainwater directly to the nearest waterbody, completely untreated," Hirsch continued. "We've been working with the town to break that direct connection between the pavement and our streams by building green infrastructure like rain gardens."

Recently, the Town of Canton and NepRWA teamed up to build rain gardens near the Dean S. Luce School and in the Devoll Field parking lot. The rain gardens help protect Beaver Meadow Brook and Pequit Brook from harmful stormwater pollution by filtering the stormwater before it reaches the waterbodies.

The Town of Canton works with the Association and neighboring communities through the Neponset Stormwater Partnership, a cooperative group that works to comply with new requirements from EPA to reduce polluted stormwater runoff. Under new requirements for 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.

Mike Trotta, Canton DPW Director emphasized that, "Canton is committed to good stewardship of its water resources. We are investing in stormwater management and making progress through partnership with NepRWA. The Town was recently awarded over \$300,000 in Municipal Vulnerability grant funds to develop a Town-wide stormwater model to prioritize areas for nature based solutions that mitigate flooding and improve water quality and promote public education."

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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