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Water Quality in Mother Brook Improved Following Closure of Transfer Station

Volunteers from Dedham have monitored the water quality of Mother Brook at Washington St. in Dedham for more than 20 years, as part of a Citizen Water Monitoring Network that is managed by the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA).

In a recent report, NepRWA noted that water quality in Mother Brook had dramatically improved in 2019 and attributed the result to the closure of the Dedham Transfer Station in June of 2019. Chris Hirsch, NepRWA's Environmental Scientist was very excited about the 2019 results. "Last year was the first year since 2013 that Mother Brook was clean enough to swim in."

However, he also warned, "While the average bacteria levels were safe for swimming, there were still samples that were collected after rainstorms that contained *E.coli* amounts that were high enough to make people sick. As a rule, everyone should stay out of most natural water bodies for at least 24-48 hours after it rains." The Association's report suggests that *E.coli* concentrations were higher after rain because of stormwater pollution.

Stormwater pollution occurs when rain or snowmelt washes pollutants off 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. Most of those drains actually 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.

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

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