



City of Cambridge

74.

IN CITY COUNCIL

April 26, 1999

COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR BORN
MAYOR DUEHAY
VICE MAYOR GALLUCCIO
COUNCILLOR REEVES
COUNCILLOR RUSSELL
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

WHEREAS: The Charles River has been given a rating of a B-Minus by the EPA as outlined in the attachment; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the City Council go on record extending its appreciation and thanks to all parties who are participating in cleaning up the Charles River to create a swimmable, fishable Charles by the year 2000; and be it further

RESOLVED: That particular thanks be extended to the property owners along the river who have formulated a new partnership to clean up the river: Genzyme, Polaroid, MIT, Harvard University; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Council go on record extending appreciation to the Department of Public Works for their efforts; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Genzyme, Polaroid, MIT, Harvard University and the Department of Public Works on behalf of the entire City Council.

In City Council April 26, 1999.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

74

Connecticut Maine Massachusetts New Hampshire Rhode Island Vermont



Environmental News

Contact: Amy Miller, EPA Press Office (617-918-1042)

For Immediate Release: April 12, 1999

Release # 99-4-14

EPA Gives Charles River a B-Minus and Announces New Coalition of Private Institutions

BOSTON - John P. DeVillars, New England Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, announced today that the Charles River is significantly cleaner, and gave the river a grade of "B-," up from a "C" a year ago. DeVillars said the river was clean enough for boating 83 percent of the time, up from 70 percent last year and met swimming standards 51 percent of the time, compared to 34 percent last year.

DeVillars also announced that a dozen private institutions along the river have joined forces to create the "Clean Charles 2005 Coalition," a partnership that will help further EPA-New England's effort to restore the river so it is fishable and swimmable by Earth Day 2005. The partnership includes five universities, six companies and an environmental group: MIT, Harvard, Northeastern University, Brandeis University, Boston University, Polaroid, Triumverate Environmental Services, Genzyme, Stop & Shop, Mass General Hospital, Ionics Inc., and the Charles River Watershed Association.

"The EPA is thrilled to have so many world-class private sector institutions working with us to make the Charles a healthier, cleaner river," said DeVillars, at a news conference in Watertown where he was joined by half-dozen other speakers. "These private institutions will bring new perspective, new talent, new resources and new strength to this challenging endeavor – a major addition to the impressive group of state, federal and local partners that has already been assembled to make this river fully swimmable and fishable six years from now."

Members of the newly formed coalition announced that they will work together and as individual landholders to work towards voluntary stormwater management and river-related education and to focus attention on the need for water-quality research. The group, which is aiming for a membership of 100 in the next 18 months, also plans to mentor smaller institutions along the river.

"Polaroid and the Clean Charles 2005 Coalition will work together to create a fishable/swimmable Charles by the year 2005," said Stephen Greene, corporate environmental manager for Polaroid Corporation. "Through our efforts and outreach we will educate ourselves and the rest of the folks who live, work and play in the watershed area. If each university student takes away an understanding of how they impact the watershed and what they can do to minimize that impact, the coalition will have achieved a great long-term benefit."

MIT, which has had a pivotal role in the creation of the 2005 Coalition, announced that it will provide

EPA with a graduate student to work on Charles River issues as well as a staffed boat to retrieve debris from the river. In addition, MIT, in coordination with EPA, the Charles River Watershed Association and the Watershed Institute, plans to sponsor a national contest in which engineers, landscape designers and other experts will be invited to come up with ingenious, cost-effective solutions for the river's problems.

"We are delighted we have been invited to participate in the coalition and we wholeheartedly endorse the goal that has been set by EPA," said Paul Parravano, co-director of government and community relations at MIT. "It is critical that the goal of a swimmable fishable Charles by the year 2005 be achieved and we are willing to work cooperatively with EPA and other universities and institutions along the river to achieve that goal."

DeVillars issued the annual report card and welcomed the 2005 Coalition into the partnership at the Watertown Dam, where he was joined by state and local officials as well as educators and environmentalists who are working with EPA to improve the condition of the 10-mile Lower Charles River, which runs from Watertown Dam to Boston Harbor.

Among the speakers was Max Kennedy, co-director of the Watershed Institute, a non-profit organization that in the past year created a watershed science and biology curriculum for 500 students in the area. Kennedy introduced half a dozen students from Watertown High School, who demonstrated field work they are doing along the Charles through this EPA-funded curriculum.

The US Geological Survey (USGS) also demonstrated how it collects waters samples and measures the flow of the river as part of the work the agency has been doing since October to help EPA identify and quantify contamination in the Charles. USGS began working with state and federal agencies last year on a major initiative to study sources of contamination to the Charles and improved the public's access to water quality information.

DeVillars said the river's improved grade is the result of tangible water quality improvements in the river over the past 12 months. Samples taken from the river by the non-profit Charles River Watershed Association showed that the Charles in 1998 was clean enough for boating 83 percent of the time, compared to 70 percent of the time the year before, and clean enough for swimming 51 percent of the time, compared to 34 percent of the time the year before. The improvements were most marked during dry-weather conditions, when the water quality was acceptable for boating 98 percent of the time and swimming 85 percent of the time, compared to 87 percent and 56 percent of the time in 1997.

"From its headwaters in Hopkinton to the lower basin in Boston and Cambridge, the accomplishments on the Charles are nothing short of amazing," said Bob Zimmerman, executive director of the Charles River Watershed Association. "There is work to be done, but for the first time we can say it is likely we will restore the health of this river."

The 2005 Coalition will greatly enhance a number of projects already underway along the river as part of EPA's Clean Charles 2005" initiative. Working with state, local and federal agencies, as well as with non-profit groups, the partnership has focused on the following four areas: reducing pollutant discharges; enforcement and compliance assistance; scientific research and education and outreach.

Scientific Research

EPA, MWRA, the State of Massachusetts and USGS are jointly funding a major initiative, which

VISIT EPA's WEB SITE HOME PAGE FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION: <http://www.epa.gov/region01>

will determine the extent to which combined sewer overflows (CSOs), storm water runoff and upstream flows coming over the Watertown Dam are loading the lower river with metals, bacteria and nutrients. Automated monitoring and stream gaging equipment will be placed in the Charles this spring to support this effort.

Data collected by the USGS in this two-year project will be available this summer to the public through a web site, that is linked to the USGS Massachusetts web site (<http://ma.water.usgs.gov>). The \$1 million project is supported in part by a national EPA program called EMPACT (Environmental Monitoring for Public Access and Community Tracking).

“When citizens go to the USGS Web Site, they will find up-to-the-moment data on the state of the Charles,” said DeVillars. “Information from this study will help identify the sources of river contaminants and give us options for its clean-up.”

Reducing pollutant discharges

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority has been a crucial player in EPA’s goal of restoring the river. Improvements in the MWRA sewer system are substantially reducing the amount of sewage being discharged into the river. MWRA, as part of the clean-up of Boston Harbor, has markedly increased the capacity at the Deer Island treatment plant, allowing far less wastewater to get backed up in the system. The authority has also separated sewer and storm drain pipes formerly draining together through combined sewer overflow pipes. CSO pipes hold overflow wastewater from both storm drains and sewage. These pipes discharge untreated wastewater into the river after storms create an overload in the MWRA system.

The MWRA now has 11 combined sewer overflows, which discharge a total of 110 million gallons of treated waste and 50 million gallons of untreated waste into the river each year. (All of the treated waste comes from the Cottage Farm treatment plant in Cambridge, which has reduced its discharges nearly 14-fold in the past decade from 1.5 billion gallons a year to 110 million gallons a year.) Further reductions will occur as MWRA carries out its long-term plan for increased treatment capacity and for separating storm and sewer pipes.

Local municipalities have also done their part. All 10 communities in the lower Charles have evaluated their storm drains for illegal tie-ins from sewer pipes and removed connections, reducing illicit discharges by one million gallons a day over the last several years. In the past year, communities had access to \$28 million in interest-free loans to assist in these projects. The money came from combined state and federal funds in the state’s revolving loan fund.

Two major projects are underway in Newton and Waltham to address indirect discharge into the river. In Newton, 17 miles of sewer line is being sealed to prevent leaks into the Charles River. This \$16.5 million project is being funded with \$6 million from the state revolving loan fund. In Waltham, two miles of leaking pipe are being replaced.

In an unusually progressive undertaking, Watertown’s Department of Public Works has instituted a program in which bikes and a boat will be used to monitor the river. Under “Watertown Public Works – Riverwatch,” DPW staff look for dry weather and illegal discharges along the river. The DPW bike and boat units were at today’s event to underscore the success of their monitoring efforts.

While work to reduce wastewater continues, EPA is also stepping up its efforts to help private industry and local communities reduce non-point pollution, which includes storm runoff from streets,

roofs and gardens. Each of the 10 communities in the lower watershed last summer submitted plans for stormwater management to EPA. By the end of this year, EPA expects to sign agreements with each of the communities detailing how they will put their plans into place.

Spearheading this work with the communities is Thomas Schueler, one of the premier urban stormwater experts in the country. Schueler, who comes from the Center for Watershed Management in Maryland, will hold a stormwater workshop April 16 in Boston to cover topics of urban watershed protection and stormwater management practices and education.

Education and outreach

As part of EPA's educational focus, the agency has funded a basic watershed science and biology curriculum for high school students in eight Boston Harbor Watershed communities. The Watershed Institute, a partner with EPA in reaching out to the public, began offering the curriculum this year to 500 high school students from Boston, Newton, Cambridge, Watertown, Needham, Arlington, Medford, and Revere. Students demonstrated their field work today and explained that they are following improvements in the river through field studies tracking the recovery of animal and plant species.

Enforcement and assistance

The Clean Charles 2005 Initiative also includes a major enforcement/compliance assistance effort focusing on private industry along the river. In March 1998, EPA mailed letters to 200 facilities in the Charles River watershed, warning them that EPA would undertake an enforcement sweep. This led to about 50 inspections several months later, which in turn uncovered only a handful of significant environmental violations. Inspectors believe the pre-inspection notice letters encouraged companies to come into compliance with discharge laws before any citations were necessary.

"It appears our warning letters worked very well in persuading companies along the river to make sure their operations were clean and up to code," said DeVillars. "It is better for the public and the company when compliance is voluntary."

About 1,000 auto facilities also received letters from EPA asking them to follow environmental laws and offering federal assistance. An EPA inspector made 93 site visits to those facilities closest to the river and found few major problems. Many facilities were, however, having problems with storage, labeling and other housekeeping issues.

In the future, EPA sees private institutions as significant collaborators in efforts to bring a cleaner, healthier river to Eastern Massachusetts.

"It is a good day for us all when parties like Harvard and Genzyme, MIT and Polaroid, work with the federal government to improve the natural habitats we all share and enjoy," said DeVillars. "As we head into another year of work to clean the Charles, it is gratifying to know that we are all in this together – citizens, communities, the state and now, the private sector, working as a team."

(1)

Welcome to little

one of the newest residents of Cambridge and
recently adopted daughter of Hilary Fabre^{FABRE}
and Tom

Congratulations to ~~all~~ the whole family,
aunts, uncles, cousins, too grandparents

Ordered: That the City Council go on record

(2)

Dedicating the corner of Cambridge St +

Elm to Robert "Fireball" ^{Fireball} Masters, Jr.

(L)

late worker of the DPW; and be it further
ordered.

Resolved

(3)

That the City Council go on record extending its
appreciation & thanks to

(M)
(15)

Thank ~~you~~ to all parties who are
participating in cleaning up
the Charles River to create a
swimmable, fishable Charles by the year
2000; and be it further.

Resolved

That ^{he intended} ~~particular~~ thanks to the ~~city~~ property owners
along the river ^{who have committed} to clean up the river: Stop & Shop, Polaroid,
MIT, Harvard; ~~and~~ and be it further

a new
partnership

Suitable copy to all

Resolved

That the CC go on record extending their appreciation to
Thanks to our own DPW for their ~~work~~ efforts

Suitable copy to all



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RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Genzyme, Polaroid, MIT, Harvard University and the Department of Public Works on behalf of the entire City Council.

494 R
Consent Order #74

Councillor Davis re: appreciation
and thanks to all parties who are
participating in cleaning up the Charles
River to create a swimmable, fishable Charles
by the year 2000.

In City Council April 26, 1999

ORDER ADOPTED