

## Chapter 6: Shoreline Surveys

**Summary** Plans, goals, and recommendations are only as effective as the commitment to specific actions by individuals within certain timeframes. Otherwise they collect dust on a shelf or only become implemented in reaction to negative extremes. In recognition of the development pressures faced by the cities of Peabody and Salem, SSCW is taking a proactive approach to ensure the future health of the watershed.

### 6.1 Action Plan

North River Stream Team recommendations for action were based on May 2006 Shoreline Surveys. At the same time permission was received from the Salem Conservation Agent to implement a future project in the fall that would involve restoration of riparian buffers in Leslie's Retreat Park. A local Plant Nursery, Corliss Brothers in Ipswich, offered to donate plant materials at the end of the season for fall planting. Existing conditions of the site were analyzed to determine a list of native plants that would be appropriate for this location (see Appendix C). Any plantings will need to be coordinated with Salem's Parks and Recreation Department.



*Riparian Buffer, Leslie's Retreat Park, Salem*

The mission of the North River Stream Teams is to raise awareness in the Peabody and Salem communities, identify and report problems, and take action to protect and restore the North River and its tributaries.

#### 6.1.1 Water Quality

Goal: Restore the River and adjacent land so that it becomes a natural amenity that improves the quality of life for residents of Peabody and Salem.

#### **Reporting/Short Term Action**

Share information about problems with city officials and support actions to solve these problems.

**DPW Reporting:**

1. Abandoned foot bridge between Howley Street and Grove Street in Salem crossing the North River is dangerous.
2. Investigate pipe with hole at Flint Street.

**Conservation Commission:**

1. Clearcut area along Strongwater Brook at Aborn Street, Peabody.
2. Illegal dumping of yard waste in wetlands, particularly along Goldthwaite Brook, Peabody.
3. Flea market building, next to Howley Street, is discharging water into the North River, Peabody.
4. Peeling siding that is falling into the river from the remaining tannery building across from Leslie's Retreat Park, Salem near the Flint Street. Also, this building when in operation omits a sewer-like odor. Are their wastes being properly disposed?
5. Intrusion from adjacent property owners at Furlong Park, Salem.
6. Rail road ties in the North River between Howley Street and Grove Street in Salem.
7. Old oil booms in North River at Howley St. Peabody, Flint St. and North St., Salem
8. Oil drums along the bank- are these in the flood plain and can they be removed?
9. Outfall discharge from MBTA – commuter rail parking lot directly into North River east of North Street.
10. Appears to be a discharge pipe into the middle of an emerging salt marsh near March St. Salem.

**Short Term Action**

1. Work with Witchcraft Heights School and St. Joseph School in Salem on continuing river projects, including monitoring, cleanups and additional surveys. Help them to get an Outdoor Classroom grant to continue work.
2. Get new storm drain stencils so that the schools can stencil next fall.
3. Learn the status of the Wallis Street area in Peabody. Are they classified as brownfield areas? Is there any potential to clean up and create flood storage?
4. Establish a North River Technical Team to advise SSCW on more complicated pollution issues.

**Long Term Action**

1. Work with Peabody in their efforts to cleanup and redevelop brownfields while working on solutions for the downtown flooding issue.
2. Culvert maintenance on Proctor Brook- work with the city to improve culverts as they need repair.
3. Work with both cities to have yearly Hazardous Waste Days in an effort to reduce illegal dumping.

4. Develop a rapid response protocol, team and funding to monitor water quality when emergencies arise.
5. Work for a stormwater ordinance and utility in Peabody and Salem.
6. Support the conservation commissions to protect more of the stream buffers in both cities.
7. Provide commission, boards and city councilors with information about Low Impact Development and stormwater ordinances and utility fees.

### **6.1.2 Education and Outreach**

Goal: Educate and raise awareness about the North River and its tributaries in the Peabody and Salem communities

#### **Short Term Action**

1. Reach out to Peabody residents to be involved with the North River and its tributaries.
2. Resurvey Strongwater Brook with local students and neighbors.
3. Promote the North River and tributaries as important resources through local and regional newspaper articles.
4. Install Kiosks with educational postings and perhaps wildlife sightings, at frequented spots such as the T, golf course and city parks.
5. National Arbor Day - work with the schools to promote more river sensitive, fast growing native trees for distribution, such as willows.
6. Work to educate adults through their children.
7. Extend planted areas along the North River in Leslie's Retreat Park as a demonstration of vegetated buffers of appropriate natural plantings. Have an informational kiosk.

#### **Long Term Action**

1. Construct better functioning wetlands at the Welch School, Strongwater Brook, Peabody, and then use the wetland as an outdoor classroom.
2. Develop a program where businesses and organizations Adopt-a-Brook, particularly in Peabody.
3. Conduct river walks and stream ecology classes for school children and adults.
4. Educate commissions and boards on LID and Smart Growth.

### **6.1.3 Recreation and Access**

Goal: Promote the river's recreational value and provide for better access.

#### **Short Term Action**

1. Discuss potential for recreation with Salem and Peabody. Work with the cities to partner on recreational planning efforts.

2. Bike Path - work with MassHighway and Peabody to improve plans to take a more ecologically sensitive approach to the bike path in areas where the current condition is more natural.
3. Riverwalk – work with Peabody to improve plans to take a more ecologically sensitive approach

### **Long Term Action**

1. Complete a study and plan recreational potential and public access along tidal area of the North River.
  - a. Seek grant funding to develop recreational plan.
  - b. Ensure public input in plan.
  - c. Potential new community park and waterfront area between the MBTA station and Burnham's.
  - d. Examine ways to improve Furlong Park.
2. Work with the state Fishing and Boating Access (Dept. of Fish and Game) on potential access sites.
3. Incorporate history into parks and ecological restoration work. Highlight historical sites and areas with information kiosks
4. Leslie's Retreat is of historical significance that could be developed at the North River waterfront. Kiosks.
5. Bike Path along Proctor Brook- work with Mass Highway and the city to make sure the path reflects multiple uses and is designed to minimally impact the river and wildlife.
6. Furlong Park- Work with city planner to determine what planning has already been done with the master plan and what would be the next steps. Improvement and restoration of the park could include:
  - a. Cleanup trash and dumped items
  - b. Restore and stabilization of bank where eroded to create a more natural transition from the park to the shore
  - c. Possibly install public water access site
7. Work with partners on funding sources including an Urban Self Grant for parks improvement.

### **6.1.4 Stream Restoration and Habitat**

Goal: Improve stream buffers and reduce nonpoint source pollution.

### **Short Term Action**

1. Educate homeowners about better ways to manage lawns, improve buffers in backyards. Particularly noted along Goldthwaite Brook.
2. Educate the community about the importance of leaving natural debris in streams. Promote the idea that "rivers should be naturally messy."
3. Host neighborhood meetings to educate stream abutters around ideas of natural lawn care, rivers, etc. (Bertha might be willing to host along Strongwater Brook)

4. Investigate quality of the wetlands and salt marshes. Who is monitoring the salt marsh along the Bridge Street bypass highway and can we get the report? Speak with the Salem Conservation agent.

#### **Long Term Action**

1. Partner with Peabody and Salem to protect at a minimum a 25 foot buffer along all brooks and rivers.
2. Work with Peabody and Salem to redevelop with LID techniques such as plantings and stormwater retention.
3. Buffer plantings and rain gardens- possible grant to raise funds for community buffer plantings, rain gardens and education effort.
4. Investigate to see if there is a possible salt marsh restoration at North Street?
5. Welch School, Strongwater Brook, and Peabody - restore degraded wetland as part of a partnership with the students.
6. Assist Salem wherever possible in developing a new Open Space and Recreation Plan.

#### **6.1.5 Clean-ups**

Goal: Engage the community in actively cleaning the river.

#### **Short Term Action**

1. Cedar Grove Cemetery, Tapley Brook - discarded pots and flowers are ending up in the river. Work with the cemetery managers to fix the problem.
2. Hold cleanups and work with landowners to focus on hot spots:
  - a. Stop and Shop retention pond is full of trash
  - b. Guilford Rail, Peabody and Salem DPWs between Wallis Street, Peabody and Grove Street, Salem
  - c. Commuter Rail Station