

2007 Year in Review

Salem Sound Coastwatch (SSCW) is a non-profit coastal watershed protection organization on the North Shore and the Salem Sound Regional Coordinator for Mass Bays National Estuary Program. With the mission to protect and improve the environmental resources of Salem Sound and its watershed, SSCW's programs focus on the following challenges:

1. **Increasing efforts to reduce contaminated discharge**
2. **Increasing coastal habitat protection**
3. **Detecting and quantifying marine bio-invasers**
4. **Promoting environmental literacy and watershed awareness**
5. **Helping to empower the region's municipalities to implement effective solutions**

1. **Increasing efforts to reduce contaminated discharges —**

Stormwater runoff is the number one nonpoint source pollution threat to coastal water quality in the Salem Sound region. As part of SSCW's **Clean Beaches & Streams Program**, volunteers took biweekly water samples from 45 stormwater outfall pipes. The samples were evaluated for bacteria and the information was shared with municipal officials and other regional partners to develop solutions and notify the public of potential health risks.



Building on the 2005 SSCW Marine Sanitation Needs Assessment and working under a MA Coastal Zone Management Coastal NPS grant, SSCW convened a working group of the five Salem Sound harbormasters and representatives from the boating community to address marine sanitation issues and to increase boater awareness of pump-out facilities. The group took their mission one step further, and is near completion of an application to make **Salem Sound a No Discharge Area in 2008**.

SSCW formed a coalition with the Ipswich River Watershed Association, the Eight Towns and the Bay Committee, and the Massachusetts Bays Estuary Association to launch a new educational campaign focused on landscaping practices that reduce chemicals and water usage. Nineteen North Shore communities participated in **Greenscapes North Shore**. Program accomplishments included mailing 75,000 resource guides directly to homeowners, providing a series of free workshops and a website filled with information and tips, as well as monthly free email newsletters and discounts on a variety of goods and services including permeable paving stones and drought tolerant plants.

2. **Increasing coastal habitat protection —**



Salem Sound's salt marshes are threatened. Salt marshes provide one of the most valuable and productive ecosystems in the Salem Sound watershed, yet 2/3 of Salem Sound's salt marshes have disappeared since 1965. SSCW worked to restore salt marshes by obtaining **MA Wetlands Restoration Program Priority Status** for a salt marsh in Beverly, by partnering with Salem State College on a project to determine the most effective way to remove *Phragmites*, an invasive reed that destroys wetland habitats; and by training and mobilizing teams of volunteers to monitor the health of pre and post restoration wetlands in Ipswich, Essex, Gloucester and Newbury.

3. Detecting and quantifying marine bio-invasers —

Salem Sound Coastwatch continues to be recognized as a leader in identifying and monitoring marine invasive species. SSCW trains college interns, SCUBA divers and citizen volunteers to identify native and introduced marine species and to monitor docks, tidepools, rocky shorelines and



marine waters. SSCW has been asked to be one of the first American organizations to participate in the international SETL project, which collects data on marine fouling organisms from across the temperate world. SSCW is collaborating with MA CZM to study the growth of *Didemnum*, an invasive sea squirt, in Beverly Harbor as well as working with McGill University and the MIT Sea Grant Center for Coastal Resources on marine invasive research and public outreach.

4. Promoting environmental literacy and watershed awareness —

SSCW's success depends upon public understanding of the threats to Salem Sound and community participation in the solutions. This past year SSCW, with assistance from **MA Riverways Program**, conducted several public seminars and public access TV shows on the flooding of the North River and its tributaries in Peabody. The presentations focused on how rivers, floodplains and watersheds work, how land uses affect flooding, and the role that reducing stormwater runoff plays in flood mitigation.



In addition, SSCW's school-based program, **Stenciling for a Cleaner Sound**, gives children an active way to learn how their watershed becomes polluted as they become part of the solution by stenciling stormdrains with the message "*Dump no waste – Drains to Ocean.*"

5. Helping to empower the region's municipalities to implement effective solutions —

Salem Sound Coastwatch continues to work with communities to bring additional funding to our region through grants for environmental improvements. This past year SSCW engaged a team of Tufts University graduate students to work with the City of Salem and its residents to design a future park on vacant land along the South River. Their work contributed to Salem's successful grant applications to EPA and the MA Urban Self-Help Program, which will help fund the brownfield clean up and the park construction.

Salem Sound Coastwatch is grateful to the following for supporting our programs during 2007:

Beverly Cooperative Bank, Cell Signaling Technology, Dominion Foundation, Essex County Community Foundation, Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program, Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game Riverways Program, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, National Sea Grant, North Shore Garden Club (Mrs. Louisa Conrad Bequest), North Shore Medical Center Foundation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the many individuals who contribute to Salem Sound Coastwatch.