

# Taunton River Currents

Watershed Alliance



## New Executive Director

The organization welcomes its new executive director, Carolyn Lamarre. Carolyn started full time in February and has been busy meeting with Board Members, representatives from the Sheehan Foundation, the Taunton River Campaign, organizing the River Center and welcoming the new Audubon (advocacy person). In addition to overseeing day-to-day operations, Carolyn will focus on developing and executing a long-term plan for organizational development and sustainability.

## Foundation Donates \$400,000 for Conservation Planning and Advocacy

### in the Taunton River Watershed

(TAUNTON, MASS.) - The Taunton River Watershed Campaign will expand its conservation planning and advocacy in 2007 thanks to a generous increase in funding from the Sheehan Family Foundation of Kingston, which has made additional grants to the coalition of local, state and national environmental organizations.

The increase in funding, to a total of nearly \$400,000 this year, will result in new initiatives to respond to rapid growth, environmental threats, and opportunities to protect natural resources in the Taunton River watershed, which covers 43 communities and is home to more than 500,000 people.

Through the second year grants announced this month, the foundation's support will make possible:



## Quarterly Membership Meeting

The first quarterly membership meeting of 2007 was held at the River Center at the Boyden Refuge on Sunday, April 1. Nearly sixty members gathered to enjoy the beautiful spring weather, the natural resources of the Boyden Refuge and to learn about vernal pools, water safety for canoeing and kayaking, and sampling for water quality testing.

Sarah Slack, from the Mass Audubon, conducted an on-site workshop on vernal pools. She explained what vernal pools were, their importance to the breeding cycle of particular amphibious species and how to identify a vernal pool.

Vernal pools can be certified through the Natural Heritage Endangered Species program. Certification helps provide a level of protection to these important wildlife breeding habitats which are quickly disappearing in many developing and over-developed areas. Part of the workshop included a walk to one of the vernal pools located at Boyden. Sara discussed the physical characteristics that define vernal pools and showed how to collect water samples and look for identifying species generally found in vernal pools.



For more information about vernal pools and how to certify them, go to [www.vernalpool.org/vernal\\_1.htm](http://www.vernalpool.org/vernal_1.htm)

Many avid canoers and kayakers enjoy paddling the Taunton River and its main tributaries. But anyone can enjoy a peaceful, scenic trip on the river with some instruction and understanding of water safety. Ray Brierly and his company, Canoe Passage Outfitters ([www.canoepassage.com](http://www.canoepassage.com)), provides instruction, equipments and rentals on canoeing and kayaking. Ray and his associate, Jay Whitkens, went over the ten most important safety points to be familiar with when on the river. They provided an overview and demonstration of the safety equipment every paddler should have with them before heading out on the river, and emphasized the importance of having a (pre-trip plan).

Wrapping up the meeting, Alex Houtsager, gave an overview of

- A full-time Executive Director, Carolyn LaMarre of Brockton, and annual operating funds for the Taunton River Watershed Alliance, based at the River Center at the Gertrude M. Boyden Wildlife Refuge in Taunton
- A full-time Taunton Watershed Advocate at Mass Audubon, Priscilla Chapman of Fall River, also based at the River Center.
- A regional open space planning effort in four communities around the Freetown-Fall River State Forest
- A part-time coordinator at The Trust for Public Land to provide technical assistance to communities considering the Community Preservation Act
- A second year of Grassroots Watershed Mini-grants for local conservation efforts
- Operating funds for the Campaign and the 10 member organizations in the coalition

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to continue to support the outstanding environmental groups and local activists who have demonstrated a commitment to the Taunton River and its interconnected natural resources,” said Margaret Sheehan, Executive Director of the Sheehan Family Foundation. “These groups are getting results, by protecting open space and our rivers, and providing the public with access to our natural resources.”

“Much remains to be done to preserve the ecology and heritage of these globally significant lands and waters, and we intend to continue our efforts into the future. We urge everyone to join in the effort by becoming members of these groups and getting out to enjoy these local treasures,” Sheehan said.



the TRWA’s water sampling program. Alex, who chairs TRWA’s Water Quality Committee, discussed the value of water quality sampling and testing to identify problem areas on the river, so they can be addressed; he then walked everyone through the process of taking a water sample from the river. Water samples are taken early morning on the second Tuesday of every month. Alex stressed the importance of expanding the number of testing sites and asks anyone who is interested to get in touch with the office at the River Center. The number at the office is (508) 828-1101

The next Quarterly Membership Meeting is scheduled for (day, June ) and will be held in conjunction with the Annual Canoe Trip. Please visit the website at [www.savethetaunton.org](http://www.savethetaunton.org) or call the office at (508) 828-1101 for details.

### Natural Heritage Presentation

On March 8, 7:00 p.m. at the Lakeville Public Library, under the sponsorship of TEAMS (The Environmental Advocates for



Massachusetts, Southeast) and TRWA (Taunton River Watershed Alliance), Jon Regosin, Ph.D., Regulatory Review Manager for the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program will explain the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) project review process. MESA regulations were revised in July 2005 to clarify project review filing requirements for projects or activities that are located within a Priority Habitat of Rare Species, to provide

clear review timelines, and to establish an appeal process for agency actions. Dr. Regosin will also discuss the new local Priority and Estimated Habitat for endangered species maps, as revised this past fall. Prior to the presentation there will be Refreshments will be served.

Join us for an opportunity to get a better understanding of the methodology behind these maps, their purpose, and their regulatory significance as well as an opportunity to express any concerns.

TEAMS and TRWA urge members of area planning boards, conservation commissions, boards of selectmen, open space, and any other agencies or committees concerned with development or conservation issues to attend as well as landowners, local developers, and residents concerned with development and/or land conservation.

### Green Fair on Saturday, March 31

TEAMS (The Environmental Advocates for Massachusetts, Southeast) and TRWA (Taunton River Watershed Alliance) invited everyone to join them for a day to learn about environmental information and products geared to help protect their families and our watershed. The Green Fair **was** designed to

The Taunton River Watershed Campaign is a multi-year effort to conserve land, water and community character founded in 2005 by the Sheehan Family Foundation.

help people understand how watersheds work and how the actions of individuals can impact the overall health of our watershed and to inspire responsible, earth friendly decisions about lawn care, landscaping and gardening, waste disposal, water use, well and septic system care. The Fair was held from 10 AM to 3:30 PM at Ted Williams Camp in Lakeville.

Presentations included:

- 10:00-10:40 Maribetts - The Benefits of Community Sponsored Agriculture
- 10:50-12:20 An Inconvenient Truth movie by Al Gore
- 12:25-12:55 Ropes and Saddles - The Why's and How's of Organic Landscaping
- 1:00-1:40 Frank Albani - Growing Organic at the Soule Homestead
- 1:30-3:00 An Inconvenient Truth movie by Al Gore
- 1:50-2:20 Making Compost Better and Faster - with the Aid of Worms
- 2:30 - 3:00 MASS Audubon: Birding & Bird Study Slide show and discussion
- 3:05-3:20 Herring Fisheries report

Earth-friendly services and products, were on exhibit and available for purchase, including:

*Jonathan Green Organic Lawn Care* Products available at *Winberg's*.

*Solar Systems, Inc. of Plymouth* Totally Tubular system demonstration

*Ecowaters Projects of Concord* composting toilets and gray water systems

*Olde Maids, Inc.* environmentally friendly house cleaning and cleaning products Energize Now how to reduce your energy use and carbon foot print

*Mount Vernon Group Architects, Inc.* focuses on green building designs

*Energy Efficient Building Technologies* in energy efficient and green buildings.

*Cape Cod Stoves* Renewable, Sustainable Heating & Energy Systems

*Bridgewater State College Watershed Lab* Watershed Nutrient Study

*Local youth ecology club* hands-on children's activities.

*Lakeville Litter Lifters* an Earth Day pick up announcement.

*Invasive Plant displays* land and aquatic plants

*Well and Septic System Care* available from the Lakeville Board of Health.

*Local Science group* showing us what they have done in the past.

*TEAMS* activities and accomplishments

*TRWA* issues facing the Taunton River Watershed Alliance

*Hannaford Supermarket* provided **Organic** refreshments.