University of Massachusetts Boston Urban Harbors Institute

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency New England

In Cooperation with: The Center for Watershed Protection

The Promise and the Challenge of Urban Rivers

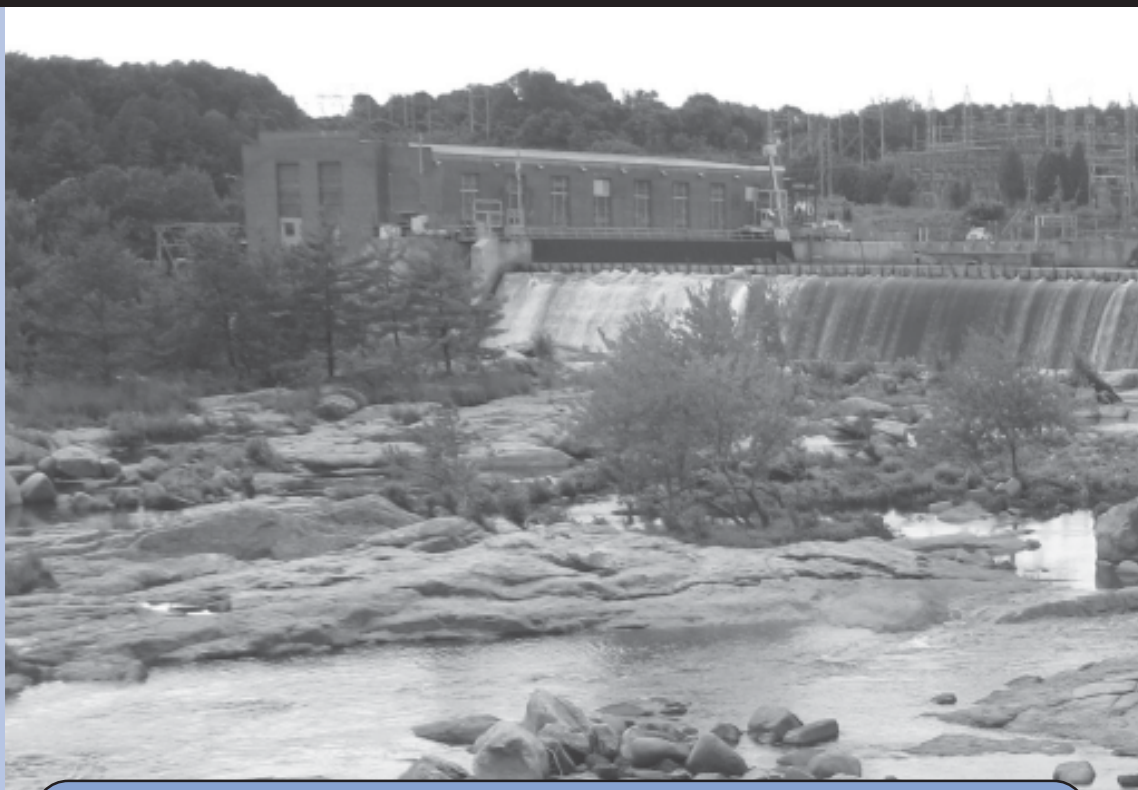
Agenda & Registration

Federal Reserve Bank
600 Atlantic Avenue • Boston, MA

March 29, 2007

www.epa.gov/ne/urbanrivers

The Promise and the Challenge of Urban Rivers



The Audience

The conference agenda is designed to meet the needs of various audiences. Information will be presented with the aim of making it useful to representatives of all levels of government, environmental and public health advocates, watershed associations, neighborhood groups, and urban and regional planners. All are welcome.

Conference Description

This conference is designed to inform and inspire those working on urban rivers by:

- providing information on technical and financial resources available
- providing hands on training
- sharing success stories
- raising awareness of environmental justice issues
- generating dialogue about how to address problems facing urban rivers

There are 22 cities in New England with populations over 50,000 and defined environmental justice areas (low income and minority areas). This conference is designed with these as well as smaller cities in mind. With your participation, the conference will address a number of questions:

- What resources are available to assist with urban river issues?
- What are the most promising techniques used for urban river restoration?
- What can we learn from cities across New England who have had success with their urban rivers?
- What are the biggest challenges faced by urban communities in working on river issues?

Agenda March 29, 2007

8:30	**Registration (Photo ID is Required to Enter)**
9:00	**Welcome & Introductory Remarks**
	Robert W. Varney Regional Administrator, EPA New England
9:15-10:15	**Plenary Session**
	Urban Rivers & Urban Ecology: Hope for the Future Charlie Lord, Urban Ecology Institute, Urban Ecology Collaborative
	Urban River and Environmental Justice Success in Rhode Island Jane Sherman, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council; Bill Struever, Struever Brothers; Mike Cassidy, City of Pawtucket
10:15-10:30	**Break**

Agenda

March 29, 2007

10:30-11:30 Exploring the Promise of Urban Rivers Two Concurrent Sessions

- **Envisioning Restoration: An Introduction to Urban Watershed Restoration Opportunities**
  Rebecca Winer-Skonovd
  Training presented by the Center for Watershed Protection

- **Massachusetts Urban River Visions**
  Kurt Gaertner, MA, EOEA
  Presentation and Discussion: Is this a model for other NE States? How did they do it, what has been accomplished? Lessons Learned.

11:30-12:30 Exploring the Challenges of Urban Rivers Three Concurrent Panel Sessions

- **Complicated and Costly – What are we Learning about Dealing with Contaminated Sediments**
  Moderator: Kathy Baskin, MA EOEA

  - **Human History as Reflected in Chemical Contamination**
    John Durant, Tufts University
  - **Partnerships for Urban Rivers Assessment and Restoration**
    Peter Weiskel, USGS
  - **Contaminated Sediment Study in the Greater Boston Harbor Watersheds (Neponset, Charles, and Mystic)**
    Robert Breault, USGS

- **Public Access and Urban Land Conservation**
  Moderator: Jack Wiggin, Urban Harbors Institute, UMASS Boston

  - **Urban Greenways**
    Jane Calvin, Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust
  - **Chelsea Greenspace**
    Stacey Chacker, NOAH
  - **Greenprinting: A Proactive Conservation Strategy**
    Nancy Kafka, Trust for Public Land

- **Water in the City: Stormwater, Illicit Connections and Urban Low Impact Development (LID)**
  Moderator: Scott Horsley, Horsley & Whitten

  - **Cooperative Efforts to Fund Stormwater in NH and ME**
    Kristie Rabasca, Edwards and Kelcey
  - **Urban LID- Environmentally Sound Techniques for Urban Revitalization and Infill Development**
    Andrea Cooper, MA EOEA
  - **Illicit Connections and Urban Rivers - Stories from the Field**
    Steve Landry, NH DES

12:30-1:30	**Lunch (on your own)**

1:30-2:30	**Exploring the Challenges of Urban Rivers Three Concurrent Sessions**

☐ **Getting Results for Your River**
Moderator: Robert Zimmerman, Charles River Watershed Association

- **Fishable and Swimmable Charles River by 2005: Report Cards and Other Examples of What Works**
  Bill Walsh-Rogalski, EPA New England
- **Monitoring and 308 Letters: Impact on the Mystic River Watershed Bacteria Levels**
  Nancy Hammett, Former Executive Director, Mystic River Watershed Association
- **Spickett River and Green Alleyways**
  Maggie Superchurch, Groundwork Lawrence

☐ **Urban River Restoration: Ecologically Oriented Development Considering Environmental Justice**
Moderator: Chantal Lefebvre, Urban Harbors Institute, UMASS Boston

- **Ultra Urban Low Impact Development (LID) with Wetland Resources and Brook Protection**
  Bethany Eisenberg, VHB
- **Mill River Restoration Project in Stamford, CT**
  Milton Puryear, Director, Mill River Collaborative
- **One River Project**
  Anne Tate, RI School of Design

☐ **How to Do Stormwater Retrofitting and Address Illicit Discharges**
Jennifer Zelinski
Training by Center for Watershed Protection

2:30-4:00	**Resources for Urban Rivers: Going Beyond the Usual**

This panel identifies various ways to garner funds and resources for urban rivers from foundations to the Farm Bill, technical assistance such as mapping and web sources to municipal assistance on land and housing issues. Examples of innovative approaches and case studies will be used to illustrate ways to bring resources to urban rivers.

- Technical Assistance Resources - Chet Arnold, UConn, ESRI representative (invited)
- Financial Resources - Sam Merrill, Environmental Finance Center, Elizabeth Krautscheld, MA Housing and Community Development
- Public/Private Resources - Andy Lipsky, USDA NRCS; Steve Dickens, River Network (invited); Jenny Russell, Merck Family Fund
- Urban River Restoration Website: Compilation of Resources (financial, technical, education, communication, digital)

4:00	**Identify Needs and Best Ideas for Moving Forward**
4:30	**Adjourn**

"Urban rivers are the lifeblood of our cities and have huge potential. The agenda for the conference is tailored for people interested in restoring urban rivers. We hope you will join us on March 29th to discuss the promise and challenge of urban rivers."

—Robert W. Varney

The Promise

Rivers are critical to the history, identity and livelihood of many New England cities. Though rivers have become polluted by industry and urban life, they also hold great promise for the revitalization of degraded urban environments. As water quality improves and land is redeveloped, cities take on a new vitality. As cities manage their stormwater so runoff does not pollute the rivers, and as communities begin to invest in their rivers, new energy is given to planting trees and gardens and creating new riverfront parks. The promise in improving urban rivers in turn becomes the promise of cleaner and stronger urban environments.

The Challenge

The health of New England's urban rivers has been compromised over the last two centuries by industry, growth and increasing population density. Our region's rivers have powered industries, leaving behind a legacy of polluted rivers and contaminated sediments. Marshlands along rivers have been filled to accommodate urban growth, leading to flooding and erosion. The high density of people living in cities has created pollution stemming from sewage and trash. Large swaths of paved surfaces have altered the flow and quality of water running into rivers. Residents have become reluctant to fish or swim in these rivers, and in some cases don't even want to live near or to reinvest in them. Many riverfront cities face the further challenges of a declining tax base, poverty, crime and aging infrastructure, with many urban residents living with pollution and increased health risk. There is a growing urgency to clean the region's urban rivers. While these problems are complex and challenging, they are not insurmountable.

In addition, as rivers are cleaned up, riverfront properties become increasingly more valuable; investors can chose to partner with local watershed and municipal representatives to collaborate on cutting edge river restoration projects or promote a project that limits the opportunities to balance environmental and economic issues. The challenge is in identifying successful and just ways to clean up the region's urban rivers.

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March 29, 2007

Directions:

Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
600 Atlantic Avenue
Boston, MA 02210

Public Transportation
The Federal Reserve is located directly across the street from South Station (Amtrak, Commuter Rail, Red and Silver Subway lines, and the Bus Terminal is housed directly behind South Station).

Pre-recorded Telephone Directions
(617) 973-FIND [3463]

Internet
Mass transit and driving directions, including parking and hotel options are available at:
www.bos.frb.org/about/directions.htm

For general information about this conference call:
Chantal Lefebvre or Pauline Westhaver (617) 278-5570 at Urban Harbors Institute or Trish Garrigan at US EPA (617) 918-1583

Visit **www.epa.gov/ne/urbanrivers** for program and registration updates.

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency New England
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