

THE CANOE RIVER AQUIFER

THE CANOE RIVER

The Canoe River flows approximately 16 miles from its headwaters near Lake Massapoag in Sharon to Winnecunnet Pond in Norton. Its shores are predominantly wooded as it meanders through the Massachusetts towns of Sharon, Foxborough, Mansfield, Easton, and Norton. The river's watershed re-



Participants Canoeing on the Canoe River
Photo: Jenn Carlino

charges the Canoe River Aquifer which supplies water to municipal wells in four of these five communities. It has been designated a state Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and a federal Sole Source Aquifer. Publicly owned areas of the watershed are enjoyed by canoeists, fishermen, hikers, and outdoor enthusiasts. However, much of the vacant land within the riparian corridor is privately owned and is not protected or available for public use. It is crucial to protect and preserve lands within the aquifer to ensure continued water quality for the region.

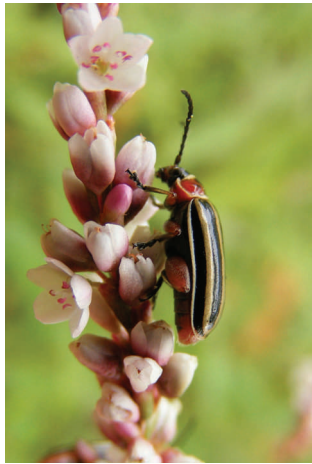
THE CANOE RIVER AQUIFER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The CRAAC was formally created in October 1987 by the adoption of state legislation. Its main purpose is to educate the public about the benefits of protecting the Canoe River Aquifer. This regional committee is comprised

of 15 members, three from each of the five communities through which the river flows. Members are municipal officials, residents, or serve on land trust boards. Among other activities CRAAC advises town officials and residents on development impacts, water quality concerns, conservation practices, protective zoning by-laws, and other issues. It also sponsors educational conferences and meetings. State environmental officials regard CRAAC as a model for a volunteer regional entity.

THE CANOE RIVER GREENBELT PROJECT

One of CRAAC's most challenging and long-term goals has been to create a regional Greenbelt of land open to the public and preserved in its natural state. The intent is to acquire parcels within the riparian corridor through friendly purchase or easement. The wetlands and woods abutting the river are integral components in maintaining water quality and quantity. These environs are prime habitat for numerous species of plants and wildlife, many of which have been designated "endangered" or "species of special concern" by the State of Massachusetts. Preservation of these areas is critical to retaining the overall health of the river ecosystem, which in turn protects this public water supply.

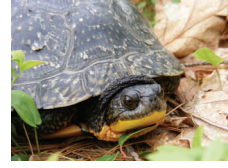


Flea Beetle at Winnecunnet Pond
Photo: Jenn Carlino

GREENBELT TIME-LINE

- 1996 The CRAAC Greenbelt subcommittee was formed.
- 1997 The CRAAC received a \$38,500 grant from the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) for computer mapping of the Greenbelt.

- 1997 As part of the Greenbelt initiative the Foxborough Conservation Commission purchased 11.6 acres of land.



Blandings Turtle Photo: Jenn Carlino

- 1998 The CRAAC's first Greenbelt brochure was completed and distributed.
- 1999 The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Hydrology & Water Resource Group completed digitizing all properties along the Canoe River into GIS.
- 2000 The Town of Norton acquired two parcels totaling 96 acres within the Greenbelt.
- 2001 CRAAC established a partnership with the Trust of Public Land to purchase and protect land along the Greenbelt.
- 2002 The Town of Norton purchased Lincoln Woods adding 70 acres to the Greenbelt.
- 2004 176 acres within the aquifer was transferred to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife with Article 97 protection.
- 2007 The Town of Easton's GIS Specialist updated the 1999 GIS map layers in order to utilize Greenbelt data with current geographic information (see map).

CANOE RIVER AWARENESS DAY

First held in 1987, the purpose of this annual event is to increase public awareness of the Canoe River and promote initiatives to protect it.

The Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee

Canoe River Greenbelt (in green)

"A Cooperative Approach to Regional Water Supply Protection..."

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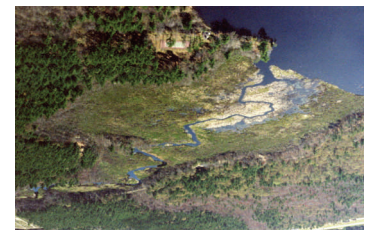
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Photo: Jenn Carlino

The projects and events presented by the CRAAC can only be accomplished with the support of private property owners within the Canoe River Aquifer and other concerned individuals. Objectives of this brochure include providing information that will be the basis for this cooperation and building more interest in and awareness of the aquifer. With support from state and local organizations CRAAC will continue to work in concert with individuals and communities to preserve this vital resource for future generations. Through growing support, interest, and awareness the benefit of a Greenbelt of connected parcels could be realized by those who live within and reach beyond this unique region.

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Confluence of the Canoe River at Winnecunnet Pond

Canoe River Aquifer Awareness

- Wetlands make up 15% of the Aquifer.
- Over 101 rivers, brooks and streams flow into the Aquifer.
- The Aquifer supplies over 66,000 residents with drinking water in the Towns of Easton, Sharon, Mansfield, and Norton.
- Over 600 species, including rare and endangered, live within the aquifer.
- The Aquifer is rich in archeological and historical resources spanning over 7000 years.