



Merrimack River
Watershed Council



Annual Report

2009

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MISSION

The Merrimack River Watershed Council, Inc. (MRWC) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization formed in 1976 by citizens and regional planning commissions to promote citizen involvement in the clean-up of the Merrimack River. Its mission is *to protect the Merrimack River and promote the wise use of its watershed*. MRWC fulfills its mission through water quality monitoring, watershed education and outreach, advocacy and recreation. MRWC is a member-based organization with members throughout the Merrimack River Valley in both Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and elsewhere in New England and other states. MRWC understands it is the only advocate of the Merrimack River in Massachusetts who is independent of commercial or regulatory interests; it is the "Voice of the Merrimack."

Message from the Executive Director

The good news is that media attention has finally been placed on the importance of water for aquatic and human life as can be seen in the New York Times series *Toxic Waters* and the Frontline PBS Special *Poisoned Waters*. The challenging news is that times have been tough for all non-profits - especially environmental non-profits - limiting the full impact we can have on our community. As the national focus is turning to human service, MRWC has aligned its message with the national focus to show that our efforts to protect the Merrimack River not only protect aquatic life, but also the 375,000 people in Massachusetts and New Hampshire who drink the Merrimack River and the thousands more who boat, swim and fish in the Merrimack. As a result, MRWC has been thinking creatively and working hard to counteract the impacts of the times.

In order to grow our membership program and fundraising efforts during this difficult period, we have developed a new corporate incentive called the *Adopt-a-Merrimack-Mile* program. It enables local business to show their true "green" color and community support by "adopting" a mile of the Merrimack River (see listing on back page of this report). Additionally, MRWC has hired a new office manager and updated our membership software through a grant from the Parker Foundation.

In order to maintain and grow the MAPP Program, we have increased the depth of our program, and therefore been able to diversify the potential for funding sources. This year, we have not only conducted baseline monitoring, as in past years, but we have also monitored the Merrimack River for pharmaceuticals, expanded our monitoring program to include pathogen hot spots and nutrients, and began intensive research on the industrial and municipal permits that EPA has granted for discharging into the Merrimack River. Additionally, we have explored potential dam removal projects, environmental education opportunities and new partnerships to enhance our service to the community.

Difficult challenges are off-set by the support of our members and volunteers who, through their time, talents and financial means, have enabled us to serve the Merrimack Valley for the last 30 years. As always, we continue to look to the community for support and are open to suggestions, ideas, and creative ways to succeed. In this way we can look forward to the MRWC continuing to serve the Merrimack Valley, not only this year, but for another 30 years to come.

Christine Tabak

MAPP Program

The Merrimack River is the drinking water supply for over 300,000 people in Massachusetts as well as the summer water supply for more than 75,000 residents of Nashua, New Hampshire. As such, we have been working diligently to determine the ways to accurately measure the health of the river and protect it. Our *Merrimack River Water Quality Monitoring, Analyzing, Protecting and Promoting (MAPP) Program* has been the core of our efforts. The 2009 MAPP Program consists of four projects: (1) the baseline monitoring of the MAPP Project which began in 2007 and assesses the “vital signs” of the Merrimack River; (2) the new *Merrimack River Impairment Quantification (IQ) Project*, which seeks a more detailed profile of the bacteria and nutrient pollutants in the river; (3) a pharmaceutical product screening which is proactively examining the health care chemicals in our river even before water quality standards for these chemicals have been determined; and (4) an advocacy campaign in the form of our new “*Permit Me to Make a Difference*” Project to ensure that point source discharges to the Merrimack meet water quality standards. Financial support for the MAPP Program has been received from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, the Stevens Foundations, the Davis Conservation Foundation, the EnTrust Fund and the Cabot Family Charitable Trust. Additional support of water sample analysis and equipment has been donated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility.

The MAPP Project has completed its 3rd year of baseline monitoring, providing important water quality data that helps us, the states, and EPA determine how clean the Merrimack River is, what areas are dirtiest, and where the pollution is likely coming from. In 2009 MRWC and 38 volunteers monitored on 31 days between May and October, covering not only the 50 miles of river in Massachusetts that we have sampled in previous years but also extending our reach into southern New Hampshire. Preliminary water quality analysis has noted extremely low pH values on four days this season and also indicates that Merrimack tributaries continue to contribute bacteria to the mainstem. Federal, state and local authorities have been notified of these conditions. Hotspot bacteria sampling in 2009 focused on the greater Lawrence area, identifying at least two potential problem sites. A complete water quality report will be available on our website in April 2010.



The new *IQ Project* examines specific pollutants and their potential sources. While the bulk of the nutrient data collection will occur in 2010, preliminary project successes include one set of nutrient and metals samples collected in the greater Lowell area along with a week of continuous monitoring upstream of the Pawtucket Dam which determined that diurnal changes in dissolved oxygen during the period remained supportive of aquatic life in the river.

In addition to our more traditional monitoring, MRWC conducted a screening of pharmaceutical and personal care products in the Merrimack River between the Essex Dam in Lawrence and the Haverhill waste water treatment plant. Results discovered 16 of the 20 common chemicals tested were present in the river, with the greatest number found in the source area for the drinking water of 150,000 Massachusetts residents.

Finally, MRWC took a great step forward in its efforts to track potential pollutant sources in 2009 by beginning the *Merrimack River “Permit Me to Make a Difference” Project*. This project not only includes submitting suggested regulation changes and more protective permit requirements as we did during the past year for the Massachusetts Stormwater Management Regulations and two businesses discharging into our rivers, but also tracking the status of active permits and the potential pollutants being discharged.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As of June 30, 2009 with 2008

ASSETS			
Current Assets		<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Cash & Cash equivalents	\$	25,462	\$ 34,393
Accounts receivable, net	\$	8,125	\$ 12,700
Prepaid expenses	\$	2,037	\$ 4,550
Total Current Assets	\$	35,624	\$ 51,643
Property & Equipment, net	\$	468,265	\$ 470,309
Agency Endowment & Investments	\$	189,150	\$ 226,858
Total assets	\$	693,039	\$ 748,810
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS			
Current Liabilities		<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Accounts Payable	\$	2,978	\$ 4,727
Accrued Liabilities	\$	826	\$ 1,779
Total Current Liabilities	\$	3,804	\$ 6,506
Net Assets		<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Unrestricted	\$	468,286	\$ 465,465
Temporarily restricted	\$	95,066	\$ 150,956
Permanently restricted	\$	125,883	\$ 125,883
Total Net Assets	\$	689,235	\$ 742,304
Total liabilities & net assets	\$	693,039	\$ 748,810

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

		<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Total public support & revenues	\$	114,759	\$ 116,512
Expenses			
Program Services	\$	128,505	\$ 119,625
Management & general	\$	17,238	\$ 13,636
Fundraising	\$	19,375	\$ 10,084
Total expenses	\$	165,118	\$ 143,345
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$	(50,359)	\$ (26,833)
Net assets, Beginning of year	\$	739,594	\$ 769,137
Net assets, End of year	\$	689,235	\$ 742,304

Membership Program

The past year has seen improved administrative operations and efficiency with new computer software to better serve both organizational and constituent needs, records, and services. Increased communications, constituent services, fund raising, public relations, and organization visibility in the community has helped expand the MRWC profile. MRWC also established a social networking program via distributed email announcements, regular updates to its website, Facebook page and Twitter account. Results of such efforts have been felt, as both consistency and reliability in organizational outreach, information and materials, web updates, press releases, and eNewsletter broadcasts have improved dramatically.

In a year of significant national economic downturns, MRWC donors stepped up to show support and reflect their concern in protecting the Merrimack River. Heart-felt gratitude goes out to the all our donors and the Parker Foundation for their generous support this past year. The number of corporate donors increased almost 25%, while their donations increased almost 40%. Individual donors slightly decreased (-3%), while their total donations increased slightly (+2%).

Paddling Program

The 2009 Paddling season was again a successful effort due to the generosity of volunteer trip leaders and sponsors. Appreciation is extended to them for their dedication and support. Over 40 first-time paddlers (5 becoming new members) participated in 36 different paddling trips in a variety of settings, not only on the Merrimack River but throughout the watershed.



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Individual Donors

River Benefactor (\$500 - \$999)

George Jones
Alan & Mariel Sherburne
Barbara & Mark Steinberg
John M. & Ledlie Woolsey

River Steward (\$250 - \$499)

John F. Drake
David & Lynn Eikenberry
John W. Murphy
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Sponsor (\$100 - \$249)

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Benedict & Clarice Andreozzi
Karen & Mark Archambault
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Merrimack Mile Sponsor

(\$1,000 - \$4,999)

Hydrologics
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Merrimack Mile Co-sponsor

(\$500 - \$999)

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(\$100-499)

Susan C. Tucker

Agency Member

(\$100 - \$499)

Andover Garden Club
Charles River Canoe & Kayak
Contoocook River Canoe Company
Cirtronics Corporation
City of Lowell
City of Nashua
Kittery Trading Post
Merrimack River Rowing Association
Mill City Environmental Corporation
Pentucket Bank
Worthen Industries, Inc.

Paddling Program Sponsors

Charles River Canoe & Kayak
Contoocook River Canoe Company
Kittery Trading Post
Plum Island Surfcasters, Inc.
Polartec, LLC

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Individual Donors

Supporter (\$50 - \$99)

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Caren & Blair Roberts
Nolan & Joan ones
Robert Jones & Margaret Beale
Frederick R. Kettnering
Barbara & Rodney L'Italien
Michael & Jeanne Lampros
Thomas & Lyndia Lamson
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