



Our Guiding Principles

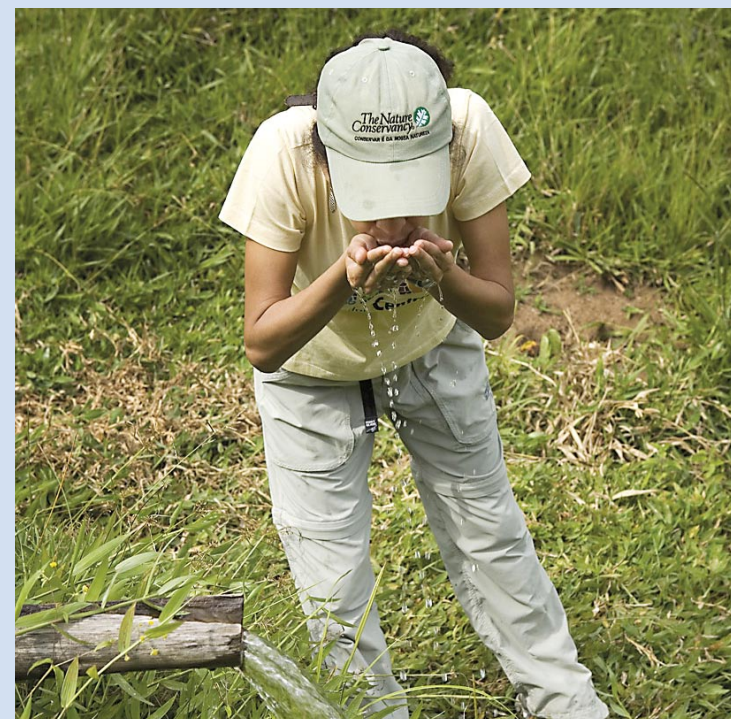
- Healthy rivers, a sustainable water supply and a sustainable economy go hand-in-hand. Rivers will sustain us if we help sustain them.
- *Every* river should be an asset to its community, whether it flows through forest, farmland, suburb or city.
- *Every* resident of the Commonwealth has the right to clean, safe drinking water and outdoor recreation in a healthy environment.
- Decisions about water management should be based on sound science and meet the needs of both people and nature.
- We will work toward these goals in good faith with all who support sustainable water management; we welcome non-traditional partners and allies.

Organizational Signatories

Appalachian Mountain Club
Belmont Citizens Forum
Berkshire Environmental Action Team
Blackstone Headwaters Coalition
Blackstone River Coalition
Blackstone River Watershed Association
Charles River Conservancy
Charles River Watershed Association
Clean Water Action
Coalition for Buzzards Bay
Connecticut River Watershed Council
Conservation Law Foundation
Eel River Watershed Association
Environment Massachusetts
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Essex County Greenbelt Association
Friends of the Blue Hills
Greater Northfield Watershed Association

Green Berkshires, Inc.
Hop Brook Protection Association
Housatonic Valley Association
Ipswich River Watershed Association
Lake Cochituate Watershed Council
Mass Audubon
Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition
Massachusetts League of Environmental Voters
Massachusetts Rivers Alliance
Massachusetts Watershed Coalition
MASSPIRG
Merrimack River Watershed Council
Millers River Watershed Council
Mystic River Watershed Association
Nashua River Watershed Association
Neponset River Watershed Association

North and South Rivers Watershed Association
Organization for the Assabet River
Parker River Clean Water Association
Rushing Rivers Institute
Saugus River Watershed Council
Sharon Garden Club
Sudbury Valley Trustees
Sudbury, Assabet and Concord Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council
Taunton River Watershed Alliance
The Kestrel Trust
The Nature Conservancy
The Trustees of Reservations
Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee (WSCAC)
Westfield River Watershed Association
Westport River Watershed Alliance



Water 2020: A Shared Vision for Massachusetts



The Nature Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™



Massachusetts
Rivers Alliance

PHOTO CREDITS: Front Cover Nature Conservancy interns conducting a dragonfly study ©Amy Deputy, Westfield River ©Jerry and Marcy Monkman, Bog turtle in Berkshire wetlands ©Tony Gola, Bald eagle ©istock.com, Girl kayaking ©istock.com **Page 1** Nature Conservancy interns surveying osprey nests by boat ©Amy Deputy, Girl with trout ©istock.com, Westfield River ©Jerry and Marcy Monkman **Page 2** Connecticut River ©Jerry and Marcy Monkman, Eel River © Venessa Salvucci/TNC, Alewife ©Dan Grenier/TNC, Family on dock ©istock.com, Spring Peeper ©Cheryl Rose, Girl near pond ©Erika Nortemann, Kayaking on the Concord River ©David Griffin **Back Cover** Girl drinking from fountain ©istock.com, Great blue heron ©David Spier, Girl in stream ©Amy Vitale, Drinking from a free-flowing spring © Scott Warren

Healthy Rivers, Healthy Communities



The Future of Water in Massachusetts

Americans value clean water above all other environmental amenities. Public opinion surveys consistently highlight concerns about our water supply: Is it safe to drink? Will we run out of water? We also worry about the health of our rivers and lakes: Can I swim in that river? Can I eat the fish that I catch in this stream? The key to making sure we meet all of these needs is sustainable water management.

All water is connected. In Massachusetts, rivers and streams—working in concert with the aquifers and reservoirs to which they are inextricably connected—provide water that underpins the health of our residents and the vitality of every corner of our economy. Some rivers serve as municipal water supply sources, while many others feed water supply reservoirs around the state. Even those of us who rely on water from wells are tapping into groundwater aquifers that provide flows to rivers and streams during summer months.

Our rivers also help define the Commonwealth’s unique quality of life. Rivers shape the characters of our communities and serve as destinations where families explore and enjoy nature together.

Yet most Massachusetts rivers and many of its streams suffer from pollution, loss of surrounding natural areas and destruction of wildlife habitat. Despite the fact that Massachusetts receives more than 45 inches of rain and snow each year, some streams dry up in the summer and many don’t meet water quality standards. These are the unhappy results of ill-planned development, inadequate storm- and wastewater management and inefficient water use. As a result, not all Massachusetts communities have enough water or water that is as clean as it should be.

What is sustainable water management? Managing water sustainably means meeting current needs without compromising the needs of future generations. Sustainable water management is essential to the health, safety and economic development of Massachusetts communities and to the health of fish and other native wildlife—now and in the future.

Sustainable water management also takes into account the predicted effects of climate change, such as increased frequency and severity of droughts and floods, helping to ensure the resiliency of our rivers, streams and water supplies.

The environmental community has come together to create **Water 2020**—a shared vision for water and rivers in Massachusetts. The vision highlights shared priorities and actions that will help us work together to achieve sustainable water management in the Commonwealth by the year 2020.

What is Our Vision for the Year 2020?

Enough clean water for current and future generations

We must ensure that there is enough clean water to meet the needs of people, our growing economy and wildlife into the foreseeable future.

Clean rivers that support a growing economy

The rivers, streams and wetlands of Massachusetts must continue to provide ecological services critical to our health, safety and economy.¹

A healthy river flows through it

We envision healthy rivers flowing through vibrant, sustainable communities. *Every* river in Massachusetts should be an asset to the communities through which it flows. Rivers and streams provide family time and habitat for fish and other wildlife, while adding natural beauty to our landscapes.

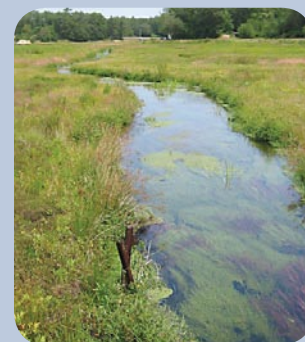
What Actions Will Get Us There?



1 Keep rivers flowing during dry times and minimize flooding of our communities in wet times.

- Integrate management of drinking water, wastewater and stormwater so that our built environment mimics “natural” water cycles.
- Establish streamflow standards based on the best available science to guide water management decisions.
- Balance water budgets within watersheds and subwatersheds.

- Promote local recharge of stormwater and wastewater to replenish aquifers.
- Protect lands in floodplains, river corridors and aquifer recharge areas.
- Build water management systems that will be better able to cope with anticipated impacts from climate change, such as intense seasonal rain and drier summers.
- Select “green” infrastructure (wetlands and rain gardens) over “gray” infrastructure (pipes and culverts).
- Promote water conservation, efficient water use and water re-use.



2 Clean up polluted rivers and make sure clean streams stay that way.

- Promote proper treatment and local recharge of wastewater.
- Reduce pollution from stormwater runoff through source control, smart development and on-site treatment and infiltration.
- Reduce pollution at the source.

- Improve understanding of how “emerging contaminants”—such as pharmaceuticals—affect the health of people and fish.
- Eliminate combined sewer overflows.
- Reduce existing paved surfaces in urbanized watersheds through retrofitting.



3 Ensure that rivers support fish and other aquatic life.

- Restore the continuity of stream habitat by removing obsolete dams and improving bridge and culvert designs.
- Maintain adequate flows and water levels.
- Restore priority habitat areas, including wetlands, river corridors and floodplains.

- Maintain and improve water quality, including protecting the temperature of cold and cool rivers.



4 Invest in water and water infrastructure.

- Create new financing mechanisms to support the protection of water resources and water supplies and to assist municipalities in updating inadequate water infrastructure.
- Keep all water supplies protected for the benefit of everyone.

- Adequately fund state environmental agencies that manage water and ensure compliance with laws protecting rivers, wetlands and aquifers.²
- Create incentives that allow water suppliers to fund their operations while conserving water.
- Develop financial incentives to promote stormwater and wastewater recharge.
- Prioritize State Revolving Fund (SRF) projects according to their environmental benefits and promote green infrastructure.



¹ These services include storing and purifying drinking water, providing recreational opportunities for tourists, maintaining biological diversity, providing spawning opportunities for commercially valuable fish such as herring, raising property values, supporting agriculture and commerce and protecting people and property from flooding. These services have been valued at over \$2.5 billion per year (*“Losing Ground: At What Cost?”* Mass Audubon Society, 2003).

² Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Conservation and Recreation.