

REPORT OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007

It is the mission of the Natural Resources Commission to provide stewardship, education and advocacy of the Town of Wellesley's park, conservation, outdoor recreation and open space resources so that the full value of the Town's natural assets can be passed on to future generations.

The Natural Resources Commission provides the Town with the highest quality of environmental leadership, establishes sound environmental policy, improves environmental planning and management, and protects and enhances the Town's natural and outdoor recreational resources. To achieve these goals, the NRC is charged with the statutory responsibilities of *Park Commissions, Conservation Commissions, Tree Wardens, Shade Tree and Pest Control Officers, and Town Forest Committees* under Massachusetts General Laws Chapters 40, 45, 87, 131 and 132. The Commission appoints the Wetlands Protection Committee, the Trails Committee, and oversees special committees such as the Morses Pond Management Committee, Pesticide Awareness Committee and the Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee. A representative from the Commission serves on the Community Preservation Committee ("CPC"), the High School Land Use Committee, the Playing Fields Task Force, the Sprague Field Task Force, the 27 Washington St. Study Committee, and in addition, the NRC works closely with the Wellesley Cancer Prevention Project and the Wellesley Conservation Council.

The NRC's website contains the agendas, meeting minutes, goals, priorities and projects of the NRC, the Wetlands Protection Committee, and the Trails Committee. The NRC web site also contains extensive information on the Town's parks, playgrounds, recreational resources and natural resources including the Town-wide trail system, as well as pesticide use reduction information, and provides links to related fields. For more information about the NRC, Trails Committee and the Wetlands Protection Committee please visit our website at www.wellesleyma.gov/nrc.

The NRC continues to implement a very ambitious and well-planned agenda. In FY07, the NRC held 23 public meetings that included public meetings on the Reidy Baseball Field Little League Improvement Plan and the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan. In addition, the NRC held 4 Public Shade Tree Removal Hearings and attended 11 public meetings with the Board of Selectman and other Town boards to discuss the NRC's open space protection efforts and related Town business.

In 2007, the NRC was successful in securing funding from the Advisory Committee, Community Preservation Committee and Town Meeting for its FY07 initiatives that included \$969,500 in funding for the Implementation of the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan, as well as continued funding for the NRC's Public Shade Tree Replacement Program, Town-wide trail network improvements and for construction of a new basketball court at Warren Park. The NRC successfully secured several conservation restrictions protecting extensive open space and wildlife habitat. In partnership with the Department of Public Works (DPW), the NRC continued to implement its Pond Restoration Master Plan, and this year the NRC focused on the

first phase of the implementation of the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan as well as the restoration and dredging of the Town Hall Duck Pond. In addition, the NRC's program to reduce the use of pesticides continues to be recognized by the State as the leading local pesticide use reduction and education effort in Massachusetts. The NRC was also awarded the first in the state 24-Year Tree City USA designation in recognition of its tree management and replacement program.

The NRC meets regularly on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the NRC's office at Town Hall. All Town residents are encouraged to attend.

NRC'S OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION EFFORTS

Implementation of the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan

As part of the Commission's efforts to ensure that Wellesley's natural resources and recreational areas are preserved and protected, the NRC continued its efforts to implement and update the Town's *Comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan*. In FY07, the NRC continued to work with its Open Space Consultant Nina Danforth in updating the Plan. An Open Space and Recreation Plan is required for a town to apply for state funds for open space acquisition. This plan makes an inventory of existing resources; evaluates the interests of the community; and attempts to prioritize open space and recreational needs. In turn, the plan assists town officials in making land acquisition decisions. In a developed suburban community such as Wellesley, issues concerning the acquisition and management of our remaining open space have become important and controversial. This year, the NRC has focused on implementing the following Open Space and Recreation Plan goals: pond restoration with emphasis on Morses Pond; open space acquisition; trail network improvements; playgrounds and playing fields improvements; enforcement of the Town Wetlands Protection Bylaw; protection of the Town's trees; and pesticide education and reduction efforts.

Educating the Public Regarding the Need to Preserve and Acquire Open Space

The Commission continues to focus on educating the public regarding the advantages of open space preservation and acquisition. For Wellesley, there are many advantages to open space preservation and acquisition, all of which culminate in making our community more livable. The trend towards larger and newer housing has resulted in more conversion of open spaces into development. Consequently, the Town is faced with both a challenge and an opportunity; indeed, the challenge is to preserve existing open spaces and avidly look for opportunities to acquire much-needed open space. Justification for preserving open space at a time of high-profile development fall into three interdependent benefits -- social, environmental and economic.

Social: From a societal point of view, open space affords passive recreation, density control, environmental education, the ability to enjoy healthful walks, beautiful views, and opportunities for quiet relaxation and closeness to nature. Most importantly, balanced open spaces become part of a community's character and identity.

Environmental: The environmental richness of conserved open space, i.e., the wetlands and floodplains, insures the continued operation of vital natural functions

that prevent altering or damaging Wellesley's water supply, aquifer zones and watershed districts. Open space preserves and protects the wide diversity of plant and wildlife species and the continued operation of those natural processes necessary for survival, i.e., air and water purification, flood control, water storage and climate control.

Economic: Open space preservation is most often a less expensive alternative to development. The case for open space protection, based on a cost vs. revenue concept, indicates that development of land does not usually pay its own way and property tax revenues levied do not cover the costs a community incurs in providing essential services -- schools, water, sewer, utilities (i.e., annual property tax revenues for the median priced home in Wellesley are \$4,660, whereas the annual school expenditure per student is \$9,241). In addition, open space increases the value of all property while saving public funds by preventing development of areas of critical concern.

Although Wellesley is generally considered a "built-out" town, a Community preservation Build-Out Analysis of the Town by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council concluded that an additional **851 acres (out of a total land acreage of 6,338) of privately owned open space could be developed under existing zoning regulations, which could result in an additional 2,229 dwelling units with 8,094 additional residents.** This increased development would irreparably alter the Town's open space and would dramatically increase demands on the town's infrastructure, including its school system, water supply, and solid waste capacity (see "Metropolitan Area Planning Council Build-Out Analysis of the Town of Wellesley," November 2000).

Many residents are deeply concerned about the "mansionization" of Wellesley. Wellesley is currently faced with an increasing loss of open space, and the Commission will continue to make the preservation and acquisition of open space a priority for the benefit of all residents.

NRC Evaluates State-Owned Cochituate Aqueduct for Town Acquisition

In FY07, the NRC spearheaded an effort to evaluate the remaining 5 acres of the Cochituate Aqueduct that is owned by the State. At the 2002 Annual Town Meeting, the Town voted to pursue the acquisition of this open space land bordering Natick for municipal purposes. In FY07 the State completed its appraisal of the land and has offered to sell the land to the Town. The NRC continues to work with the Board of Selectmen, Housing Development Corporation and the State to evaluate this property for possible acquisition by the Town for open space and other potential municipal purposes.

NRC Approves Conservation Restriction on Sun Life Property

In FY07, the NRC reviewed and approved a conservation restriction on Sun Life Property at the corner of Dearborn and McLean Street that will permanently protect 3 acres of open space, and that borders extensive Sun Life land in both Wellesley and Needham that are already protected by conservation restrictions. The NRC successfully negotiated with Sun Life to allow public access to the trails on the open space. The NRC thanks Sun Life for its efforts to protect this important open space.

NRC's Eighth Annual Earth Day Clean-Up, April 21, 2007

The NRC's eighth annual Earth Day clean-up along the Charles River was held on Saturday, April 21, 2007, and was co-sponsored by the Charles River Watershed Association. This annual event is a rite of spring for many volunteers from Town Boards, community organizations and the Town's colleges and scout troops. This year, over 40 volunteers helped clean-up along the banks of the Charles River, which is one of our most precious water resources. This year marked the 37th anniversary of Earth Day and the NRC thanks all those who participated.

NRC Receives Recommendation from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to Place the Fuller Brook Park on the National Historic Registry

In FY07, the NRC hired Ms. Shary Berg, the NRC's Landscape Historian on the Fuller Brook Park, to complete the nomination application for listing the Park on the National Registry. Last year, the Mass. Historical Commission confirmed that the Fuller Brook Park is eligible for listing on the National Historic Registry, including the entire park, running from Maugus Avenue in the east to Dover Road in the west. This project was funded by the Community Preservation Commission and is being spearheaded by the NRC in cooperation with the Wellesley Historical Commission.

NRC Efforts to Preserve Open Space at MassBay Community College

In FY07, the NRC continued its efforts to preserve and explore the possibility of acquiring open space that is State-owned and under the control of MassBay Community College. The College owns approximately 43-acres of environmentally significant open space, which encompasses extensive wetlands, forest land, and is located in the Town's Water Supply Protection District. This state-owned land includes extensive wildlife habitat and a public trail system that is maintained by the Town of Wellesley. Based on the Town's past partnership with MassBay Community College as stewards of this important conservation land, the NRC has made a concerted effort towards continuing this partnership in order to protect this land as open space in perpetuity. The NRC has held several meetings with MassBay's new College President, Dr. Carole M. Berotte Joseph, in an effort to unite the college community and the Town in protecting this open space for future generations and allowing Town residents to continue to take walks through this important natural resource and discover the beauty of this land.

The NRC was granted funding in 2006 by the Community Preservation Committee to develop an acquisition feasibility study that is the first step towards protecting this open space. The potential for the Town to acquire this land as open space was identified in the "Wellesley Community Preservation Plan," dated June 2005.

Fuller Brook Park Restoration Master Plan

In FY07, the NRC continued its work in developing a master plan to restore and maintain the Fuller Brook Park, a 23-acre parcel that encompasses Wellesley's most popular walking, biking and running trail. The master plan will assist the NRC in restoring and maintaining this valuable resource, and, most significantly, ensure its historical integrity. Fuller Brook Park runs from Dover Road, across from Wellesley College's Nehoiden Golf Course, and follows the Fuller Brook about two miles to

Hunnewell Field near the Wellesley High School. A second nearby portion of the Park, called the Caroline Brook Path, runs from Paine to Maugus Street. Heavy use and minimal maintenance has left Fuller Brook Park in a deteriorated and vulnerable state. The Master Plan will address competing uses for its trail – which often sees walkers and families guiding baby strollers, making way for runners and bicyclist of all ages – and will also develop a plan to maintain trees, develop a cohesive planting system that includes eradication of invasive plants that have taken over areas along the Fuller Brook. Much of the Park's infrastructure also suffers from years of erosion and needs repair.

Fuller Brook serves as the stormwater drainage system for more than half of Wellesley before flowing into the Charles River. In the early 1900's, Wellesley began acquiring land around the brook, seeking a pedestrian and horse path that avoided the then heavy traffic of horse drawn vehicles on Washington Street. The formal 23-acre Fuller Brook Park – with its footbridges, stone bridges for vehicles and the linear path system – was completed during the Depression. The NRC continues to work with the Halvorson Design Team, the Town's consultant on this project, to complete the Master Plan.

Placement of the NRC's Clock Tower Park on the National Historic Register

In FY07, the NRC was pleased to support the Historical Commission's effort to nominate the NRC's Clock Tower Park for placement on the National Register of Historic Places, which was funded by the Community Preservation Act funds. The nomination was reviewed and approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission in April, 2007 and reviewed and approved by the National Register in June, 2007. The Clock Tower Park will now be placed on the National Register, giving it additional prominence.

NRC Participation on the Wellesley High School Land Use Committee

In the fall of 2006, the NRC and its Wetlands Protection Committee were invited by the School Committee to participate on a High School Land Use Committee, which evaluated the natural resource areas around the high school school land to determine any site constraints and issues related to the proposed renovation and expansion of the high school. After extensive discussions and meetings, there was a conclusion that the School Committee would not pursue the use of any parkland in the expansion or renovation of the high school. During the discussions, it was confirmed with Town Counsel that the process to convert parkland to any other use would involve an extensive 3-step Town and legislative approval process, should any conversion be proposed. The NRC continues to work with the School Committee to evaluate issues related to NRC land use at the high school site.

NRC Adopts Statement in Support of Green Building Design and LEED Standards for the Wellesley High School Project

In May 2007, the NRC adopted the following statement urging the Town to support Green Building and "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" (LEED) Standards for the design and construction of the High School:

"The Natural Resources Commission strongly recommends that the Town of

Wellesley take action to seriously address the very real threats posed to our Town and our world by global warming. Towards this end, the NRC urges Town officials to take all steps available to improve our energy efficiency and reduce our carbon emissions including the adoption of Green Building LEED Standards in the design of the renovation and expansion of the High School. Taking action now will improve our quality of life, save money, and make our Town a healthier, cleaner place to live and set a good example for future generations.”

NRC Co-Sponsors Green Building and Sustainability Forum

On April 25, 2007, the NRC co-sponsored a “Green Building and Sustainability Forum” in collaboration with the Wellesley Conservation Council and the citizen environmental “SMART” group. The forum focused on educating residents about what they can do to make their homes and lifestyles more environmentally friendly and included information on what Towns can do to encourage the construction of “Green” municipal buildings. The NRC is committed to working with all Town Officials and residents to create a sustainable community.

NRC Director Testifies at State House in Support of Conservation Legislation

NRC Director Janet Bowser testified at the State House in May 2007 in support of the statutory establishment of Massachusetts Land Conservation Tax Credits and Incentives Legislation. If enacted, this legislation would create stronger incentives for private landowners to donate ecologically valuable land by providing them with a state income tax credit. The anticipated result would be more natural resources protected from development.

NRC Participation on the Community Preservation Committee

In FY07, NRC member Joan Gaughan continued to serve as the Commission’s representative on the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). The Committee is charged with making recommendations for the use of CPA funds. The NRC worked with the CPC in writing and updating the open space section of the CPC’s June 2005 “Community Preservation Plan,” which outlines the need for open space acquisition to help the Town protect its drinking water supply, wetlands, floodplains, wildlife habitat and scenic vistas, as well as expand recreational resources. This Plan also identifies goals and current and projected capital projects that may be eligible for CPA funding, including restoration of Morses Pond, Longfellow Pond, State Street Pond, and Abbotts Pond, the restoration of the historic Fuller Brook Park, and the Town Hall Park, as well as park, playground and recreational improvements. To read the full text of the CPC’s Community Preservation Plan, visit the CPC website: www.wellesleyma.gov/cpc.

NRC Encroachment Correction Policy

Correction of encroachments onto public land is a Commission responsibility. Because the NRC has jurisdiction over the Town’s natural resources, including its park and conservation land, the NRC has encountered an increasing number of encroachments on NRC land by private parties. In most cases, a tactful reminder to the homeowner corrects the problem, but often the boundary line has become

obscured and it is necessary to call upon the Public Works Engineering Division to survey the line and to place permanent bound markers. In order to have a uniform policy regarding the correction of encroachments, the NRC adopted a formal Encroachment Correction Policy in February 2006, which is based on the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Land Disposition Policy dated 1998. In general, the new policy states that the NRC will seek to correct all encroachments on land under its jurisdiction and require that the encroaching party restore the land to its original condition at their cost. The policy states that in exceptional circumstances, the NRC will consider encroachment corrections that involve a land exchange, but only if such an exchange results in a net gain of public open space and provides a substantial benefit to the Town as determined by the NRC. Occasionally, residents offer to pay for landscaping Town land next to their yards. These offers have to be considered carefully. While the Town welcomes help in cleaning up and enhancing our parks, some of these offers are denied if they discourage public use of public land.

NRC'S RECREATIONAL LAND USE, PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

NRC Playground Master Plan Improvements

Over the past several years, the NRC has worked with the DPW to implement an ambitious and very successful Playground Master Plan for improvements at the parks, playgrounds and playing fields under its jurisdiction. Recently, new playgrounds and playing fields were installed at Ouellet Park, Warren Park, Phillips Park, Hunnewell Field Tot Lot, and funding has been secured for playground improvements at Brown Park. In addition to the park and playground improvements listed below, a new toddler swing set and an ADA compliant drinking fountain were installed at Perrin Park.

NRC Approves Wellesley Little League's Reidy Field Improvements

In FY07, the NRC continued to work with the Wellesley Little League in seeking approval for the League's Reidy Field Improvement Plan by the Board of Selectmen, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Design Review Board. The Plan proposed a series of improvements to the baseball field, which is a public field that is used primarily by the Wellesley Little League, as well as by the Wellesley High School Softball Team. The improvements include a lighting system, a limited sound system, brick dugouts, new perimeter and dugout fencing and new bleachers and landscaping. Over the course of a year and a half, the NRC conducted a series of meetings and held two public hearings to present the improvements and gain feedback from all impacted constituencies, including the field user groups, the neighborhood residents, and other Town boards and interested parties. Over the course of the approval process, a number of compromises were made in order to address the concerns of all parties, resulting in the NRC's approval of improvements to Reidy Field that will expand recreational usage of the site that will not substantially affect the character of the site and its surrounding area and neighborhood. The Wellesley Little League has committed to paying for all improvements through private funds and the NRC applauds the League for taking the initiative and responsibility for making these improvements.

Morses Pond Parkland Improvement Project

In FY07, the DPW completed landscape renovations to the Morses Pond Beach pathway area that included the removal of over 100 feet of old chain link fence and invasive vegetation. The park area was cleared of invasives, with help from volunteers from the Friends of Morses Pond and public access was improved allowing for scenic pond vistas and the growth of native vegetation.

Playing Fields Task Force and Improvements to Athletic Fields

In FY07, NRC Members Richard Bashian and Paul Cramer continued to represent the NRC on the Playing Fields Task Force. The Task Force, comprised of representatives from the NRC, DPW, Rec. Department, School Department, Wellesley Little League, Wellesley Lacrosse, and the Wellesley Soccer Club, continues to focus on identifying the most urgently needed improvements and developing a long-term plan for improvements to the Town's athletic playing fields. Improvements to NRC land in FY07 involved the completion of renovations of the Kelly Baseball Fields #2 and #4 infield and backstop areas and included a new ADA accessible pathway for Kelly Baseball Field #3, which was renovated last year. The NRC continues to work with the Playing Fields Task Force to improve the Town's playing fields and to obtain the maximum space with minimum wear.

NRC's TRAILS COMMITTEE PROJECTS AND IMPROVEMENTS

In FY07, the NRC's Trails Committee maintained, improved and expanded Wellesley's trail network, and continued its community outreach programs.

Trail Maintenance

Throughout the year, the Committee repaired or replaced posts, directional arrows, medallions and map houses. Members regularly monitor and maintain assigned sections of the trails network. The Department of Public Works provides assistance for larger projects such as removing major blowdowns. The DPW also keeps paths mowed in the summer.

Trail Improvements

The following projects were completed improving trail access:

- Sudbury Path: A new footbridge was constructed. The work was completed in July by Scouts led by Matt Ballin.
- Guernsey Sanctuary: A footbridge was constructed. The work was completed in December by Scouts led by Ben Zaehring.
- Morses Pond Trail: Invasive plants were removed near Morses Pond in April. Girl Scouts led by Hannah Smith completed the project.
- Centennial Reservation Trail: A portion of the Trail was rerouted to reduce erosion and improve neighborhood access. The work was completed in June by Boy Scouts led by Ben Haines.

Trail Network Expansion

Plans were developed to lengthen the Morses Pond Trail by adding a section around the ice pond and moving the intersection with the Crosstown trail. The Recreation Department, the DPW and the NRC all gave approval to the reroute.

The Trail should be rerouted in the fall of 2007. There are now 25 miles of marked trails throughout the Town.

Community Outreach

In FY07, the Committee initiated several activities that increased public awareness and encouraged greater use of the trail network. The Committee led four walks in the fall and four walks in the spring including the first one-way walk with a car shuttle. There were 90 participants in the fall, an all-time record for a season and 62 walkers in the spring. The Trails Committee's Website, now in its fifth year, continues to provide on-line access to information about the trails network and Trail Committee sponsored events. The web site is updated on a regular basis and improvements are made to keep the site relevant and user friendly.

Trail Mapping

The Town's Network and Information Systems Department has been very cooperative in providing data for the trail maps. The Committee will be using the Town's data for all future trail map printings. We appreciate their help with the following two projects this year:

- Morses Pond: Five miles of trails were mapped near the pond, and a new trails pamphlet was published.

- Town-Wide Trails Map: To help residents locate the trails in town, a new street map was produced showing all the marked trails and open space in Wellesley.

Throughout the year the Committee's relationships with MassBay Community College, Babson College, Wellesley College, Olin College, the Town of Needham and the MWRA have allowed the Committee to improve the trail network.

As always, the Committee is grateful for the tremendous help received from the Natural Resources Commission, the Board of Selectmen, the Department of Public Works, the Municipal Light Plant, the Wetlands Protection Committee and the Boy and Girl Scout Troops in Wellesley.

NRC'S TREE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

Public Shade Tree Replacement Program

The NRC, as the Town's Tree Wardens, works with the DPW in developing and implementing the Town's Tree Management Program, and its goal is to preserve and maintain the Town's 3,150 shade trees for the enjoyment of the public and the enhancement of Wellesley's environment. Routine maintenance is conducted on a four-year cycle to provide adequate safety pruning to all of these trees. The care includes: vandalism repairs as needed; storm damage repairs; shade and park tree planting; management of new trees for one or two years; tree and stump removals as necessary; and other tree care according to need.

Trees are essential to Wellesley's character as a green, shady, residential town. Tree planting maintains Wellesley's property values and quality of life, reduces sound and

glare, improves air quality, replenishes groundwater, reduces erosion, buffers weather changes, adds beauty, inspires tranquility, screens unsightly areas, and separates incompatible uses. This year, 118 new trees were planted by the DPW, primarily on public land. At Town Meeting this year, \$25,000 was appropriated for new tree plantings throughout Town and for shade tree replacement of trees lost due to age, disease, storms and road reconstruction projects.

NRC Works With DPW and the State To Develop A Tree Inventory Program

In FY07, the NRC continued to work with the Massachusetts Urban Forestry Division and the Parks Division of the Dept. of Public Works in the development of a State Tree Inventory Program tailored for the Town of Wellesley. The State has developed a database computer system entitled "TreeKeeper" that will assist the Town in developing an effective database system to track the health, location, and other information on the Town's trees. The State is initially providing the software free to the Town in order to help it develop an inventory listing of Town trees. The NRC is working with the Town GIS Department and the DPW to further develop this important database system.

Massachusetts Honors Wellesley with Two Tree City USA Awards

In May 2007, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs presented two Tree City USA awards to the Wellesley Natural Resources Commission and Board of Public Works. DCR Acting Commissioner Priscilla Geigis presented the awards to the Town of Wellesley in recognition of its significant commitment to community and urban forestry.

The first award was the Tree City USA "Annual Award" for excellence in the management and nurturing of public shade trees. Wellesley received this award for the 24th consecutive year. Only 80 of the 351 towns and cities in Massachusetts have ever received this award, and Wellesley has received it longer than any other. The NRC serves as the Town's Park Commission and Tree Warden and together with the Department of Public Works, promotes a "Shade Trees Make the Difference" campaign to encourage support for shade trees throughout the Town. To be eligible for the Tree City Award, Wellesley had to spend at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry, enforce laws that protect public trees and hold an Arbor Day celebration and meet other standards.

The second award was a "Mass. Sustainable Community Forestry Award" in recognition of Wellesley's exemplary commitment to community forestry. Only 22 Massachusetts municipalities received this new State award this year.

These two awards are a testament to the Town's long tradition of valuing trees and open spaces. Wellesley founded a Park Commission in 1888 to landscape avenues and parks, and it was one of the first boards established in the Town.

Urban and community forests are visible signs that our community has a sense of pride and that it has been highly valued by residents for a long time. The environmental benefits of urban and community forests are many but they can be summarized as follows:

- Our forested streets and parks help define the character of our community and offer the functional human benefits of noise reduction, cooling shade, visual screening, enhanced property values, economic growth, community pride, reduction of crime and more rapid recovery from illnesses.
- Our forests reduce levels of pollutants such as solid particles, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide and others that seriously impact human physical, mental and emotional health negatively.
- Trees are the Town's most important natural infrastructure.
- Our forests reduce heating and cooling needs for residential buildings thereby reducing costs, reduce the "urban heat island effect" (localized heating due to the preponderance of black topped surfaces) to provide a more human friendly living environment, reduce rainfall runoff and erosion thereby improving water quality and quicker re-charge of local aquifers, function as habitat for wildlife to enrich human enjoyment and reduce global warming for the long term security of the Earth.

Winter Moth Caterpillar Control Town Tree Protection Program And Educational Forum

In FY07, in response to a significant increase in damage to Town trees by the invasive insect known as the "winter moth caterpillar," the NRC worked with the DPW to develop a proactive program to address this problem and protect the Town's trees. In February 2007, the DPW proposed, and the NRC approved, a program to spray approx. 800 public trees with an environmentally safe spinosad product called "Conserve" to control damage from the winter moth caterpillar. In addition, on April 2, 2007, the NRC, DPW, and State Forestry experts presented a public education forum on the winter moth to outline the Town's approach to treating this problem and to help residents understand the problem and how they can protect their own properties from this invasive specie.

Scenic Roads Tree Protection Statutory Enforcement

Pursuant to its authority as Town Tree Warden and under M.G.L. Chapter 40, sec. 15c, the NRC protects all public shade trees along the six scenic roads in Wellesley that have been designated by vote of Town Meeting as scenic roads: Benvenue Street, Cartwright Road, Cheney Drive, Pond Road, Squirrel Road, and the Waterway/Brookway. Under the statutory requirements of this law, the NRC is required to hold a public hearing to review proposed removal of trees along any designated scenic road. No public shade tree removal hearings on a scenic road were held in FY07.

NRC's EFFORTS TO PROTECT TOWN LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

Lawns, Buffers and Water Quality

Maintenance of the Town's half-dozen major and minor ponds is essential to Wellesley's quality of life. Under modern circumstances that means periodic dredging. Wellesley's ponds were largely weed-free up to the end of World War II. That was when retooling wartime industries and suburban developers sold the parents of the baby boomers on evergreen lawns. Sweeping green lawns symbolized English estates, where cool, damp weather and grazing sheep made them easy to maintain. But in America, grass is supposed to go to seed and become hay in July. Currently, Americans pour priceless water, fertilizer and herbicides onto their lawns, and the nutrients from these unnatural lawns pour into our streams, lakes and ponds. That is why ponds need dredging. In the words of the Town's Moses Pond consultant Dr. Ken Wagner, "Green lawns mean green lakes."

The quality of Wellesley's water supply and the cost of maintaining our ponds are directly related to the amount of pesticides and fertilizers used by Town residents. Perfectly manicured lawns need to be made socially unacceptable. Buffers as wide as possible need to be planted between overfed lawns and golf courses and storm drains and ponds.

NRC Pond Restoration Master Plan Implementation

The Commission continues to implement its *Pond Restoration Master Plan*, which sets priorities for restoring the Town's beautiful ponds. The NRC's Master Plan was developed in conjunction with the DPW and was endorsed in a resolution approved unanimously by Town Meeting in March 1998. As a capital budget priority, the NRC supports an alternating schedule of dredging feasibility studies and actual dredging for the next several years. Dredging studies are required because the method of dredging must be determined, the quality of the dredged material must be tested, and suitable disposal sites must be found. There are contracts to be written and issues of truck access, hours of operation, and the like to be resolved before work starts. To date, Reeds Pond, Bezanson Pond, Rockridge Pond and the Town Hall Duck Pond have all been successfully restored. A long-term, \$2 million comprehensive management plan has been developed for Moses Pond and is currently being implemented (see below). Next up are feasibility studies for State Street Pond (aka Skating Pond), and Abbotts Pond. The NRC would like to thank Town Engineer Steve Fader for his hard work and dedication in assisting the NRC with the restoration of Wellesley's ponds.

The Commission asks every resident to take personal action to prevent pesticides, fertilizer and herbicides from contaminating Wellesley's natural resources including the Town's drinking water supply.

Town Hall Duck Pond Restoration Plan Completed

The Duck Pond Restoration project was completed by the DPW in FY07 and involved the dewatering of the duck pond, installation of a 36" by-pass pipe, installation of a weir and a new outlet structure to improve drainage and water quality. In addition, the NRC continues its successful educational program to discourage people from feeding the waterfowl in order to improve water quality and the health of the wildlife.

Development of the Moses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan

Morses Pond is Wellesley's preeminent natural, recreational and scenic resource. Approximately 40% of the Town's water supply is pumped from municipal wells located at the Pond, and the public beach and the open space bordering the pond have been used by many generations of Town residents. But Morse's Pond is facing a wide range of problems due to the fact that it provides drainage for an 8.8 square mile watershed, including commercial industry and several miles of heavily traveled Route 9. These problems, which include eutrophication and the increasing and dramatic spread of aquatic invasive plants and algae, support the immediate need for a comprehensive management plan that will examine the options available to address these problems. Over 300 residents from throughout the Town signed a Citizens Petition in support of the development of this action plan, which documents the community's broad-based support and concern for the health of the Pond.

In recognition of the need to address the health of Morses Pond, the CPC, Advisory Committee and Town Meeting supported funding for the development of a Comprehensive Management Plan for the pond at a cost of \$150,000, with CPC and Advisory sharing the costs evenly. The Board of Public Works, NRC and Recreation Commission formed the Morses Pond Ad Hoc Committee (MPAHC) to work with the Town's Pond Consultant, Dr. Ken Wagner, of ENSR, for a year and a half in evaluating options for the pond's preservation and restoration. As part of this evaluation process, the NRC voted to affirm its adherence to its Integrated Pest Management Policy that prohibits the use of all pesticides, including fluridone, in Morses Pond. As a result of this vote, fluridone was not considered as a management technique to be used in Morses Pond and other safer and non-toxic management alternatives form the Comprehensive Management Plan for the Pond. The plan, completed and approved by the three boards in Nov. 2005, outlines the options evaluated, makes recommendations for implementation, identifies a 5-year timeline for implementation, and costs for the implementation of the identified options. The three boards, spearheaded by the NRC, work collaboratively in managing the pond and implementing the Plan.

Implementation of the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan

In FY07, the NRC was successful in requesting and securing \$969,500 in funding from the Advisory Committee, the Community Preservation Committee, Town Meeting and Town Voters for the implementation of the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan. NRC Chairman Neal Seaborn and the Town's Morses Pond Consultant, Dr. Ken Wagner, made a presentation to the 2007 Annual Town Meeting, which approved FY07 funding that included \$153,000 in capital funds from the Community Preservation Act Fund for a phosphorus and sediment inactivation station that will reduce the amount of phosphorus and sedimentation coming into the pond. In addition, \$650,000 was approved by Town Meeting and Town Voters in a debt exclusion vote for funding the design, permitting, construction and monitoring for the dredging of the northern portion of Morses Pond, which currently acts as a sediment and nutrient detention basin, but which has become more and more shallow over the years. In addition, \$166,500 was approved in operating costs related to the Morses Pond Plan, including funds for operating the new weed harvester, which was approved for funding in FY06 and purchased in FY07, and is operated through a program with the DPW. Additional operating expenses for FY07 include: operation of the new phosphorus and sediment inactivation station; funding to hire a professional pond manager; funds for the

design and permitting for selective beneficial plants; and organizing manual harvesting throughout the pond to complement the Town's weed harvesting efforts. The NRC works collaboratively with the Board of Public Works and the Recreation Commission to implement the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan, and these three boards have formed the Morses Pond Management Committee, which oversees the implementation and management of the Plan.

NRC's Educational Efforts Related to the Morses Pond Management Plan

NRC Presentation to the Wellesley Rotary Club

On June 5, 2007, NRC Chairman Neal Seaborn made a presentation to the Rotary Club, which focused on the NRC's Projects and Priorities, including the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan. The NRC looks forward to continuing to work with Wellesley organizations, such as the Rotary Club, in educating them on the Town's environmental issues, as well as working with them on future projects.

NRC Presentation on Morses Pond at the Wellesley West Gateway Study Forum

On June 7, 2007, NRC Chairman Neal Seaborn made a presentation on the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan at this forum, which focused on improvements and evaluating changes to this area that borders the Natick Town line. At the forum, Mr. Seaborn focused on the Plan elements to improve the Morses Pond watershed area including limited impact development efforts and possible Town Bylaw revisions. The NRC looks forward to working with the consultants on this study to evaluate improvements to the Morses Pond watershed, as well as focus on the possible acquisition and protection of 5 acres of the Cochituate Aqueduct that is still owned by the State.

NRC Presentation to the Mass. Conference of Lakes and Ponds Association

NRC Chairman Neal Seaborn made a presentation at this conference on June 16, 2007, regarding the implementation of the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan. The NRC networked with many lake and pond association representatives from throughout the State and discussed issues similar to those being addressed at Morses Pond. The NRC will continue to make similar outreach efforts, which allows them to publicize the efforts the Town is making to improve Morses Pond, while educating other organizations doing similar work.

NRC Presentation to the Mass. Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals

On June 27, 2007, NRC Director Janet Bowser made a presentation to this statewide Municipal Conservation Organization regarding the efforts and progress made on the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan. In addition, the presentation involved extensive discussion of lake and pond management issues and a session at Morses Pond on the identification of invasive aquatic plants.

Presentation at the Wellesley Cancer Prevention Project Water Quality Forum

On November 9, 2006, Mr. Seaborn attended the Wellesley Cancer Prevention Project Forum on Water Quality in Wellesley, and made a brief presentation on the

initiatives that the NRC is undertaking in order to protect the Town's water quality, focusing primarily on the NRC's pond restoration master plan and implementation of the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan.

The NRC's Wetlands Protection Committee

The NRC, having the powers and duties of Conservation Commissions, appoints the five volunteer members, and two associates, of its Wetlands Protection Committee (WPC). The NRC delegates to the WPC the power and authority to administer and enforce the Wetlands Protection Act (G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40) and Wellesley's Wetlands Protection Bylaw (Article 44). In FY07, Mary Jane O'Donnell served as Chair and Rhonda Ryznar served as Vice-Chair.

Wetlands Permits

In FY07 the WPC held 17 public meetings, reviewing 55 proposed projects under the State Wetlands Protection Act and the Wellesley Wetlands Protection Bylaw. Hearings included the review of 28 new Notices of Intent (NOI) and four NOIs that had been continued from the previous fiscal year. In addition, 23 Requests for Determination of Applicability were reviewed. Fifty-five permits were issued in FY07, including 20 Orders of Conditions (wetland permits); one Amended Order of Conditions, 11 Certificates of Compliance (for completed projects), 23 Determinations and two Enforcement Orders. None of the WPC's decisions was appealed. Wetland fees received totaled \$10,595 (\$4,810 in State fees; \$5,785 in Town Bylaw fees). During FY07, the WPC addressed seven wetland violations, four of which were carry-overs from FY06. By the end of FY07, four violations had been satisfactorily resolved, two had received the WPC's approval for restoration plans and are currently being implemented, and three violations were under investigation.

Wetlands Protection Bylaw

The Wellesley Wetlands Protection Bylaw (Article 44) was approved by Town Meeting on April 2, 2002 and became effective on September 12, 2002. The WPC adopted application Filing Fees on October 9, 2003; Regulations, including Performance Standards in October 2003 (revised on June 24, 2004); and Rules for Hiring Outside Consultants on April 22, 2004.

Bylaw Resource Areas. The following areas (referred to as "resource areas") are protected by Wellesley's Wetlands Protection Bylaw:

Wetlands *marshes, wet meadows, bogs, swamps, banks, reservoirs, Lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, creeks*

<u>Isolated wetlands</u>	containing at least 2,500 square feet of surface area;
<u>Upland areas</u>	land within 100 feet of the above resource areas;
<u>Vernal pool habitats</u>	which include the upland areas within 100 feet of
vernal pools;	
<u>200 foot Riverfront</u>	land within 200 feet of perennial streams/rivers; and
<u>Lands that flood</u>	bordering land subject to flooding (i.e., abutting
wetlands) and;	
	isolated land subject to flooding (i.e., upland area
	depressions)
	<i>(the above floodplains do not have buffer zones)</i>

The Wetlands Permitting Process

Anyone proposing to alter any areas that are located within 100 feet of a wetland or within 200 feet of a perennial stream must file a NOI under State and Town wetland protection laws prior to commencing any activities. If the applicant is in any doubt as to whether an activity is subject to wetland regulation (i.e. whether a wetland permit would be required), they should file a Request for a Determination of Applicability (an informal process to ask the WPC to determine whether a NOI needs to be filed for the proposed project).

The WPC regularly processes several kinds of applications under the State Act and Town Bylaw. The following applications are the most commonly filed with the Committee:

1. Request for Determination of Applicability (RFD) – to determine whether the law applies to a particular area and project.
2. Notice of Intent (NOI) – for projects that propose to alter a State or town resource area.
3. Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) – for the review of wetland and/or upland resource area boundary lines, or for “simplified review” certification.

The response to an RFD is a Determination of Applicability (DOA). The DOA establishes which portions of a property are subject to the law and which are not. A positive DOA would be issued for proposed work that requires the filing of a NOI. The WPC’s response to an NOI is an Order of Conditions (OoC) to do the work. This can include either a denial of the project, or an approval which can spell out in detail the terms under which the proposed work can be performed. An ANRAD can be filed prior to a NOI, as it allows an applicant to receive certification for the exact boundaries and status of their property’s resource areas before designing a project and filing a NOI. An Order of Resource Area Delineation (ORAD) is the response to an ANRAD, and addresses resource area and boundary delineations, as well as “simplified reviews.” The above Orders and Determinations are valid for three years. The wetlands administrator is available to help guide residents or their representatives through the wetland permitting process.

Significant Wetlands Projects and Concerns:

Protecting Wellesley’s rivers, streams and ponds: Most of the permit applications that are received by the WPC involve proposed projects that are located in riverfront areas or near streams or ponds. Filings often propose the expansion of an existing building, the replacement of an existing building with a larger building, or the removal of natural vegetation (often mature trees) for the creation of grassed lawns. Protecting our streams and their receiving water bodies from the cumulative adverse effects of resource area alterations, while accommodating reasonable expectations of property owners, is an on-going concern.

The Problems with the “Perfect” Lawn. The WPC endeavors to protect our lakes and streams by requiring natural buffer zones between manicured lawns and wetland areas. This, unfortunately, only provides minimal protection to Wellesley’s natural assets, since runoff from manicured lawns will still end up running into streets, street drains, and eventually into our lakes, ponds and streams. Therefore, the WPC encourages homeowners and developers to use native plants in their landscaping plans. Native plants are beautiful, have excellent wildlife habitat value,

are drought resistant, and are low/no-maintenance. Realizing that modern civilization requires certain tradeoffs, the WPC, in collaboration with the NRC's Pesticides Awareness Campaign, endeavors to educate residents about the adverse effects of their modern ways, such as:

- Purchasing fertilizers and chemicals for the sole purpose of creating greener lawns. These chemicals will eventually end up in our lakes and ponds, playing a major role in their accelerated rate of eutrophication.
- Applying herbicides and chemicals for the sole purpose of killing non-grass species. Herbicides and chemicals can have serious side effects to wildlife, to neighboring and downstream vegetation, and to human health.
- Misuse/Overuse of precious water resources. Installing irrigation systems and freely using limited water resources for the perfect lawn threatens our water supply. New England was blessed with an abundant supply of pure groundwater, but over the years, that supply has been threatened by overuse and misuse. The Committee endeavors to protect our water, which is our most precious natural asset.

Vernal Pool Education Project

In FY07, the NRC's Wetlands Protection Committee continued their efforts to protect Wellesley's vernal pools by holding their annual vernal pool program to educate the public about vernal pools and the many species that inhabit them. Although Wellesley's Wetlands Protection Bylaw protects all State "certifiable" vernal pools, including their associated upland habitats (areas within 100 feet of the pools), finding vernal pools is the first step in protecting them. Approximately 50 children and their parents attended this year's program, held on May 6, 2006.

NRC's Pesticide Awareness and Organic Land Care Educational Campaign

The mission of the NRC's Wellesley Pesticide Awareness Campaign (WPAC) is to reduce the exposure of children and adults to pesticides and pesticide breakdown products which are known or probable health hazards, to protect Wellesley's water supply, and to restore Wellesley's land use style to healthier and less toxic land care practices.

Seven years ago, the NRC was instrumental in hiring Dr. Sarah Little as Wellesley's first Pesticide Awareness Coordinator, the first such local position in the state. Dr. Little resigned from her position with the Town in order to pursue her work on a more regional level, and the NRC thanks Dr. Little for her continuing efforts to help residents reduce pesticide use and educate residents about the harmful effects of toxics.

This year, the NRC continued to implement grants from both the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection and from the Mass. Toxics Use Reduction Network, to develop a local and regional Pesticide Use Reduction and Education Program. The NRC's Pesticide Awareness Campaign continued to focus on educating Town residents about reducing pesticide use in and out of the home, growing and caring for an environmentally safe lawn and garden, and on learning about the health risks

posed by pesticides. For more information on alternatives to pesticides, and for a listing of organic lawn care companies, please visit the NRC's pesticide use reduction website at www.wellesleyma.gov/nrc/pesticide.

There is an increasing body of scientific evidence that synthetic pesticides in extremely small amounts can disrupt hormones, particularly in the fetus and in young children. Around the world deformed or absent amphibians—frogs, salamanders, toads—are signaling that something pervasive is terribly wrong. Please contact the NRC office for more information, and we encourage residents to take the NRC “Pledge to Learn About Alternatives to Pesticides” and receive a “Safe and Pesticide-Free Lawn” sign for your yard. Poison is bad for people as well as pets. Talk with your veterinarian if you want to know what lawn chemicals are doing to dogs and cats. Under no circumstances allow your children to play on recently treated lawns. If you are thinking about lightening your workload by reducing the size of your lawn, your family and all of us will be healthier.

This year, the Pesticide Awareness Campaign included extensive public education efforts including producing numerous fact sheets and brochures. Four years ago, the NRC and the School Committee approved an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy for land under their respective control, and the NRC continues to work with the DPW, the Board of Health and the School Committee to implement the policy. The NRC continues to work with the Department of Public Works, the Health Department and the School Department to track the Town's annual pesticide purchases and work towards reducing and eventually eliminating the use of pesticides on Town property.

NRC Meets With Wellesley Country Club Regarding Pesticide Use and Development of an Integrated Pest Management Plan

During the past year, the NRC continued to meet with representatives of the Wellesley Country Club regarding their pesticide use and the development of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan. The NRC members toured the golf course and viewed a number of drainage areas and ponds that have been enlarged to handle increased drainage and to improve water quality on site. In May 2007, the Country Club and its consultant developed a “Turfgrass Management Plan Using an Integrated Pest Management Approach” in order to formalize its current turf and pest management practices with an effort to reduce the amount of pesticides it uses on the golf course, which is located in a Water Supply Protection District. The NRC looks forward to continuing to work with the Country Club to reduce the amount of pesticides and fertilizer use on their property.

NRC Attends Organic Land Care Program in August 2006

NRC Members Heidi Gross, Neal Seaborn, Joan Gaughan and Director Janet Bowser attended the Northeast Organic Farm Association's Organic Land Care Program in August 2006 in order to learn more about successful organic lawn and turf management practices that can be applied to Town land.

NRC Encourages Organic Lawn Care Services in Wellesley

As part of the NRC's Pesticide Awareness and Organic Land Care Educational Campaign, the NRC has reached out to lawn care and landscape service

companies doing business in Wellesley to encourage and educate them on the need to reduce and eliminate the use of herbicides and pesticides in order to protect public health, our natural resources and the Town's drinking water supply.

NRC Collaboration with the Board of Health on Healthy Living Grant

In FY07, the NRC began working with the Health Department on a Wellesley Healthy Living Grant that is being funded through the West Suburban Community Health Network. The NRC will be working with the Board of Health on this project to incorporate the use of the Town's Trail Systems and natural resources, as well as integrating a range of healthy living approaches in the home and encouraging the use of non-toxic alternatives.

NRC's Pesticide-Free Gardening Education Effort

The NRC continues to educate and encourage residents to garden with perennials and foliage grasses that require no fertilizer or pesticides and only rainwater to flourish. The NRC has created three brochures towards this goal: *A Guide to the Demo Garden*; *Buffers Are Beautiful—Protecting Water and Wildlife*; and *Plants for Landscaping Ponds, Banks, Buffer Areas and Wet Areas while Encouraging Wildlife*. The three brochures are available in the NRC office in Town Hall.

NRC Administrative Oversight of the Brookside Community Garden

The Brookside Community Garden at Oakland Street and Brookside Road had another successful year. The NRC provides administrative oversight of the community garden for the DPW, which owns the land. The Town requires that all gardeners at Brookside Garden manage their gardens organically with no use of pesticides. This year, the DPW installed a new raised garden plot to accommodate a handicapped gardener and completed other garden landscape improvements to improve the area and accessibility. There were many new gardeners who created beautiful gardens and added to the sense of community at Brookside.

NRC Collaboration with Wellesley Cancer Prevention Project

The NRC continues to support the work of the Wellesley Cancer Prevention Project (WCPP), which focuses on assessing the relationship between environmental issues and the incidence of cancer. The NRC looks forward to continuing to work with and support the WCPP's educational efforts aimed at cancer reduction and awareness.

Wildlife Notes

Wellesley is fortunate to have a wide diversity of wildlife throughout its open space, and wildlife habitat protection is one of the NRC's top land protection priorities in order to preserve and protect this diversity. Several red-tailed and broad-winged hawks were seen in Centennial Reservation, the Town Forest, and near the Town Hall Duck Pond. Recently, a moose was seen on the loose on Wellesley's residential streets, and wild turkeys were once again sited throughout Town. Many residents enjoy fishing for bass, pike, pickerel and the occasional trout in the Town's ponds and streams. Deer, coyotes, foxes, possums, opossums, rabbits, porcupines, weasels, fishers, woodchucks,

skunks and turtles were among the wildlife spotted throughout the NRC's conservation reservations. Great blue herons, ducks including several wood ducks and hooded mergansers, ring-necked pheasants, northern bobwhites, great horned owls, woodpeckers, eastern bluebirds, warblers, finches, sparrows and many other species of birds continued to be in abundance this year.

NRC MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS

In FY07, Neal Seaborn was elected Chairman, Heidi K. Gross was elected Vice Chair and Paul A. Cramer was elected Secretary. Richard Bashian was re-elected to a second 3-year term. Mary Jane O'Donnell was reelected Chairman of the Wetlands Protection Committee. The NRC appointed long-time Wetlands Protection Committee member Marc Taylor as an associate to the Committee due to his appointment to the Town's Advisory Committee, and associate member Rebecca Weissman was appointed as a full Committee member. Bob White was reelected as Chairman of the Trails Committee.

NRC Participates in Babson College Entrepreneurship Program

NRC Chairman Neal Seaborn and NRC Director Janet Hartke Bowser participated in the Town's first Babson College Entrepreneurship Program, which was conceived and organized by Board of Selectmen Chair Katherine Babson and Executive Director Hans Larsen. The program involved two program meetings in December 2006, followed by two follow-up program meetings in May 2007. Over 45 Town Department Managers and elected officials participated in the multi-disciplinary program to examine how to improve the Town's government functions through innovative entrepreneurial techniques and approaches. The participants were assigned to work on one of the following six government improvement project teams: Virtual Town Hall; Building Department Review; Centralized Customer Service; Intranet; Telecomm - unications; and development of a Strategic Balanced Scorecard. The program teams meet on a regular basis for six months, and developed recommendations and made presentations to the entire group as well as to the Board of Selectmen in June 2007. Several of the project recommendations have already been implemented, while some will need funding and further refinement.

The NRC thanks Ms. Babson, Mr. Larsen and Babson College Professors Elaine Eisenman and Julian Lange for their efforts in making this program a very effective, challenging and useful experience.

NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT STAFF

The NRC staff consists of a full-time NRC director, a full-time wetlands administrator, a full-time secretary/technical assistant, and a part-time environmental education coordinator. In FY07, Peter Keenan, who had been the wetlands administrator for almost seven years, retired and the NRC hired Jane Pierce to replace him.

NRC Director Janet Hartke Bowser was reappointed this year to serve on the Massachusetts Municipal Association's Environmental Policy Committee. In addition, Ms. Bowser provides extensive professional oversight and management assistance to the Morses Pond Management Committee, Pesticide Awareness Committee, Trails

Committee, Wetlands Protection Committee, Playing Fields Task Force, and the Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee.

Citizen Inquiries and Educational Outreach

The Natural Resources Department is committed to providing the highest level of service to the Town's citizens. The Department averages over 120 citizen inquiries per week, and many of these inquiries involve walk-in office visits after citizens are referred to the NRC by other Town Departments. The NRC staff assists citizens with a wide range of questions concerning the use and improvement of park, playground, forest, conservation and recreational land, acquisition and protection of open space, public shade tree regulations, wetlands protection requirements, vernal pool protection, toxics and pesticide reduction, encroachment corrections, and the process of project approval and scheduling of meetings with the NRC and the Wetlands Protection Committee.

Volunteers and Donors

Volunteers make Wellesley. The Town needs volunteers for its appointed boards. We need Friends groups for every park and pond in Town. We need trail monitors. We need wildlife inventory compilers. We need people willing to take the initiative. Waiting for you is work, friendship and the old-fashioned sense of a job well done. Please call the NRC, the Selectmen's office or the department that interests you.

Many thanks to all the volunteers, especially the NRC's Trails Committee and the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, who help keep Wellesley's open space clean! Generous gifts were received this year from the Wellesley House and Garden Club and the Wellesley Garden Study Group. *Thank you!*

Many of the benches, trees and landscape in Wellesley are gifts to the Town in memory of someone dear. The Commission needs gifts to make additional improvements throughout Town and especially along the Fuller Brook Park. Will you help? Donors of \$400 or more will have their names and gifts recorded for posterity in the Charles B. Steward ledger on display in the Town Hall foyer. Please contact the NRC office if you would like more information.

Respectfully Submitted,

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Neal Seaborn, Chairman
Heidi K. Gross, Vice Chairman
Paul A. Cramer, Secretary
Richard H. Bashian
Joan E. Gaughan

Janet Hartke Bowser, Director

