



Mystic River
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

2023 Highlights

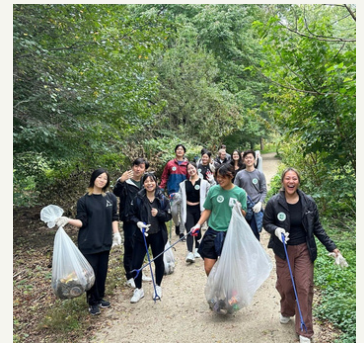
SMALL ACTIONS LEAD TO BIG CHANGES

Thanks to your continued action and support, MyRWA is setting our goals higher than ever before. Within all our programs, we are becoming **more inclusive, bolder, and more effective** to have a greater impact for all watershed residents.

We are committed to connecting people to the watershed and working so that all residents, no matter who you are or where you live, have access to a healthy environment.

TOGETHER FOR THE MYSTIC

Here are a few things we accomplished together this year →



Top: Participants enjoying the [Mystic Greenways](#) and breakfast at our Bike to Work Day event with Bike to the Sea (Karl Alexander). **Left to Right:** Open house for [Little Mystic Channel Park](#) in Charlestown (Karl Alexander); [Water chestnut](#) removal community volunteer day (Daria Clark), MyRWA Climate Resilience and Environmental Science & Stewardship Fellows at our Annual Champions Breakfast (KC Coryatt); Harvard students clean up trash along the Alewife Brook Greenway (Sushant Bajracharya)

Advocating for a watershed full of nature and free of pollution, with access to welcoming parks, waterways, and paths



Credit: Daria Clark

Restoring Wetlands

Projects are in the works to restore wetlands in Belle Isle, Everett, Reading, Stoneham, Winchester, and Woburn. Hundreds of residents showed up at outreach events to learn about these projects and share their thoughts. Strengthening these important habitats will provide ecological and climate resilience and bring new recreational opportunities to the area.

Fighting Against Sewage

Along with our partners, we advocated at the local and state levels for the elimination of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) into Boston area rivers. Community members getting informed and speaking up about this public health issue is moving the needle on reducing this major pollution source.



Credit: Video via CRWA

Providing impactful education and volunteer programs that are fully accessible to all people of all abilities

Credit: Daria Clark



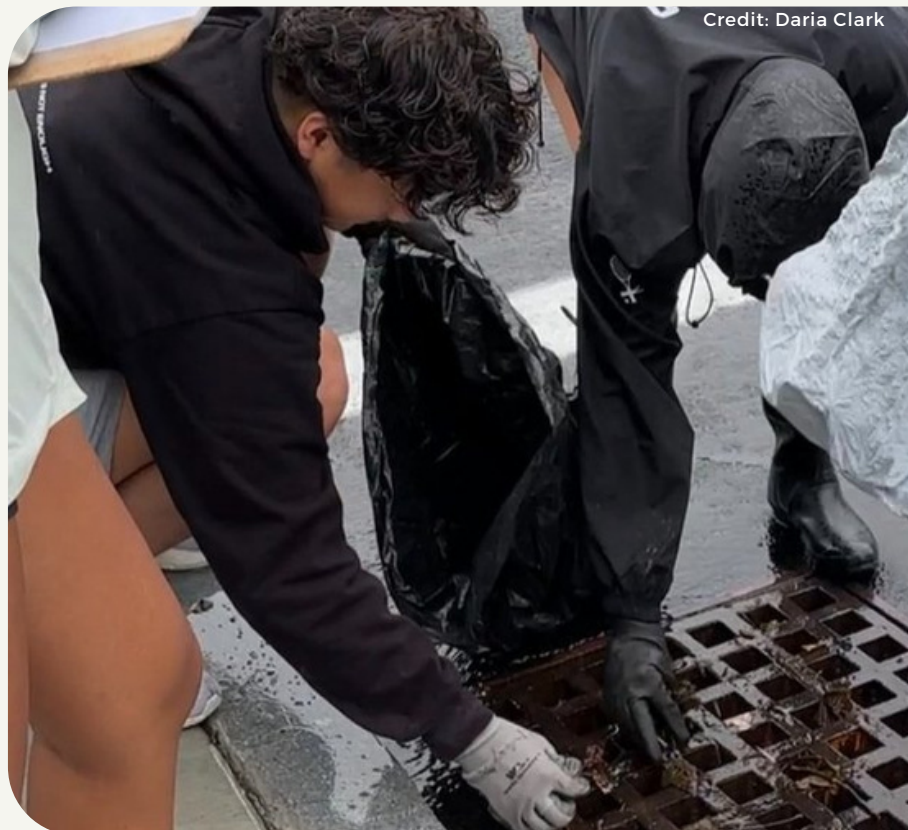
Place-based Education

We engaged with nearly 2,000 students in 15 watershed communities through interactive programs on biodiversity, stormwater pollution, climate change, and nature-based art. With the help of education program volunteers and our 6 new part-time community educators, we are bringing the watershed to more youth than ever before.

Adopt-A-Drain

Launched this summer, Adopt-a-Drain has taken the watershed by storm. 611 residents have adopted drains – volunteering to keep them clear of debris. This simple action reduces street flooding and helps keep our waterways pollution free. A side-benefit of this program has been the creative names people have given their drains like “Drain the Rock Johnson” and “Insane in the Mem Drain.”

Credit: Daria Clark



Supporting and upholding residents most affected by climate change, pollution, and other environmental injustices as the leaders in the development of solutions

Wicked Cool Mystic

Wicked Cool Mystic Ambassadors reached residents in person at 23 events and collected over 800 survey responses about how people want to cool their communities in the face of rising heat due to climate change. The top 3 cooling solutions – trees, shaded bus stops, and more water features – will be explored through pilot projects in 2024.



Tackling Air Pollution

This year, MyRWA took our work to monitor environmental pollution to the air. In the winter and spring, we worked with Malden A-VOYCE on a project to explore their air quality questions and talk about air pollution with their peers. In the summer, we launched CLEANAIR – a three year EPA-funded project to monitor air quality at community-identified locations in Charlestown, East Boston, Everett, and Malden.



Building a board and staff, who represent the rich diversity of the watershed, leading an organization with the capacity to create meaningful change

Credit: Patrick Herron



New Team Members

We added six new full-time staff to the MyRWA team in 2023. Isaiah (Outreach & Media Manager), Karina (Project Manager), Mariangeli (Climate Resilience Manager), Marja (Project Manager), Michelle (Operations Manager), and Ranida (Grant Writer) bring creativity and expertise to help MyRWA reach our goals.

Increasing Capacity

We are energized by a new strategic plan and advisors to guide our organization to deeper levels of equity, justice, and belonging. MyRWA staff and board are putting in the work personally and professionally to best serve the diverse communities in the Mystic River watershed.

Credit: Dave Queeley





Left to Right: Volunteers plant trees in downtown Malden (Daria Clark); [River herring](#) at the Scalley Dam, where a new fish passage will soon make it easier for the fish to enter Horn Pond (Jennifer Delgado), over a dozen stormwater infiltration trenches were installed in 2023 to reduce phosphorus pollution in our waterways with more sited for 2024 (MyRWA), the Three Rivers Report Cards highlight the need for local, state, and federal collaboration to close the remaining gaps in water quality across the greater Boston watersheds (Daria Clark)

BY THE NUMBERS

1,921

Youth engaged in education programming

2,634

Volunteer hours dedicated to stewardship

\$90M

In private, state, and federal grants secured by Resilience Mystic Collaborative communities

~470,000

River herring in the Mystic, the 2nd largest herring migration in MA in 2023

THANK YOU!

To all who have donated, volunteered, read, wrote, called, and more – THANK YOU for supporting this work and the watershed we love.