

Action in the Mystic

Mystic Watershed Collaborative:

A Partnership between Tufts University and the Mystic River Watershed Association

Launch of the Mystic Action Plan

On December 3, 2005, the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) hosted the Launch of the Mystic Action Plan, a comprehensive plan for the restoration of the Mystic Watershed. The Mystic Watershed Collaborative (MWC), a partnership between Tufts University and MyRWA, organized this successful event which was held at the Everett Armory. Community organizers worked together with Tufts staff and students to bring together interested citizens from across 15 communities in the Mystic Watershed.

Community organizations shared a wealth of information through table displays. There was also time for networking and discussion of potential future collaborations. The table displays and networking set the tone for the excitement and engagement that would last through the morning.

Speakers shared a range of knowledge about issues and activities in the Mystic Watershed. Nancy Hammett, Executive Director of the Mystic River Watershed Association, gave an overview of the Mystic Action Plan and elaborated on priority topics for action including water quantity and flooding, water quality, land use and open space, recreation, habitat, environmental justice, community capacity building and watershed awareness. Stephen Perkins, Director, Environmental Protection Agency Office of Environmental Stewardship, spoke about the power of partnership in environmental protection, and pledged the EPA's continued support in improving the Mystic Watershed. Senator Jarrett Barrios spoke of the importance of bringing people to the water in order to create watershed stewards, and highlighted several initiatives that he is working on to improve the health of the watershed and its residents. Kathy Baskin, Director of Water Policy at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, spoke about the funding available for watershed projects that advance the goals of the Mystic Action Plan. Adrienne Rogers, of the Friends of Upper Mystic Lake and the Aberjona Study Group, highlighted some of the problems and opportunities facing the upper watershed.

William Brownsberger, Belmont Selectman and Chair of the Tri-Community Flooding Workgroup, presented the challenges and opportunities of regional cooperation in watershed restoration. Laura Crandall, in East Boston of the Neighborhood of Affordable Housing, spoke about youth engagement and the success of the Environmental Chelsea Creek Crew in educating the residents of the lower watershed. Collectively the speakers called attention to the variety of opportunities for taking action in the Mystic Watershed.

Nancy Hammett brought the event to a close with a challenge for those present to review the plan and offer specific input on the implementation phase—how to make the plan a reality. She also thanked all those who participated, recognizing Tufts University College of Citizenship and Public Service for sponsorship of the event and for providing volunteers. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection were also acknowledged for their support in the completion of the Mystic Action Plan and the Launch event.

The Mystic Watershed Collaborative is looking forward to working with more Mystic Watershed citizens including residents, community organizers, Tufts faculty, students, and alumni to make the vision of the Mystic Action Plan a reality. Anyone that would like more information should contact Rachel Szyman at rachel.szyman@tufts.edu.



Save the Date!
Mystic River Watershed Research Conference
Friday, April 28, 2006

A Collaborative Effort

Yongxuan Gao, a graduate student in Water Resources Engineering, will be working with the Mystic Watershed Collaborative through this winter and spring to collect and organize research on the Mystic watershed. The ultimate goal of Gao's work will be to create a sustainable system for collecting and disseminating new research and information.

Gao's interest in the Mystic watershed began during her undergraduate years at Tufts University. She worked with the Mystic River Watershed Association on water level monitoring. After spending a few years in China working on watershed issues, Gao has returned to Medford and reconnected with the Mystic.

Throughout the next few months not only will Gao delve into the great wealth of research on the Mystic Watershed but she will also get to collaborate with Executive Director Nancy Hammett of the Mystic River Watershed Association, Tufts faculty and staff, and many more. Together all these individuals will help to make the research and information available on the Mystic an accessible resource for all.

The timing of Gao's work is also an exciting step after the Launching of the Mystic Action and a renewed commitment to watershed action priority topics. Gao's work will support the Mystic Watershed Collaborative's efforts to assist with community capacity building and watershed awareness.

Gao's work will be a great resource to individuals and organizations focusing on water quantity and flooding, water quality, land use and open space, recreation, habitat, and environmental justice.

Members of the Mystic watershed Collaborative Steering Committee are extremely excited that Gao has continued to make the Mystic River Watershed a part of her education and experience at Tufts University. Gao's efforts will be a great example of collaboration and an inspiring contribution to the Mystic Watershed Collaborative.



The MWC is grateful to Tufts Institute of the Environment for supporting this project through Funds for Student Research Assistantships. The MWC looks forward to working with TIE in the future.

Editor: Rachel Szyman, Americorps VISTA Associate

Lincoln Filene Center for Community Partnerships
University College, Tufts University
Medford, MA 02155

Website: <http://www.tufts.edu/tie/mwc/>
Email: rachel.szyman@tufts.edu
Phone: (617)627-2811
Fax: (617)627-4142

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