



Canoe River Aquifer Project

Public Workshop to Select Projects that Protect Water Quality and Support Climate Resiliency

April 7, 2022... The Canoe River Aquifer is an underground source of drinking water, the only viable source for over half the people in Easton, Foxborough, Mansfield, Norton, and Sharon. The Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Network is working with these communities to identify and champion approximately ten Nature Based Solution projects in the Canoe River Aquifer area, and other nearby areas within the Taunton River watershed, to protect this critical drinking water source and prepare the region for climate change. Public input is important in selecting these projects, and the SNEP Network and the five towns are reaching out to residents to understand their concerns around these issues.

A virtual public workshop will be held on **Thursday, April 28, 2022, from 6-7:30 pm** to present a short list of potential Nature Based Solution projects in all five towns. This workshop follows a public meeting on September 29, 2021, and an online questionnaire, where we learned from residents about specific places in the region that experience more frequent flooding, need more green space, and have other impacts from climate change.

Potential projects were selected based on this public input and working with individual towns to understand their priorities to address roadway and property flooding, habitat restoration, and water quality, among other climate impacts. Through the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program, all five towns have collectively identified over 300 localized projects to address the impacts of climate change and natural hazards. Most of the short-listed NBS are part of these MVP plans. Hearing from residents will help the project team understand the issues residents are facing in their neighborhoods and prioritize projects that can offer multiple benefits and have the biggest impact.

At the virtual workshop, attendees will learn about the Canoe River Aquifer Project and how the short-listed Nature Based Solution projects address specific issues, but also offer multiple benefits to the community. It will be an opportunity to ask questions and give feedback on these projects in small groups organized by town. The SNEP Network will also talk about how individuals can support climate resilience in their own backyards.

Nature Based Solutions (NBS) use carefully designed landscapes, rather than pipes and drains, to filter polluted stormwater before it seeps back into the aquifer. NBS can be as complex as a newly constructed wetland, or as simple as a small rain garden or newly planted trees. NBS not only help keep our water clean, they reduce flooding, cool and clean the air, and minimize impacts of development and climate change.

The Canoe River Aquifer Project is led by a Steering Committee with representation from the towns of Easton, Foxborough, Mansfield, Norton, and Sharon, as well as local community groups, nonprofits, and interested citizens. Having an extensive public engagement process will help the SNEP Network and the five communities select projects that enable regional collaboration, prioritization, and support, giving them the leverage needed to secure funding and shepherd them through to final design and construction.

To register for the virtual public workshop on April 28, 2022 and learn more about the SNEP Network and the Canoe River Aquifer Project, visit <https://snepnetwork.org/taunton-river-watershed/>. For more information about the virtual public workshop, contact Krista Moravec at kmoravec@horsleywitten.com.

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