

TOWN OF WESTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
Project Submission Form – FY15

Submitter: Weston Conservation Commission

Submission Date: 9/29/14

Submitter's Address: PO Box 378, Weston, MA 02493

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Purpose: (Check all that apply)

- Acquisition, creation, or preservation of open space or the rehabilitation/restoration of open space if acquired or created with CPA funds

Project Name and Brief Description:

Preservation of the Charles River – Harvesting Invasive Water Chestnut.

The project in Weston is part of a larger effort to rid the Lakes District of the Charles River of invasive water chestnut. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in cooperation with the Cities of Waltham and Newton, the Town of Weston, the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA), and local residents have begun a 3-5 year effort to harvest this weed. Water chestnut can completely cover the water surface crowding out native surface plants and blocking sunlight from reaching underwater plants. Dissolved oxygen decreases during the summer and the water quality is further compromised when the great mass of vegetation decays in the fall. In addition to the detrimental effect on flora and fauna, boating and fishing become impossible.

Fortunately, since water chestnut reproduces by seed, harvesting it before seeds mature in late July can halt spread. Unfortunately, seeds can remain viable for up to 12 years (most germinate in a few years) so this is a multi-year project.

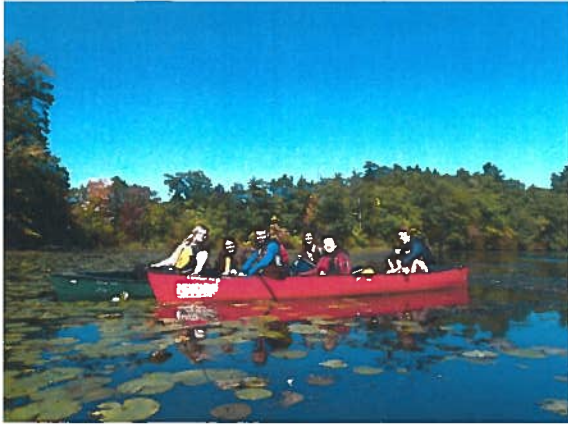
Kingsbury Cove in Weston is almost 100% covered by water chestnut. The water is shallow which limits the use of mechanical harvesters. In addition to clearing this approximately 10 acre bay, the project will continue to hand-pull scattered plants along the river's edge upstream adjacent to the Leo J. Martin Golf Course.

For the past two years DCR has committed about \$200,000 per year and the Cities of Waltham and Newton have funded harvesting along their shores. CRWA organizes about 500 volunteers per year to hand-pull in shallow areas which are hard to access by machine.

Funding from Weston would support paid workers to assist CRWA volunteers so that their efforts are more productive and will pay for hand harvesting to clear isolated plants and shallow areas which cannot be reached by machine.

How This Project Helps to Preserve Weston's Character:

Removing the water chestnut along the Weston portion of the Charles River will greatly improve and preserve the health and ecological integrity of the Charles River in this stretch of the river. Numerous residents enjoy canoeing and kayaking this section and in recent years, sections of Kingsbury Cove have been nearly impassable.



Weston High School Environmental Science Class conducts water quality and dissolved oxygen sampling on the Charles River in Weston annually

Projected Cost:

Fiscal Year	Total Project Cost	CPC Funds Requested	Other Funding Sources
2014	\$200,000	0	DCR, State Budget, Waltham and Newton city funds
2015	\$35,000	\$5,000	DCR, State Budget, Waltham and Newton city funds
2016	\$35,000	\$10,000	DCR, State Budget, Waltham and Newton city funds
2017	\$35,000	\$10,000	DCR, State Budget, Waltham and Newton city funds
Total	\$305,000	\$25,000	

For Community Preservation Committee Use:

Received on:

Associated Town Department/Committee:

Reviewed on:

Determination:



CRWA

Saving the Charles River since 1965

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 26, 2014

CRWA, DCR AND CANOE COMMIT TO REMOVING INVASIVE VEGETATION FROM THE CHARLES RIVER LAKES DISTRICT

WALTHAM, MA – On Thursday, June 26, 2014, Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA), along with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Citizens Alliance for NOxious weed Eradication (CANOE), a local citizen's group, celebrated along the banks of the Charles River in Waltham the start of large-scale mechanical harvesting of invasive aquatic weeds choking the Charles River Lakes District.

Located in the communities of Newton, Waltham and Weston, the Charles River Lakes District has long been obstructed by water chestnuts, whose prolific growth negatively impacts fish and wildlife habitat and impedes recreation in this heavily used section of the river. Every summer, CRWA coordinates volunteer groups to help remove the weeds by hand, and has strongly advocated for state funding for large scale mechanical harvesting to eradicate the problem.

"Aquatic invasive species present a significant problem for recreation, wildlife and overall health of a river," said DCR Commissioner Jack Murray. "Mechanical harvesting of water chestnuts is efficient and can prevent long-term deterioration of these important urban river areas."

To date, the harvesting project has targeted more than 60 infested acres in the Charles River Lakes District through a joint partnership between CRWA, DCR and CANOE. CRWA and CANOE have raised \$25,000 to assist with the project and hope these monies will be used to leverage a 2:1 match of DCR partnership funds this year for a total of \$75,000. DCR has hired Lycott Environmental of Spencer, MA to conduct the mechanical harvesting.

"For nearly a decade, CRWA has been committed to eradicating the invasive water chestnut from the Charles River Lakes District through volunteer hand-pulling and mechanical harvesting, said CRWA Executive Director Bob Zimmerman. "Our partnership with DCR and CANOE is crucial as we expand this effort and work to restore this historic section of the Charles."

"We are delighted to see the state restoring our river," said Don Swire of CANOE. "We expect that after a few years of mechanical harvesting, invasive water chestnut will be sparse and easy to keep in check. Meanwhile, starting this summer, canoeists, fishermen, and boaters of all sorts can again explore the many scenic coves and channels that in recent years had been off limits to people and wildlife due to the dense growth of invasive vegetation. This is a happy day for all of us who love the river."

The effort to eradicate invasive vegetation in the Charles is a multi-year effort, and DCR has made a commitment to addressing this issue, although having the necessary funds to complete the mechanical harvesting project is critical.



Many acres of the Charles River were cleared of water chestnut this summer thanks to the use of a mechanical weed harvester and countless volunteer hours hand pulling this invasive plant.

About Charles River Watershed Association:

Charles River Watershed Association's mission is to use science, advocacy and the law to protect, preserve and enhance the Charles River and its watershed. One of our country's first watershed organizations, CRWA formed in 1965 in response to public concern about the declining condition of the Charles River. Since its earliest days of advocacy, CRWA has figured prominently in major clean-up and watershed protection efforts that have dramatically improved the health of the Charles.