

Slide 1 - Title

Good afternoon members of the Boston Harbor Ecosystem Network.

My name is Linda DiAngelo President, of the Back River Watershed Association. Thank you for inviting us here today.

Slide 2 - Introductions

With me today is Scott Dowd, a Biologist at the Boston Aquarium, Co-Founder of Project PIABA, and a member of the Weymouth Conservation Commission. And Andrew Hultin, our Conservation Administrator in Weymouth.

Slide 3 - BRWA

The Weymouth Back River was formed 12,000 years ago during the period of the last glacial melting.

The Back River, as it often referred, is a sub-basin of Boston Harbor. A historic and treasured destination in the South Shore community just 12 miles south of Boston.

The Back River is located near Route 3A bordering the coastal towns of Weymouth and Hingham. It is distinguished as one of Massachusetts Special Places, A Local Scenic River, A Wildlife Refuge, and designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern in 1982.

Within the nature reservation are two large parks. On the Weymouth side is the 237-acre Great Esker Park, which features unique geological eskers some rising 90 feet the highest in North America and the longest northern wooded ridge in the region. On the Hingham side is the 484-acre Bare Cove Park. These parks offer beautiful views of Boston Harbor and exceptional passive recreational opportunities

The Back River Area is considered, "A priceless archeological resource" as it one of the only estuaries in Boston Harbor which still has a number of indigenous sites preserved in its soils. Members of the Eastern Archeological group that studied this area concluded evidence of various pre-historic cultures which occupied the area for thousands of years.

Slide 4 - BRWA

The Back River watershed consists of approximately 950 acres and includes; Weymouth's Great Pond, Mill River, Old Swamp River, which enter Whitman's Pond. On the Hingham side, Fresh River and Tucker's Swamp-Hockley Run also enter the Back River creating a highly productive estuary which empties into Hingham Bay.

Back River is a coastal, tidal river running a mile and a half through saltwater marshes and supports smelt, eel, and Weymouth Herring Run. The estuary serves as breeding ground for many native species of fin fish, shellfish, and aquatic life. The forested parks provide habitat for many forms of wildlife, unique plants, and 150 species of birds.

The Back River Watershed Association was founded in 2000 by the late Ms. Mary F. Toomey, a Weymouth High School English teacher, Town Meeting Member and ardent environmentalist. She founded the Great Esker Park Natural Science Center.

Ms. Toomey and Dr. Mary Sears, USNR Commander and oceanographer at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, worked for decades as champions to save the Back River, clean up major pollution, restore the fisheries and the Herring Run, and create nine open space parks in the towns of Weymouth and Hingham.

Our non-profit mission - To preserve, protect, and promote the Back River and its watershed largely in the coastal communities of Weymouth and Hingham, and parts of Abington Rockland, Holbrook, and Braintree.

Slide 5 – Ecology of the Back River

We have two publications. "The Ecology of the Weymouth Back River", published in 2017, is a comprehensive study of the river. It was prepared by the School of Marine Science & Technology at UMASS Dartmouth in partnership with the Town of Weymouth & the Back River Watershed Association.

Slide 6 – Two Women & a River

Our second publication, released in March on Amazon, is "Two Woman and a River" written by our founder, Mary Toomey. This book documents Mary's quest, with the help of Dr. Mary Sears. Two women of vision who worked to restore the entire Back River area.

Thank you. And now I'll turn this over to Scott Dowd who will discuss challenges maintaining to the Weymouth Herring Run.

Linda's edited version:

Boston Harbor Ecosystem Network (BHEN) - Narrative

Good afternoon Members of the Boston Harbor Ecosystem Network, thank you.

My name is Linda DiAngelo President, of the Back River Watershed Association. The Weymouth Back River formed 15,000 years ago during period of the last glacial melting. The Back River, as it often referred is a sub-basin of Boston Harbor. A historic and treasured destination in the South Shore community just 12 miles south of Boston.

The Back River is located near Route 3A bordering the coastal towns of Weymouth and Hingham. Within the nature reservation are two large parks.

On the Weymouth side Great Esker Park of 237 acres, featuring unique geological eskers some rising 90 feet the highest in North America and the longest northern wooded ridge in the region.

On the Hingham side Bare Cove Park of 484 acres.

It is distinguished as one of Massachusetts Special Places, A Local Scenic River, A Wildlife Refuge, and designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern in 1982.

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The Back River watershed consists of approximately 950 acres and includes; Weymouth's Great Pond, Mill River, Old Swamp River, which enter Whitman's Pond and in Hingham, Fresh River, and Tucker's Swamp-Hockley Run enter Back River thus creating a highly productive estuary which empties into Hingham Bay.

Back River is a coastal, tidal river running a mile and a half through saltwater marshes and receiving water from upland ponds, swamps, rivers, lakes, with smelt, eel, and Weymouth Herring Run. The estuary serves as breeding ground for many native species of fin fish, shellfish, and aquatic life.

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Linda J DiAngelo

President, Back River Watershed Association