



BACK RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES ITS 25th YEAR

BECOME A MEMBER

The Back River Watershed Association, incorporated in the year 2000, is pleased to celebrate our 25th year of our mission and vision for the future preservation, protection, and promotion of the beautiful and historic Weymouth Back River. The Back River is a short, tidal, coastal river that borders the towns of Weymouth and Hingham and is a sub-basin of Boston Harbor.

Our great friend and founder of the Back River Watershed Association, the late, great Mary F. Toomey, was a talented Weymouth High School teacher, Town Meeting Member, author, and ardent environmentalist. As a leading citizen, she served the community and the Back River Watershed Association and received many prestigious environmental awards. Mary “saved” the Back River area under the direction of Dr. Mary Sears, US Naval Commander and oceanographer from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Dr. Sears, a scientist emeritus, said, “The estuaries controlled the nursery for the offshore fisheries, the Back River Estuary, being one of the most important ecological food resources in the region, and that its resources were limitless, providing an important food source”.

Ms. Toomey worked for decades to save the land bordering the Back River, resulting in the creation of nine open-space public parks in Weymouth and Hingham. The larger parks, adjacent to Route 3A near the Back River Bridge, are Great Esker Park and Abigail Adams State Park in Weymouth, which Mary named after First Lady Abigail Adams of Weymouth, and Bare Cove Park and Stodder’s Neck in Hingham. The parks provide a quiet habitat for many forms of wildlife, including ducks, reptiles, wildflowers, unique plants, and over 150 bird species, including egrets, great blue & black-crowned night herons, red-tailed hawks, osprey, and the American Bald Eagle. Mary worked tirelessly to restore the river’s fisheries, including the historic Weymouth Herring Run, by spearheading efforts to reduce pollution and clean up the Bradley Fertilizer Works, a former Superfund site. Due to Mary’s boundless energies, today’s Weymouth Back River is a highly productive nursery that supports abundant aquatic life, including 31 species of finfish, shellfish, smelt, eel, and the herring run. A treasured destination for nature lovers on the South Shore, the Weymouth Back River is an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, one of “Massachusetts’ Special Places”, a Local Scenic River, and a Wildlife Refuge.

A granite marker at Mary’s Point in Webb Memorial State Park acknowledges Mary Toomey, often called a modern Abigail Adams, and Dr. Mary Sears. The marker reads, - “*Two valiant women of vision - True champions that saved the entire Back River Area*”. To learn more please read, “*Two Women and a River*” by author Mary Toomey available on Amazon.

If you are interested in joining the Back River Watershed Association, please visit us on Facebook or contact us through our website or email.

The Back River Watershed Association is a 501(c) (3) tax exempt organization organized to preserve, protect, and promote the Back River and its watershed in Weymouth, Hingham, and parts of Abington, Rockland, Holbrook & Braintree.

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