

THE BACK RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Participants, Back River Boat Tour, September 26, 2007

Ian Bowles, Secretary, MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Philip Griffiths, Undersecretary for the Environment, EEA
Mary Griffin, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game
Rick Sullivan, Commissioner, Department of Conservation and Recreation
Leslie-Ann McGee, MA Director, Office of Coastal Zone Management
Lisa Berry Engler, ACEC Coastal Coordinator, DCR
Jennifer Baker, Legislative Director for Secretary Bowles
Stephanie Cooper, Chief of Staff, DCR
Meg Colclough, Office of Public Affairs, EEA
Rick Corsi, Planner, DCR
Darryl A. Forgione, Sr. Project Engineer, DCR
Susan Kane, Islands District Manager, DCR

State Sen. Robert Hedlund
State Rep. Garrett Bradley and Steven Burm, Aide
State Rep. James Murphy

Bob Bentley, environmental chemist and aquatic toxicologist; President, Analytic Balance Co.; President, Friends of Webb State Park and the Back River
Dr. Brian Howes, Professor, School of Marine Science and Technology; Director, Coastal Systems Program at UMass Dartmouth; head of MA Estuaries Project
Dr. David White, Sr. Research Assistant at Coastal Systems Program at UMass Dartmouth
George Loring III, past chair, Back River Committee; Weymouth Herring Warden
Mary Toomey, past chair, Back River Committee; founder Back River Watershed Assoc., and **Linda DeAngelo**, Assistant
Russ Wilder, URS Corporation's VP of Environmental Services for N.E. in charge of hazardous waste cleanup and restoration at Webb State Park and environs
Deborah LaMond, ConocoPhillips Site Manager at Webb State Park cleanup
Don Cuddahy, Commodore, South Shore Yacht Club
George Mutch II, Vice Commodore, South Shore Yacht Club
Brooks Robbins, Vice-chair, Bare Cove Park Committee
Dave McDermott, RDW Group, PR for ConocoPhillips
Cheryl Hollis, URS Corporation, Administrative Assistant
Ken Corson III, Deputy Harbormaster, Hingham
Mark Brennan, Assistant Harbormaster, Hingham
Bill Holland, Assistant Harbormaster, Hingham
Ben Matthews, Assistant Harbormaster, Hingham
Paul L. Milone, Harbormaster and Clam Warden, Weymouth
Lou Gropp, Boat Captain, DCR
Kevin Tufts, Boat Captain, DCR

Mary Anne Jackson, co-chair, Back River Watershed Association
Kathleen McGovern, co-chair, Back River Watershed Association

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS WHO MADE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE:

Al Dugan, Forest & Parks Supervisor III, DCR
South Shore Yacht Club
John Souther, Harbormaster and Clam Warden, Hingham
Shaw's Supermarket, Cohasset
Shaw's Supermarket, Weymouth
Stop & Shop Supermarket, Hingham
Stop & Shop Supermarket, Weymouth
URS Corporation for luncheon
George Loring III, Loring Studios, Hingham, for photography

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September 26, 2007

Message from Mary Toomey for the
Back River Watershed Boat Trip

In 1971, Dr. Mary Sears, of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, asked me to help her save the Weymouth Back River and its valuable resources. Dr. Sears was a well known rivers and oceans expert who had travelled over the world giving advice concerning these waterways.

During World War II she instituted the Oceanographic Division of the U. S. Navy, enabling the identification of areas within which U.S. submarines, traveling submerged around the world, would be safe from detection. For this reason, the U. S. Navy named a ship in her honor.

Dr. Sears was upset that estuaries and salt marshes in Massachusetts were being destroyed. Her concern was that marine food resources were at risk, and she identified the Weymouth Back River as a valuable estuary which could feed the offshore fisheries to a wonderful extent, saying that this estuary had been preserved only through the acquisition of the area by the U.S. Navy in 1912. However, the area was now about to be given up, and the estuary would become vulnerable to extinction.

Dr. Sears had vision as well as a scientific background. In 1971, she predicted that, in the 1980's, the State of Massachusetts would produce a disaster report for the condition of the fisheries, that the country would be at war around the turn of the century, and that the price of gas would eventually reach \$5 a gallon. As a result of this, the cost of food, especially meat, being trucked would rise, and people would turn to fish as protein. Dr. Sears was very worried that large amounts of fish would not be available. She further predicted that, following the rise of oil and gasoline costs, there would be a severe depression.

All of this convinced me that I should agree to help Dr. Sears carry out her plan. This plan consisted of three parts:

- (1) Acquire all vacant land abutting the river. Use it for passive recreation only.
- (2) Get rid of all pollution.
- (3) Bring in private agencies to increase fish production. (She pointed out that the opportunity for experimentation was limitless, that oysters could be brought back, that the clams were the same variety as Cape clams, and should be cared for, etc.)

Together we worked as volunteers on our own time, depending on the wonderful people God put into our paths, and we persevered

over 32 years in getting 9 parks, cleaning up 28 million gallons of pollution which went into the river yearly, and have now come to our own final goal - a good assessment of the estuary, its fisheries, wildlife and watershed, to be conducted by two of Dr. Sears compatriots at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution: Dr. Brian Howes and Dr. David White, both experts on estuaries.

My concerns at present are the ever-present developers who see an opportunity to make money by utilizing our restored area. This must be carefully watched so that the resources we've worked so hard to preserve are not lost for the people of this state.

For example, the Back River Committee, through the testimony of experts, including both the highly regarded harbor masters of Weymouth and Hingham, concluded that no marinas or moorings should be introduced into the Area of Critical Environmental Concern. This area, the nursery for the offshore fisheries, should be protected and conserved, with all efforts going to conserve the fisheries. Concerned with these findings Mr. Robert Bouve, one of the finest of Hingham Harbor masters, identified other sites for moorings and suggestions for sensible numbers which the river could sustain.

As I acquiesce to my retirement because of age and health, I am very fortunate that two exceptionally gifted women, one from Weymouth and one from Hingham, have volunteered to act as co-chairmen of the Back River Watershed Association. I am eternally grateful to them, and know that with the cooperation of the new Watershed Association and the excellent people appointed by this administration to head the state environmental agencies, the Back River Estuary and its many resources will be protected and preserved for future generations.

The three goals that I envision being promoted by the Back River Watershed Association are as follows:

- (1) To promote the close cooperation of government and private agencies in preserving this valuable estuary, its breeding ponds and the many algae species which provide nourishment to other life forms, as well as promoting research that supports and protects the life of the estuary.
- (2) To preserve the waterways, surrounding lands, wildlife, trees, and other vegetation in order to support the healthy recreation of citizens of all ages to enjoy for generations to come.
- (3) To utilize this area for educational purposes by individuals and institutions of all kinds to promote an understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the many wonders of the natural world, and the importance of its protection and preservation as one of our greatest legacies to future generations.

Sincerely,
Mary F. Torrey

Dr. Mary Sears was a Commander in the United States Naval Reserve and a leading oceanographer. Throughout her career, she was associated with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI). Few members of the staff have been more closely involved in the development of WHOI than was Sears. She was present for many of the early discussions organizing the Institution and acquiring its first ships, the 142-foot ketch *Atlantis* and 40-foot coastal vessel *Asterias*, and its first laboratory, later named the Bigelow Laboratory.

Following mostly summer appointments in the 1930s, she served on the scientific staff as a planktonologist from 1940 to 1963, when a new department structure was organized under Director Paul Fye and she was named a Senior Scientist in the Biology Department, a position she held until her retirement in 1970. She was named a Scientist Emeritus in 1978.

Dr. Mary Sears was awarded the Johannes Schmidt medal in 1946 for contributions to marine research and Navy oceanography during WWII. Her other work included, co-founding editor of the journal *Deep-Sea Research*, founding editor of the journal *Progress in Oceanography*. In 1999 a U.S. Navy oceanographic survey ship was named after her - the USNS MARY SEARS.

Mary Toomey educated at Boston University (M.A.), was a pioneer in the environmental awareness movement. In addition to a 41 year teaching career in Weymouth Schools, Mary spent more than four decades saving the Back River Estuary, a tidal river lying between Weymouth and Hingham.

Working under the direction of Dr. Mary Sears of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Mary Toomey worked tirelessly to obtain all available lots abutting the river, clean up pollution, and restore the fisheries. There are now nine open space parks surrounding the estuary, the waters are clean, the shellfish beds are open, and the Herring Run has been restored.

Mary Toomey founded Great Esker Park Natural Science Center, and is the recipient of numerous awards and distinctions including the prestigious Visionary Award from the Gulf of Maine Council, U.S. EPA's 1991 Environmental Merit Award for exceptional work and commitment on behalf of the environment, BU Academy of Distinguished Graduates, Conservation Teacher of Year Award, Audubon Teacher of the Year Award, the Weymouth Rotary Club Service Award and was named Woman of the Year, from the Theresa Heinz Foundation.

At the age of 88 Mary Toomey began documenting the inspiring true story of the impact in which two women can have on the environment.

DEDICATION CEREMONY OF MARYS' POINT

WEBB MEMORIAL STATE PARK,
NORTH WEYMOUTH, MA

Saturday, October 10, 2009 10:00 AM



Dr. Mary Sears



Mary Toomey

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

American Legion Post #79

ConocoPhillips

Russ Wilder - URS

Massachusetts Department of
Conservation and Recreation

Susan Kane - DCR

Dave McDermitt - RDW Group

Weymouth Fire Department

Weymouth Police Department

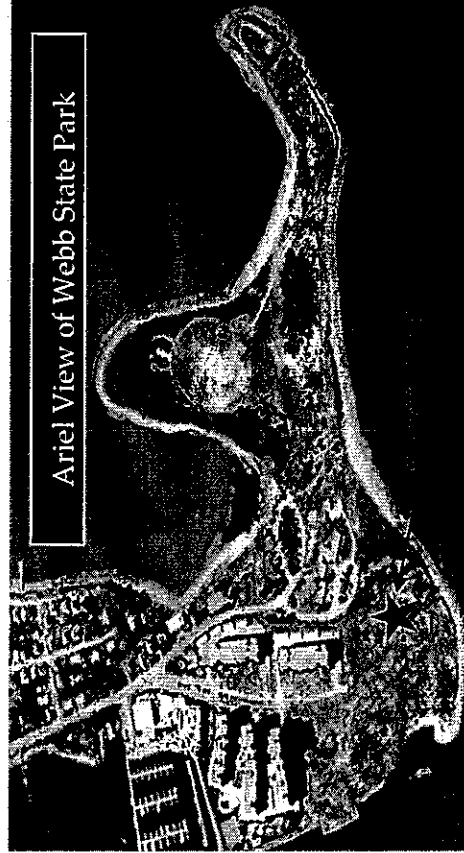
South Shore Yacht Club

Back River WaterShed Association

*And for everyone else who made
this special event possible...*

*Please join us for refreshments compliments of
Representative James M. Murphy.*

Ariel View of Webb State Park



Schedule of Events

OPENING CEREMONIES

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

Weymouth Veterans
American Legion Color Guard
Weymouth Police Department
Weymouth Fire Department

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Frank Dilorenzo

INVOCATION

Monsignor Peter Martocchio

SPEAKING PROGRAM

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

State Representative James Murphy

MASSACHUSETTS SENATOR

Robert Hedlund

URS CORPORATION

Russ Wilder
Licensed Site Professional

A PASSAGE FROM

"TWO WOMEN AND A
RIVER"

Laura Kischitz
President, Sustainable Life Solutions

A MESSAGE FROM THE
TOOMEY SISTERS

Read by:
Linda DiAngelo

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

*One More River (Danny Coyle -
Acoustic Blues Singer)*

THE LIFE OF

MARY TOOMEY

Bob Bentley
President of Analytical Balance

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

*So Sang The River (Danny Coyle -
Acoustic Blues Singer)*

THE LIFE OF

DR. MARY SEARS

Kathleen McGovern

BENEDICTION

Monsignor Peter Martocchio

UNVEILING

Speakers and former students of
Mary Toomey

Letting their lives speak: The visionaries of the Gulf of Maine

By Andi Riorden, Editor

Each year, the Gulf of Maine Council gives two Visionary Awards to individuals or organizations in each state and province bordering the Gulf. With innovation and creativity, these visionaries illustrate a deep devotion to improving the health and future well being of this vast and precious watershed.

Mary F. Toomey

In the mid-1960s, Mary F. Toomey an English teacher at Weymouth High School was approached by a member of the local conservation commission asking if she'd help protect an unusual parcel of land along the Weymouth Black River near Boston. The request would forever change her life. Before long, Mary set up a nature center near an area known for its outstanding glacial eskers.

The success of the center and Toomey's drive to call attention to Back River's marshes, headwater ponds, uplands fish and birds, attracted Dr. Mary Sears, an oceanographer at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. "Dr. Sears told me that the Back River estuaries controlled the nursery for the offshore fisheries," Toomey said. "Then she asked me: 'Will you come down to Woods Hole and I'll teach you the value of this estuary?'" And Toomey said yes. There, Sears handed her *The Fisheries of the Gulf of Maine* by Henry Bigelow, thus beginning a long tutelage and friendship. Sears died in 1997.

But with Sear's inspiration, Toomey evolved into a passionate grassroots activist. She was instrumental in creating the Weymouth Back River Area of Critical Environmental Concern in 1982; helped identify a hazardous waste site on Weymouth Neck that is now being cleaned up and restored by Conoco-Philips Inc; and lobbied extensively for 15 years for a state park on the Weymouth Back River—an effort that led to the opening of the Abigail Adams State Park last summer.

Says Toomey: "I owe it all to Dr. Sears and her giving me *The Fisheries of the Gulf of Maine*. I'll never forget that book."



Photo courtesy of M.F. Toomey

WHOI News Releases

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Relations Office

Contact: Shelley Lauzon

November 12, 1999

508-289-2270 or 289-3340

Dr. Mary Sears, Scientist Emeritus at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI), received the first "Women Pioneers in Oceanography" award in 1994 from the WHOI Women's Committee. (1994 Photo by Tom Kleindinst, WHOI)



The United States Navy Names New Ship for Long-time WHOI Scientist

The U.S. Navy's newest oceanographic survey vessel has been named the USNS MARY SEARS in honor of the long-time Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution scientist and pioneer in oceanography. Mary Sears (1905-1997) was a guiding force in the development of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) and a major force in uniting the world oceanographic community while serving both her community and her country.

"Commander Mary Sears, USNR (W), established a small oceanographic unit in the Hydrographic Office during World War II and helped expand the role of applied oceanography within the Navy," said Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig in announcing the honor. "During the war, she studied and reported oceanographic conditions affecting naval operations. Her most important reports, 'Submarine Supplements to the Sailing Directions,' predicted the presence of thermoclines under which submarines could escape enemy detection." According to the Office of the Oceanographer of the Navy, this is the first Navy oceanographic ship named for a woman.

"This is a wonderful tribute to Mary Sears, someone who so quietly contributed to oceanography over so many years," said WHOI Director Robert B. Gagosian. "Her many contributions were not just to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, where she was a guiding force from our founding in 1930, but for the entire oceanographic community and for the U.S. Navy."

