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Town of Ipswich Awarded Coastal Resilience Grant Latest Phase to include Videos and Interactive Story Map by Ipswich River

IPSWICH, MA. January 6, 2021. With an eye to the future, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) has awarded a coastal resilience grant to the Town of Ipswich. The grant will address critical infrastructure and planning needs along the Ipswich River. The project includes vegetative improvements to stabilize the riverbank, upgrades to the sewage infrastructure, and videos and an interactive story map focused on the nearby Riverwalk trail. The video series will be produced by Ipswich River Watershed Association with assistance from Ipswich Community Access Media, with the first video set to premiere in April.

“This is the first time we're telling the bigger story about what's happening in our towns,” says Kristen Grubbs, Ipswich Town Planner. “Projects like these take years to permit and plan. They require a lot of people in different departments and agencies working together, yet we don't usually see that process in action. With climate change bringing new concerns about flooding and erosion, we're seeing more and more how important it is for our towns to learn from each other and figure out ways to expedite restoration projects like this one.”

To date, Massachusetts CZM has funded several phases of the project through its Coastal Resilience Grant Program. “The Baker-Polito Administration is committed to strengthening the resilience of the Commonwealth's coastal communities, and is pleased to support the third phase of the Ipswich Riverwalk Restoration,” said CZM Director Lisa Engler. “By using a nature-based approach to increase resilience in the community and including the development of videos and online information, this project will help support this important work in other coastal areas by sharing lessons learned and best practices.”

The coastal resiliency project was recently discussed at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Parker-Ipswich-Essex Rivers Restoration Partnership, also known as PIE-Rivers. PIE-Rivers is the first watershed-scale collaborative in Massachusetts, having formed in 2011. Over 40 representatives attended the Annual Meeting, which was held virtually this year due to the pandemic.

Speaking on behalf of Ipswich River Watershed Association, Environmental Planner Patrick Lynch calls the project “an open invitation” to collaborate on the video series. “We're calling on towns across all three watersheds to let us know what you're working

on.” Lynch, a filmmaker and public policy advocate, hopes the video series will reach residents all over the state. “We want to reveal what the future will look like as our climate changes and we really start to embrace the huge benefits of collaborating. Most importantly, we want to reveal how towns make these projects happen despite all the challenges.”

Executive Director of Ipswich River, Wayne Castonguay, also supports the project. “We commend the Town of Ipswich for its forward-thinking approach to protecting the Ipswich River. With two severe droughts in the last five years and more people worried about climate, we’re at a crossroads.” For Castonguay, the project will help answer important questions. “What will the future of the North Shore look like? Will we protect our infrastructure, collaborate, and create more beautiful spaces for residents? Or will we sit and watch while life gets more difficult with each new drought or flood, or severe storm? We’re at this point where residents want to see their towns stepping up. This is one project that aims to do exactly that.”

To subscribe to additional news or to let Ipswich River know about a project in your town, contact Patrick Lynch, Ipswich River Environmental Planner at plynch@ipswichriver.org

About Ipswich River

Ipswich River (Ipswich River Watershed Association) is a leading 501(c)3 nonprofit working to create a more resilient North Shore. We represent over 350,000 residents and businesses who depend on the watershed for clean water. Ipswich River and our municipal and nonprofit partners work across 28 communities on the North Shore, from Salem to Newbury. Since 2011 we convene PIE-Rivers (the Parker-Ipswich-Essex Rivers Restoration Partnership), the first cross-watershed collaborative in Massachusetts. Together, PIE-Rivers represents the many groups, agencies, towns and residents promoting healthy rivers and ecosystems in our waterways. For more info visit ipswichriver.org and pie-rivers.org.