When I started at the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) in 2009, my role was to lead the water-quality monitoring program. Beyond water quality, MyRWA also worked on policy issues and conducted outreach in our community. Now ten years later, MyRWA has eight core programs that are working to improve the Mystic River watershed.

One thing that has not changed is you. Throughout the history of this organization we have depended on individuals who care about their communities. You help remove invasive species, demand improvements to our rivers, lakes, parks and paths, and you donate. Thank you for making a difference in our area and for your efforts. Together, your work and dedication have made a difference.

Your support is critical to our success. We are grateful for your continued support and dedication.

Sincerely,
Patrick Herron, Ph.D., Executive Director

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Y E A R - I N - R E V I E W

THE DIRECTOR

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MAKING ROOM FOR THE RIVER
Ten—the number of founding municipalities that launched the Resilient Mystic Collaborative this past September. The group is charged with planning for climate change at the watershed level and making sure our communities are resilient and healthy in the face of what is to come. First off the mark: a letter signed by all 21 mayors and town managers asking for $5 million from the State Environmental Bond to make the Amelia Earhart Dam, the 1960s-era barrier separating the saltwater, tidal Mystic from the freshwater portion, more flood resistant. Designed to have four pumps, the dam currently has only three pumps operating and another will certainly be needed to deal with the more intense rainfall events predicted for the future.

EDUCATING YOUTH USING OUR RIVER AS A LIVING LABORATORY
Testing water quality, creating models that demonstrate how natural systems clean water, counting herring at the Mystic Lakes Dam—these are just some of the activities area students were able to take part in this past year. In 2018 we worked with 11 schools and eight youth-serving organizations to host 34 educational sessions in the classroom and along the Mystic—thereby engaging 550 students from eight communities. Through these efforts we are providing high-quality, hands-on opportunities in nature to both enrich learning and inspire youth to become lifelong watershed stewards.

BRINGING DOLLARS TO THE MYSTIC
A 2006 oil spill in the lower Mystic resulted in a significant financial settlement to benefit local restoration. A majority of those funds have been spent outside our watershed. MyRWA and GreenRoots successfully fought for the final $1.25M to be spent on restoration in the Mystic where the damages occurred. Our work is not done though, for 2019 we will submit a comprehensive restoration plan to ensure that these funds are used on local restoration projects.

CONNECTING 25 MILES FROM THE MYSTIC LAKES TO BOSTON HARBOR
In 2018 we added Charlestown to the growing list of communities where we are working to improve connectivity and access along the Mystic. While there are currently many gaps in the path network, Charlestown has the potential to unite the Mystic River Greenway with the Boston Harborwalk. Look for two projects coming this year that will begin the transformation of this area: the Encore Boston Harborwalk in Everett and the Draw 7 Extension/MBTA Bus Yard path in Somerville/Boston. Further upstream, a new boardwalk and wetland area for flood storage will open at Wellington Park along Mill Brook in Arlington (Summer 2019). In case you missed it, the path from Route 16 (Medford) to Blessing of the Bay Boathouse Park (Somerville) was recently restored and repaved. Walk or run this new section at our Herring Run and Paddle Race on May 18th!

TACKLING STORMWATER: A THREAT TO CLEAN WATER
The Mystic River and the Mystic Lakes continue to enjoy cleaner water than ever. Despite this good news, there is growing concern with stormwater pollution due to the high percentage of impervious surface (parking lots, roads, rooftops) in our watershed. We launched a Stormwater Education Collaborative with 13 area municipalities to help cities and towns educate their community about pollution and how to prevent it. We are also partnering with municipalities throughout our watershed to implement improvements—like the two new bioswales recently built in Arlington, which are now filtering rain instead of allowing it to flow directly into our storm drains and then untreated into our river.

MEET THE TEAM

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Patrick Herron, Executive Director
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