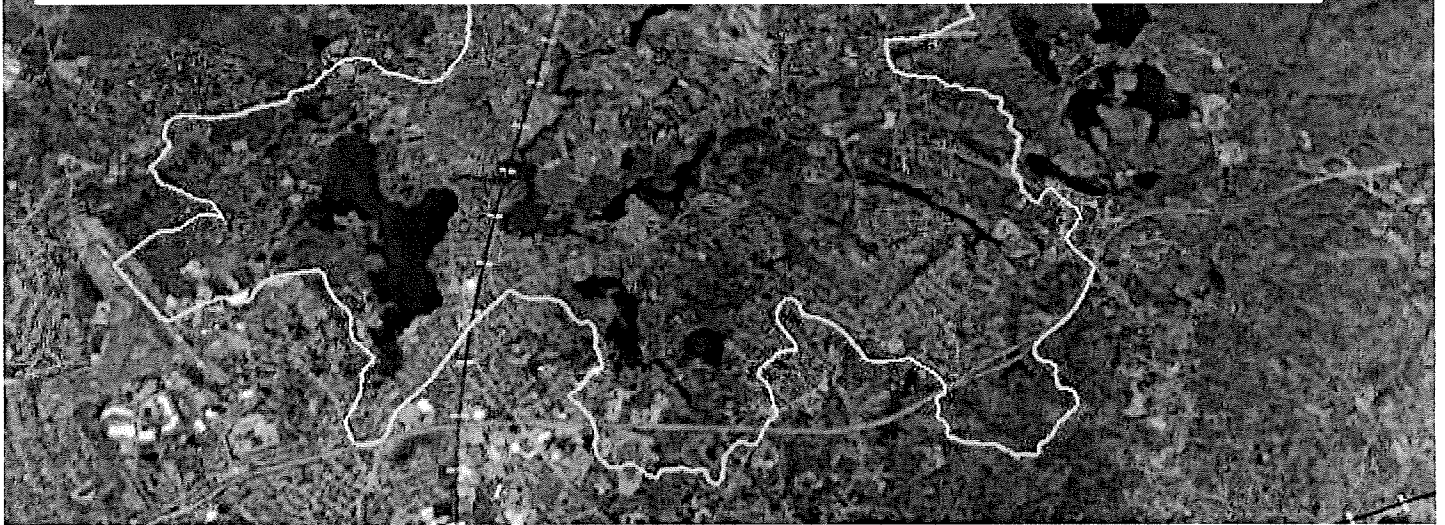


# Planning for a Resilient Miles River Watershed

An MVP Project led by the Town of Wenham



## The Miles River

The Miles River is the largest tributary of the Ipswich River lower basin, with its headwaters beginning in Beverly and flowing through Wenham and Hamilton before merging with the Ipswich River near County Road in Ipswich. The river passes residential, commercial, educational, recreational, and agricultural areas as it winds its way through these four municipalities, and its watershed area covers a significant portion of Wenham and Hamilton. Spanning a total length of nearly 9.5 miles, the waters of the Miles River intermix with the Ipswich River, eventually emptying into Plum Island Sound. The river plays a vital ecological role in supporting wildlife and significant wetland areas, as well as providing public and private water supply.

## About the Project

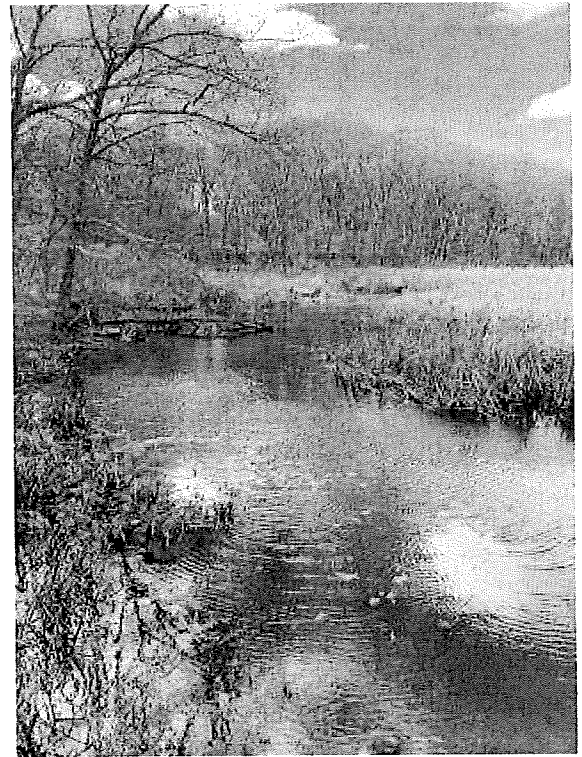
A healthy Miles River benefits the communities around it and the larger Ipswich River watershed. But the river faces big challenges, like blocked water flow, low water levels, and pollution. These problems make it harder for the river to provide clean drinking water, support wildlife, and offer places for people to enjoy nature. Climate change makes things even worse, with heavier rainstorms, rising temperatures, and longer droughts. Helping the Miles River become more resilient to these changes will protect the people, animals, and plants that depend on it.

The Town of Wenham, in partnership with the Ipswich River Watershed Association, applied for and received funding from

the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program to support the development of a Miles River Watershed Action Plan.

The project will:

- Assess current watershed conditions by incorporating previous studies & reports, conducting additional analysis on potential impacts, assessing natural resources and the potential for nature-based solutions to address issues like flooding, and bringing together community input across the watershed.
- Develop a Miles River Watershed Action Plan with implementation steps and framework for post-grant coordination, including reconvening the Miles River Collaborative. This will strengthen community capacity to advance resilience efforts beyond the grant's scope and promote a regional approach to solutions.
- Identify and select two (2) project sites in the Miles River Watershed and develop conceptual plans for nature-based solutions.



Miles River - November 2024

## PROJECT PARTNERS

## Increasing Community Resilience

Improving river function and watershed health will help mitigate a number of climate change impacts, including those related to freshwater ecosystem degradation and loss of biodiversity.

Most Urgent Priority Impacts. ResilientMass Plan.

River restoration is considered a crucial strategy to build climate resilience by allowing rivers to naturally regulate water flow, absorb excess water during floods, replenish groundwater during droughts, and provide diverse habitats that can better withstand extreme weather events associated with climate change; essentially, restoring a river's natural processes enhances its ability to adapt to changing climate conditions.

This project will also build capacity for climate resilience by improving understanding and coordination between the municipalities in the watershed, making future planning and implementation more effective.

## Terms to Know:

### Climate Resilience

The ability to prepare for, recover from, and adapt to climate change and associated impacts. ([2023 ResilientMass Plan](#))

### Nature-Based Solution

A nature-based solution (NbS) is an action that uses natural features to address environmental and social challenges. NbS can help with climate change, disaster risk reduction, food and water security, and biodiversity loss.

## Community Priorities

Restoration of the Miles River is identified as a high priority item for the Town of Wenham in the 2019 Hazard Mitigation and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan.

*Protect the Miles River and surrounding environment.*

*(p 31)*

*Collaborate with the surrounding communities of Beverly, Hamilton, and Ipswich by re-instating the Miles River Collaborative or a similar organization.*

*(p 31)*

*Restoration of the Miles River is a priority for Wenham. The river flows from Beverly through*

*extensive wetlands before reaching the Ipswich River in Ipswich. It provides excellent riparian and wetland habitat, but faces problems including low flow velocity, nutrient inputs, and barriers to flow.*

*(p 48)*

## Upcoming Events

Community engagement is an important part of the MVP process. Click on the links below to find out more and register to attend upcoming events, and [subscribe to our email list](#) to receive project updates throughout the process.

- **Action Party: Become a Riverwatch Ambassador** -  
Wednesday, February 26th from 6:00 - 7:30 pm at Wenham Town Hall
  - *Join staff from the Town of Wenham and the Ipswich River Watershed Association for a hands-on action party to learn about the Riverwatch program and how we are working to increase the resiliency of the Miles River! You'll be taught how we monitor water quality throughout our watershed, introduce you to the equipment we use, and enable you to become a part of the Riverwatch program! [RSVP here!](#)*
- **Miles River Walking Tour** - Details Coming Soon!
- **Action Party: Seeds of Change** - Tuesday, April 1st from 3:00 - 4:30 pm at Wenham Council on Aging. All ages welcome!
  - *Welcome spring with some practical steps to make our watershed more climate resilient! Learn about the Miles River watershed and the Town's MVP project, the role native plants play in our ecosystem, and make a "seed ball" to take home. [RVSP here!](#)*
- **Climate Cafe** - Details Coming Soon!

This project is funded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program.

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