

# Press Release



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## For Immediate Release—Public Interest Story—Stormwater Pollution

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### An Ounce of Prevention...

Spruce Creek is at its tipping point. Its water quality continues to degrade because of pollutants carried by stormwater runoff into the Creek. What does that mean? It means the loss of an important natural resource for clamming, fishing, boating, swimming, and admiring nature's wonders. It also means the possibility of devalued waterfront property values.

The Residential Conservation Practices Team of the Spruce Creek Watershed Improvement Project has sent out a letter this week to all residents and owners of Spruce Creek shoreline and wetland property in Kittery and Eliot. The letter includes an invitation to homeowners to join in getting the word out and participating in several ways:

- Spruce Creek shoreline and wetland property owners can volunteer their house, invite neighbors over and host an informational meeting to understand the issues facing our Creek. The SCWIP project team will come and discuss the issues and possible solutions.
- These homeowners can attend a neighborhood informational meeting. Let us know if you'd like to learn, and we'll find you a social to attend if there isn't one in your neighborhood.
- And/or they can volunteer their property as a demonstration project including simple and affordable landscaping techniques. The grant will cover half of the costs or labor and provide the help of program partners including landscapers, nurseries, and volunteer gardeners. Examples of individual yard projects to be completed in spring and summer of 2009 may include restoring a buffer area along the water's edge with native plants or locating and planting a rain garden, as well as other types of "yardscaping".

According to Team Leader for Residential Practices, Ron Ledgett, "Spruce Creek shoreline and wetland property owners volunteering their yards as a demonstration site is a great way for residents to participate in this important project. Everyone benefits: property owners get up-to-date stormwater solutions at a cut rate and they are recognized within the community for their participation. Additionally, we get to educate others in our town about stopping runoff pollution. Spruce Creek gets to be a little bit cleaner."

Pollution runs into Spruce Creek when rain or snowmelt runs over land, roads, roofs, parking lots and other hard surfaces. Some rain sinks into land and replenishes groundwater. What doesn't sink picks up oil, fertilizer, pet waste, herbicides, litter and eroding soil along the way and flows untreated into the closest creek, stream or river. The more paved surfaces like those you find in neighborhoods, the more runoff occurs. Places that did not used to experience flooding now do. Algae blooms, fish kills, higher water treatment costs and revised flood plain maps are some unsavory results.

**How to participate:** To help Spruce Creek, please contact the Residential Practices Team of SCWIP about having a demonstration site on your property, contact Marty Rea at [scwip\[at\]comcast.net](mailto:scwip[at]comcast.net) or call 207-439-6461. To learn more about the Spruce Creek Watershed Improvement Project visit <http://www.protectkitterywaters.org>

**SUGGESTED SIDEBAR:**

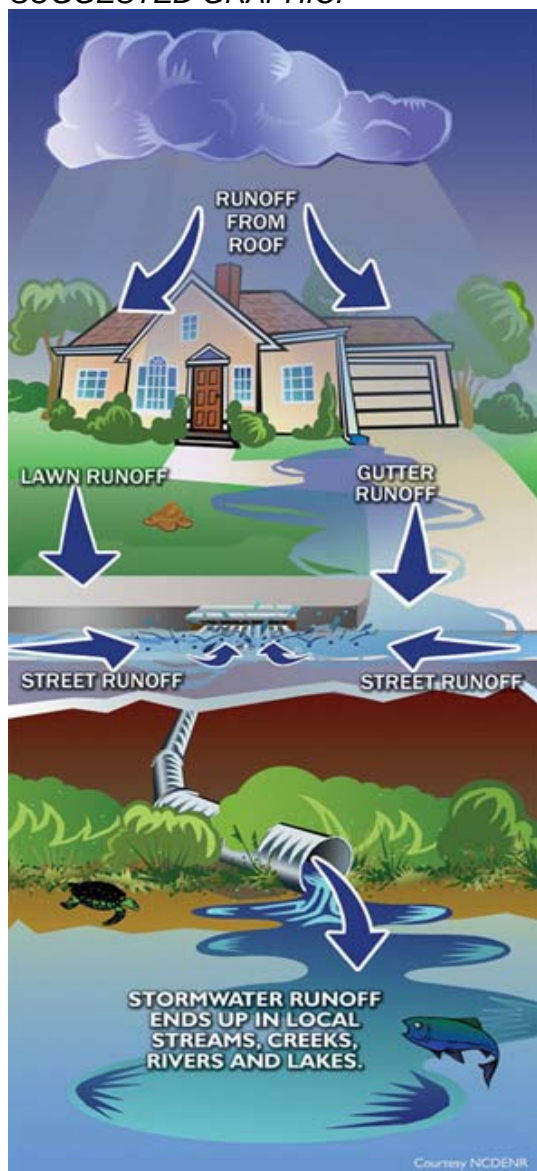
**What can you do now? Become a creek-friendly home.**

There are plenty of things you can take care of on your own property to make sure you're limiting the quantity of storm water that "runs off" as well as eliminating the pollution that it can carry with it.

- Keep or plant gardens as a buffer at the base of hills, in ditches, and along the water or road's edge
- Reduce the amount of yard that is planted in grass
- Avoid using excessive pesticides, fertilizers, and water on lawn and gardens
- Mulch and plant bare spots to reduce soil erosion – especially on slopes and at the water's edge
- Use a rain barrel to collect rooftop rain and provide free water for your lawns and gardens
- Create rain gardens to capture and slow down runoff
- Pick up after your pet
- Compost your yard waste away from streams and the shoreline
- Have your septic system inspected and pumped at least every 3 to 5 years

For these and more ideas on making your home more creek-friendly consider taking the pledge online at [www.protectkitterywaters.org/pledge](http://www.protectkitterywaters.org/pledge) - and you'll receive a sign to display in your yard!

**SUGGESTED GRAPHIC:**



# Kittery homeowners asked to save Spruce Creek

By **Dave Choate**

dchoate@seacoastonline.com

November 13, 2008 6:00 AM

KITTERY, Maine — The race to save Spruce Creek will continue, as those working to clean up the creek seek to enlist local homeowners.

According to Spruce Creek Improvement Project spokeswoman Phyllis Ford, the creek is at "a tipping point" where the quality of the water continues to degrade. With about half the town in the watershed, pollutants and other harmful substances are being carried during rain from lawns and driveways down to the creek itself.

"It's not just the people on the water's edge," Ford said.

With the help of a \$69,670 grant from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's 319 Stormwater program and \$106,000 in matching funds from the organization, efforts are under way to establish informational meetings on the creek with neighbors or friends in their households. After the grant money is used on these projects, Ford said, there will likely a celebration of cleanup and prevention efforts sometime next fall.

As for the health of the creek, Ford said the shellfish populations in the creek are not healthy, a good indicator that things are not all right in the water. Algae blooms, dead fish and higher water treatment costs form the

"The shellfish are kind of like a canary in a coal mine," she said.

Ron Ledgett, SCWIP team leader for residential practices, said the quality of the creek's water is noticeably worse than it was a couple of years ago. He said rallying homeowners around the idea of saving the creek is a challenge, but can be done with relatively low costs and small amounts of work.

"The real challenge is reaching out to people," Ledgett said.

Creating a vegetative buffer between the water or road and a lawn is one of the best ways to keep pollutants from reaching the water, due to the ability of long-rooted plants to block them. Ledgett said he hopes to have a few homes participate and envisions at least one model property that will make use of several creek-saving measures.

The eventual goal is to keep the creek from being ruined forever, he said.

Those seeking more information or looking to have their home serve as a demonstration should call Marty Rea at (207) 439-6461 or e-mail at [scwip@comcast.net](mailto:scwip@comcast.net).

## TIPS

- Keep or plant gardens as a buffer at the base of hills, in ditches, and along the water or road's edge

- Reduce the amount of yard that is planted in grass
- Avoid using excessive pesticides, fertilizers and water on lawn and gardens
- Use a rain barrel to collect rooftop rain and provide free water for your lawns and gardens
- Create rain gardens to capture and slow down runoff
- Pick up after your pet

— Spruce Creek Improvement Project

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## Help the Spruce Creek Watershed Improvement Project prevent pollution

November 21, 2008

**KITTERY** - Spruce Creek is at its tipping point.

The water quality of this important watershed area continues to degrade because of pollutants carried by stormwater runoff into the creek.

What does that mean? It means the loss of an important natural resource for clamming, fishing, boating, swimming and admiring nature's wonders. It also means the possibility of devalued waterfront property.

Pollution runs into Spruce Creek when rain or snowmelt runs over land, roads, roofs, parking lots and other hard surfaces. Some rain sinks into land and replenishes groundwater. What doesn't sink in picks up oil, fertilizer, pet waste, herbicides, litter and eroding soil along the way and flows untreated into the closest creek, stream or river. The more paved surfaces like those you find in neighborhoods, the more runoff occurs. Places that did not used to experience flooding now do. Algae blooms, fish kills, higher water treatment costs and revised flood plain maps are some unsavory results.

The Residential Conservation Practices Team of the Spruce Creek Watershed Improvement Project (SCWIP), which has been funded by a grant from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection 319 Stormwater program, recently sent a letter to all residents and property owners along the Spruce Creek shoreline and wetland property in Kittery and Eliot inviting them to join in getting the word out about protecting this resource and participating in several ways.

For example, Spruce Creek shoreline and wetland property owners can volunteer their house, invite neighbors over and host an informational meeting to understand the issues, and the SCWIP project team will come and discuss the issues and possible solutions. Homeowners can attend neighborhood informational meetings or even volunteer their property as a demonstration project including simple and affordable landscaping techniques. The grant will cover half of the costs or labor and provide the help of program partners including landscapers, nurseries, and volunteer gardeners.

Examples of individual yard projects to be completed in spring and summer of 2009 may include restoring a buffer area along the water's edge with native plants or locating and planting a rain garden.



The Spruce Creek Watershed Improvement Project serves as a model for ways to protect all watersheds. To make you are limiting the quantity of stormwater that runs off your property and eliminating the pollution that it can carry with it, keep or plant gardens as a buffer at the base of hills, in ditches and along the water or road's edge; reduce the amount of yard that is planted in grass; avoid using excessive pesticides, fertilizers and water on lawn and gardens; mulch and plant bare spots to reduce soil erosion, especially on slopes and at the water's edge; use a rain barrel to collect rooftop rain and provide free water for your lawns and gardens; create rain gardens to capture and slow down runoff; pick up after your pet; compost your yard waste away from streams and the shoreline, and have your septic system inspected and pumped at least every three to five years. For these and more ideas on making your home more watershed-friendly, visit [www.protectkitterywaters.org](http://www.protectkitterywaters.org).

Courtesy photo

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As Team Leader for Residential Practices Ron Ledgett put it, "Spruce Creek shoreline and wetland property owners volunteering their yards as a demonstration site is a great way for residents to participate in this important project. Everyone benefits: property owners get up-to-date stormwater solutions at a cut rate and they are recognized within the community for their participation. Additionally, we get to educate others in our town about stopping runoff pollution. Spruce Creek gets to be a little bit cleaner."

To be a part of this effort to help Spruce Creek, contact Marty Rea of the Residential Practices Team of SCWIP at [scwip@comcast.net](mailto:scwip@comcast.net) or call 439-6461.

To learn more about the Spruce Creek Watershed Improvement Project visit [www.protectkitterywaters.org](http://www.protectkitterywaters.org).

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