

## **Ipswich River named among America’s Most Endangered Rivers®**

*Ipswich River Watershed Association launches campaign to propose community solutions, with support from global climate leader John Kerry*

April 13, 2021, Ipswich, MA. – American Rivers today named the Ipswich River among [America’s Most Endangered Rivers® of 2021](#), citing the grave threat to ecosystem health and regional water security in the context of climate change. In conjunction with the announcement, the Ipswich River Watershed Association, a 1,500-member group of residents, scientists, businesses and community leaders concerned about the health of the Ipswich River and its watershed, is launching a new campaign to highlight actionable solutions at the state and local level. The [Endangered Ipswich Campaign](#) is being announced at the Watershed Association’s annual meeting, and will spotlight ways communities can help protect the drinking water supply for over 350,000 residents on the North Shore of Massachusetts.

U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry will deliver a video message at the annual meeting, championing the importance of local action to protect our nation’s waterways and prepare for climate change. “Even like places in New England where I grew up—and where a love for water, bays, rivers streams, estuaries, the ocean, all of that is practically written into our DNA—even here, rivers are being threatened by drought,” said Kerry. “The truth is, so much of the work that we need to do to address environmental challenges actually happens not internationally but in much smaller communities, in states, countries, cities and towns around the world.” Mr. Kerry also spoke about his childhood on the North Shore and thanked the members and supporters of the Watershed Association, stating “I want you to know that the Ipswich is particularly close to my heart.”

The Endangered Ipswich Campaign is a call to action, and will promote ongoing priorities and solutions at the individual, town, and state levels to help safeguard water supplies and maintain the river as a recreational treasure. Even in non-drought years, stretches of the Ipswich River’s tributaries run dry. In its announcement, American Rivers called the Ipswich River “[the poster child](#)” for the state’s outdated water system. Climate change is exacerbating the threat, with more severe and extended droughts creating increased risk to water supplies. The two lowest flows in the River’s history were recorded in just the last five years.

"This designation is yet another compelling reason why we must be proactive in responding now to protect our drinking water supplies and the health of the river and watershed that supports them," said Senate Minority Leader and North Shore Drought Task Force founding member Bruce Tarr. "Through the ongoing efforts of our North Shore Drought Task Force, which has a focus on the Ipswich River, legislators, local officials, water suppliers, regulators, and stakeholders are working together to identify options, build consensus, and set the stage for productive action. The challenges we face demand that we use the power of collaboration to move forward."

“American Rivers is sounding an alarm for our communities to collaborate and make decisions that protect the Ipswich River for generations to come,” said Wayne Castonguay, the Watershed Association’s Executive Director. “We are grateful for ongoing partnerships with the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance and Mass Audubon, as well as Senator Tarr’s Task Force, as we work to build consensus and propose solutions at the local and state levels to increase the resiliency of the river and our water supplies. Public water suppliers provide one of society’s most important functions. We are eager to work collectively with them to continue to provide our communities with abundant, clean, safe and affordable drinking water.”

The Endangered Ipswich Campaign is launching at a key moment in state policy. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has proposed a critical first step to help communities

conserve water during drought that would address one of the flaws with existing regulations. Ipswich River Watershed Association, American Rivers, and their partners are calling on people to write to state officials and support important measures that will make Massachusetts a leader on climate. To write to DEP and support the proposed changes, visit <https://endangeredrivers.americanrivers.org/>.

Campaign initiatives for local residents include an innovative “Lawn by Lawn” pledge to keep neighborhoods green without wasting water, and the group’s annual “Paddle-a-Thon,” where people can raise funds to support the campaign. The Watershed Association has also received funding from Essex County Community Foundation and other sources to assist Towns and Cities by bringing Mass Audubon’s award-winning bylaw review program to the North Shore. The program helps Towns and Cities as they work to update local regulations to incorporate Green Infrastructure and other forms of Low Impact Development that keep more water in the ground.

“This new campaign is a testament to the strength of local conservation groups and our vital mission to help the public learn more about what we can do in our own neighborhoods and communities,” said Susie Winthrop, the Watershed Association’s Board President. “Here on the North Shore of Massachusetts, we have a long tradition of trying to be good stewards of our environment. We talk with so many people about what we can do now that our climate is changing. Thankfully we have a really amazing team working on solutions, but we need more people to take action.”

#### **About the Ipswich River Watershed Association**

Founded in 1977, the Ipswich River Watershed Association is the voice of the Ipswich River. The Watershed Association is a group of residents, scientists, businesses and community leaders with the mission to protect the health of the Ipswich River and its watershed. Its aim is to protect nature and make sure there is enough clean water for people, fish, and wildlife, today and in the future. [www.ipswichriver.org](http://www.ipswichriver.org)

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