

Dear Friend of the Environment:

Over the years, many stormwater drainage systems from roads and parking lots have been built that discharge untreated stormwater to our wetlands, rivers, ponds, and coastal waters. These stormwater discharges pose many threats to the environment. Runoff from rain carries pollutants into wetlands, lakes, streams, and groundwater, which can affect water quality, habitat, and living resources. Excess stormwater pollutants can lead to conspicuous impacts like beach and shellfish bed closures, and more subtle changes such as loss of habitat and changes in the abundance of certain species.

The threat of stormwater discharge to human health and the environment has become an issue of national importance. The US Environmental Protection Agency is now requiring all urbanized municipalities to inventory stormwater discharges, and to develop strategies to manage stormwater to protect and restore water quality and wetland habitat. The importance of stormwater is why the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs has been making efforts to work with Massachusetts' municipalities to remediate stormwater discharges. It is also why this *Atlas of Stormwater Discharges in the Buzzards Bay Watershed* was created by the Buzzards Bay Project National Estuary Program.

This Atlas documents more than 2,600 known stormwater discharges along the Buzzards Bay coast and nearby streams, along with more than 12,000 contributing catch basins. The Atlas also helps to establish priority sites for remediation, which will help guide state and municipal officials to target limited resources toward the identification of stormwater discharge sites that, if remediated, may result in improved water quality.

The Atlas is the result of a multi-agency cooperative study, together with Buzzards Bay watershed municipalities, to inventory stormwater discharges near the coast of Buzzards Bay in southeastern Massachusetts. I applaud this collaborative effort and the team that developed this Atlas. It is my hope that it will serve as a catalyst for municipalities to develop comprehensive municipal stormwater management plans. Many communities have initiated efforts to map all stormwater discharges and catchbasins within their municipal boundaries and develop stormwater management plans. These efforts show the commitment of state and local government to protect water quality, habitat, and living resources most cherished by the residents of the Commonwealth.



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