

SENIOR MANAGING EDITOR ALAN WHITE ♦ METRO EDITOR JOHN MACONE ♦ (978) 946-2000

# Spicket River greenway plan afoot

♦ Greenwork Lawrence is working to make the Spicket River's banks an alluring parkway.

By Ethan Forman  
Eagle-Tribune Writer

LAWRENCE — When a large Dunkin' Donuts soda cup sailed into Spicket River, Armand Hyatt at first thought a bird had hit the water.

Then he saw three people walking down General Street diagonally across the street from the Russell Entrance of Lawrence General Hospital. One of them had just thrown the cup into the river from the bridge. Mr. Hyatt felt he had to speak up.

"Hey, you threw your Dunkin' Donuts cup into the river. Don't do it again," yelled the president of the board for Lawrence CommunityWorks Inc.

If he and others have their way, people will enjoy a stroll along the river instead of treating it like a place to chuck trash.

Both Mr. Hyatt and Marianne E. Paley, 38, executive director of Groundwork Lawrence, and the Merrimack River Watershed Council hope to create a greenway along the Spicket River. The project, now in its early stages, would link parks and open spaces in Lawrence.

The project won the backing of the nonprofit Essex County Foundation, which has awarded \$50,000 to clean up the environment to groups in the area. The greenway project got the largest single grant from the foundation.

A newly formed umbrella foundation, Essex County Foundation is a collection of charitable funds endowed by local donors to support the work of Essex County nonprofits. Last night the foundation honored nine grant recipients at Alexander "Sandy" Buck's barn in Topsfield.

"It just really struck us as a compelling project for us to step up and deliver," said Mr. Buck, chairman of the foundation's board of directors.

Locally, several agencies got funding from the foundation. The amounts they got and the organizations are:

**\$10,000, Groundwork Lawrence,** for the Spicket River Greenway Project.

**\$5,000, Merrimack River Watershed Council,** to expand its volunteer monitoring and protection of the Merrimack River in Methuen, Haverhill and Merrimac.

**\$3,000, Girl Scouts of Spar and Spindle Council Inc.,** for a family watershed education project, a



Armand Hyatt, the president of the board for Lawrence CommunityWorks Inc., and Marianne E. Paley, executive director of Groundwork Lawrence, look at a sketch of a future greenway along the Spicket River, at the confluence of the North Canal and the Spicket.

Cheryl Senter/Eagle-Tribune

nine-month program in which girls and their families increase their understanding of watersheds.

**\$2,150 to the Boxford Trails Association/Boxford Open Land Trust** to hire a planner to review the town's master plan.

From the Methuen border, the Spicket River runs through North Lawrence, from Stevens Pond, behind Malden Mills, to Marston and Canal streets. It's crossed by bridges in many spots.

It's been walled off over the years to prevent dumping and to prevent children from slipping down its steep banks.

"The Spicket is a tiny river and it's known for issues of its flooding," said Ms. Paley. Flooding is acute in the Arlington District where there are many poor, disadvantaged children who could also

benefit from more open space, she said.

The greenway would link different parks and open space lots along the Spicket, such as the abandoned industrial site known as the "Old Laundry" off Brook Street, Immigrant City Park on Chestnut Street and the Hayden-Schofield Playstead, to name a few.

The community would come up with the vision of how the greenway would look, she said.

Other grants recipients are The Parker River Clean Water Association, \$5,350; The Ipswich River Watershed Association, \$7,500; The Essex National Heritage Commission, \$4,500; The Massachusetts Audubon Society North Shore Conservation Advocacy and the Great Marsh Coalition, \$8,000; and Salem Sound 2000, \$4,500.

# Federal grant for gateway project

By Ethan Forman  
Eagle-Tribune Writer

LAWRENCE — The city will get \$200,000 from the federal government to revive its gateway and clean up pollution at the former Oxford Paper Co. site.

The money will also go toward creating open, green areas in the North Common neighborhood.

The money from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will compliment money the city won to redevelop brownfields in 1996, area congressmen announced last week, just days before Earth Day on Sunday.

"This award represents a fitting tribute to the city of Lawrence for improving the economic and environmental quality of life around the Oxford paper mill site, the Atlantic Powerhouse and the Everett Mills warehouse," said Congressman Martin T. Meehan, D-Lowell.

Brownfields are abandoned, idled or under-used industrial areas in need of expensive environmental cleanups. The federal brownfields program is designed to prevent, assess and clean them, through loans and grants.

Of the grant money, \$150,000 will be used to assess what contaminants might be in the soil at the former Oxford Paper Co. mill site at Canal and Marston streets, and four sites that will be target-

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# Grant: Money on the way

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The long-abandoned, 3-acre Oxford Paper Co. site is undergoing a cleanup after decades of talk about redevelopment there.

Considered the gateway to the Merrimack Valley, the state plans to build a bridge across the Spicket River, connecting streets that lead to Interstate 495. A series of fires gutted the buildings in the 1970s, and the city took title to the property in 1982. The burned out buildings were an eyesore as one entered Lawrence from I-495. They started to come down last year.

Mayor Patricia A. Dowling said the money will help the city fulfill its

commitment to the cleanup. Already, the city has spent \$1 million on it. She said preliminary studies on contamination show the ground will not need an expensive cleanup.

"We are keeping our fingers crossed, but the assessments that are coming in are not as expensive as we were envisioning. We could have been hit with a huge bill for cleanup," she said.

The city will work with local community and environmental groups Revivendo Planning Group and Groundwork Lawrence to plan the green space. The money comes as supplemental assistance to the city's Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot program, designed to coordinate the cleanup of Oxford Paper.

## SPICKET RIVER GREENWAY PROJECT

The local nonprofit Groundwork Lawrence just won a \$10,000 grant from the Essex County Community Foundation toward the early planning of a greenway along the Spicket River, a narrow, winding river that slices through Lawrence. Some of the parks and open areas along the greenway would connect would be the Old Laundry, the former Oxford Paper Co. site and the Old Laundry site.

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