



# EAST PROVIDENCE CONSERVATION COMMISSION



## 2009 Annual Report

Lorraine Nik, Chair

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The East Providence Conservation Commission remains busy and active, with numerous ongoing initiatives.

At the beginning of the year, the Commission recorded two donations of land in southeastern East Providence totaling 22 acres. Both land acquisitions are located along a portion the Runnins River that is part of a significant regional wildlife habitat. The land donations complement existing conservation efforts along the river corridor and the Commission is grateful to the donors and the City for securing these lands for conservation and open space.

The Commission provided City representation on the newly-formed Seaconke Trails Committee, which is working on trail connections between the City of East Providence and the Town of Seekonk in the vicinity of the Turner Reservoir. This cooperative effort will continue in 2010.

For the second year, the Commission sponsored a rain barrel sale in conjunction with the New England Rain Barrel Company. A portion of the proceeds from the sale, held during the Spring, benefited the Commission.

The Commission exhibited National Trails Day, held in June in conjunction with a major fundraiser for the East Providence Education Association, and at the URI Master Gardeners statewide garden tour in July, both at the Hunt's Mills Historic Site. Inquiries were fielded from area residents regarding City conservation activities at both of these well-attended events. At the former event, Commission Member Keith Gonsalves received a conservation award from the National Park Service for his fine work with the Ten Mile River Watershed Alliance.

Several conservation-related projects were reviewed including the Hunt's Mills Landscape Master Plan, for which the commission provided advisory comments as part of the East Providence Planning Department's review of the Plan.

The major project of the year for the Commission was an enhancement project at the Boyden Heights Conservation Area, located along, and extending inland from, the East Bay Bike Path. The Commission received a grant for \$2,375 from the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, which is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service, to aid in this project. Financial assistance was also pledged from the City's Recycling Division for the inclusion of recycled products as part of this project. The Commission designed a four-phased enhancement of this 10-plus acre City conservation area to restore the Boyden Boulevard entrance to the property, enhance the Bike Path Trailhead, improve and slightly re-route the trail system, and rehabilitate a deteriorating wetland boardwalk. Members of the Conservation Commission, a local Boy Scout Troop, and the East Providence Boys and Girls Club all donated labor to this year's activities. Boardwalk rehab design was completed by the Commission with assistance from the City's Engineering and Public Buildings, and Building Inspection Divisions.

Much of the work has been completed, and Boardwalk construction material was purchased and delivered to the City in December. Remaining work including Boardwalk rehabilitation, interpretive signage, and a new Conservation Area brochure is scheduled for 2010.

Frank Dias was appointed to the Conservation Commission in 2009, replacing Nancy Stevens. The Commission thanks Nancy for her many years of loyal service to this Commission and many other City organizations over the past several decades. The East Providence City Council recognized her many achievements at their June 16th meeting. Frank has become an avid member of the Commission over the past several months.

The Conservation Commission looks forward to serving the City of East Providence in 2010 and welcomes interested members of the community and other conservation interests to our meetings, which are scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month.



Above: Boyden Heights Conservation Area trailhead along the East Bay Bike Path following Conservation Commission enhancement project. Photo: Wayne Barnes