

Weir River Estuary Park Committee

The Tri-town Weir River Estuary Park (WREP) committee works to protect, link, and restore a continuous coastal vistas and habitat for indigenous aquatic and terrestrial species within the State designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern [ACEC (100 foot flood plain)] and the 200 foot River's Protection Act, as well as adjacent public and private properties. All the tri-town park properties are connected by the Weir River estuarine waters. (See map or visit the committee web-site)

Weir River Estuary Park Advancements in 2010:

- **Open Space Plans (OSP)** for Town of Hingham and Cohasset were written to include current and proposed public and private WREP properties adjacent to Weir River Estuary. The WREP submissions are based on the Weir River Estuary Land Protection Plan priority guidelines for estuarine protection, reference <http://www.hingham-ma.gov/conservation/index.html>
- **WREP Resource Management Plan & Forum preparation for 2011** The goal is to develop a cohesive community vision for the WREP, it's place within the coordinated tri-Town waters, and management needs prior to writing a WREP Resource Management Plan which follows ACEC guidelines. The WREP committee has been meeting with Hingham and Hull Harbormasters, Bare Cove Park and Hingham Harbor Development committees, the Conservation Commission Agents, the State representatives for the ACEC Program, South Shore CZM coordinator, and MA Fish & Wildlife.
- **Habitat Restoration at Straits Pond, Hull & Cohasset** With MassHighway's completion of the West Corner culvert and bridge project, a new computerized system to open and close the tide gates provides control for the flow of water to and from Straits Pond. The new water flow protocols have been vital in eradicating the former scourges of midges and huge algae mats which impoverished and polluted the habitat. Now a healthy productive resource enhances the quality of estuarine and human life within the Weir River Estuary.

In October 2010 a formal ceremony was held at the new culvert, which is designed to look like a bridge, to celebrate the opening and name the new tide gates after Lawry Reid of Hull. Lawry founded the Strait's Pond Watershed Association and was instrumental in initiating the culvert project and obtaining all the

local, state, and federal support necessary. In total \$2.5 million dollars were spent on this effort.

- **Entrance to Weir River Woods, Hull**
Thanks to the Hull Conservation Administrator's identification of the grant source, The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) received a \$75,563 matching grant from the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Division of Conservation Services, which allowed TTOR to purchase a Conservation Restriction, held jointly with the Hull Conservation Commission, on the Chatham Street entrance to the Weir River Woods. By the end of 2010, thanks to many people, the Hull Land Conservation Trust had raised over \$255,000, including this grant, **with less than \$26,000 left** to go to pay for the Weir River Woods entrance.
- **Education, Passive recreation and Access points**
Throughout the year, the Hull Land Conservation Trust (HLCT) provided tours in the Weir River Estuary, including outings on the first Saturday morning of the month, an annual July sunset paddle, and field trips for Scouts and school children. Water access is from Steamboat Wharf, Hull, where kayaks can be rented. Most estuarine land tours begin at the Estuary Center at 333 Washington Boulevard, Hull.

Goals for 2011

- Achieve an alliance of shareholder's interests through a 'forum' to complete a **WREP Resource Management Plan** which coordinates tri-Town and ACEC guidelines, communicates and educates for integrated resource protection, conservation, and use.
- Advance the Rockland Street bridge project and bike-pedestrian path with Mass Highway, the Greenbelt Bike Path proponents, and the Town, including signage.

Three representatives per community are appointed by the Boards of Selectmen from Cohasset, Hingham, Hull. The Committee wishes to thank all the interested citizens, volunteers, TTOR, HLCT, Straits Pond Watershed Ass., and representatives from local, State, and federal government for taking a role to achieve the Committee's goals put forth in the Weir River Estuary Land Protection Plan.

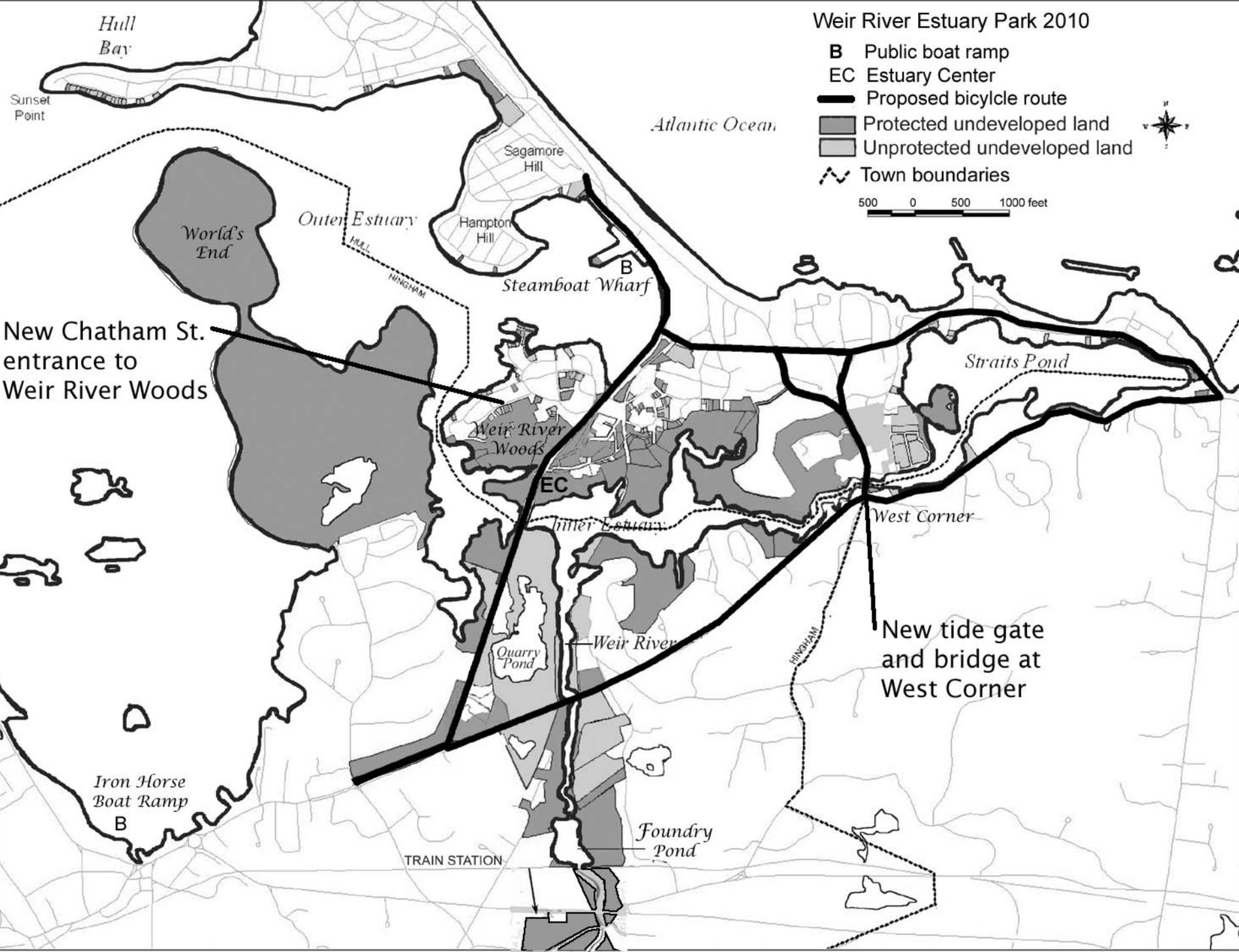
Public meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of the month, except August, either at the Estuary Center, 333 George Washington Boulevard,

Hull or at Hingham Town Hall. The year calendar of meetings is posted on the Hull, Hingham, and Cohasset Town and committee web-sites.

Co-chairpersons: Richard Avery, Cohasset; Faith Burbank, Hingham; Judeth Van Hamm, Hull

Weir River Estuary Park 2010

- B** Public boat ramp
- EC** Estuary Center
- Proposed bicycle route
- Protected undeveloped land
- Unprotected undeveloped land
- Town boundaries



New Chatham St.
entrance to
Weir River Woods

New tide gate
and bridge at
West Corner