



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

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Flood Model Will Help Keep Wellesley Above Water New Tool Illustrates Impacts of Severe Storms and Suggests Nature-based Solutions

July 28, 2021 (Wellesley, MA) – New England is reporting a record amount of rain in July. In Wellesley, flooding in recent years has closed Weston Road twice and flooding along Central Street in Natick happens frequently. As experts predict that intense storms will become more and more frequent, the Wellesley Natural Resources Commission, in partnership with the Charles River Watershed Association and 14 other communities, now have a new tool, the [Charles River Flood Model \(CRFM\)](#), to use to protect vulnerable populations and property from flooding.

The CRFM is funded by the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs FY21 [MVP Action Grant Program](#), and developed by Weston & Sampson. Wellesley was [accepted into the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Program \(MVP\) in June 2019](#) and as a result, has access to tools and projects that support climate change resiliency. The CRFM provides valuable information by visualizing the impacts of increasingly severe storm events that will become more common with climate change, and helps communities make informed decisions about nature-based solutions to help reduce these impacts.

The CRFM found that without intervention, a projected 2070 100-year storm would flood up to 12,500 acres within the Charles River watershed including in Wellesley, put residents at risk, and leave major roads under water. By using this model, communities will better understand how to prepare for these situations and can adopt policies and practices to reduce the significant effects.

“We hope this tool will promote a broader perspective and a better understanding of land use impacts across municipal borders, so we can implement the most effective and sustainable watershed solutions,” said Wellesley Public Works Director Dave Cohen.

Wellesley has already seen the benefits of nature-based solutions along Fuller Brook Park, where bio retention basins slow and filter stormwater and improve water quality in Caroline and Fuller Brooks.

“The Charles River Flood Model complements the Town’s existing efforts to manage stormwater and protect our wetlands, floodplains, and watersheds,” said NRC Director Brandon Schmitt. “It also provides the opportunity to network and discuss issues facing all of us across the watershed areas as we identify and illustrate the consequences of not doing anything and galvanize the community to act.”

The DPW and NRC plan to demo the CRFM during upcoming meetings.

Communities participating in the Charles River Watershed network include Arlington, Dedham, Franklin, Holliston, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Newton, Norfolk, Sherborn, Watertown, Wellesley, Weston, and Wrentham. The Charles River Watershed Association uses science, advocacy, and law to promote resilient communities and a healthy river ecosystem.