

President's Message

At this time last year, Professor Richard Primack wrote a wonderful article on the effects of climate change on Newton. (You can refresh your memory here: http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletters/15_01_climate.pdf).

His article included the following chart, which shows the areas of Boston that will be vulnerable to flooding as our region experiences more intense storms and a rise in sea level as a result of climate change.



Areas vulnerable to flooding are highlighted in color in this map of the Inner Harbor of Boston; the Charles River basin is shown in the upper left.

Until recently, most of the state government's attention has focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to mitigate those effects as much as possible.

Recent reports, however, have indicated that some of the changes in weather and sea level are inevitable. We cannot abandon work to reduce our consumption, but we also must start to plan how to manage those changes that are expected. In response, a group of noted environmental groups have joined together to form the Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Coalition. Those groups include Mass Audubon, the Sierra Club, the Charles River Watershed Association, The Trustees of Reservations, the the Nature Conservancy Massachusetts, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and many more. The Conservators was one of the

first local nonprofit organizations to join the coalition (and we've since been joined by our local partners Green Newton).

The mission of the organization is to advocate for the passage of state legislation to prepare for climate change, to educate the public about climate change and strategies for adapting to it, and to convene stakeholders to develop appropriate policies for mitigation.

The Conservators' first act was to send a letter to Rep. Brian Dempsey of the Massachusetts House Ways and Means Committee encouraging the passage of House Bill 472, which calls for the establishment of a comprehensive adaptation management plan. A similar bill (S.1979) already has passed the state Senate.

In coming months, we will bring you news from the Climate Change Coalition. If you want to learn more now, one good place to start is the Boston Harbor Association's report "Preparing for the Rising Tide" (http://tbha.org/files/documents/preparing_for_the_rising_tide_executive_summary_final.pdf). You also can visit the website of the Coalition: massadapt.org.

Beth Wilkinson