Understanding the Impact of Residual Designation Authority Permits on your Community

What is the Problem?
Rainwater that falls on hard surfaces such as parking lots and roofs can pick up pollutants that are then carried into local rivers. This polluted runoff, known as "stormwater," flows over these hard surfaces directly into storm drains so there is no opportunity for soil and plants to absorb the rainwater and filter out pollutants. These pollutants can lead to green algae growth that can harm people, wildlife, and pets. And the bacteria from dog and wildlife waste can make waters unsafe for swim-ming and shellfishing.


Algal blooms can harm wildlife.

Even with the good work undertaken by many over the years to clean up the rivers, lakes and streams in the Charles, Mystic, and Neponset River watersheds - the areas impacted by this permitting action - stormwater runoff remains the biggest source of water pollution.

What is "RDA" and Who Does It Apply To?
EPA may use its "Residual Designation Authority" under the federal Clean Water Act to issue permits to certain private landowners to require them to reduce their stormwater runoff pollution. Using this authority, EPA plans to issue permits to certain privately-owned industrial, commercial, and institutional properties in the Charles, Mystic and Neponset River watersheds that have one or more acres of hard surfaces, sometimes called "impervious surfaces," such as parking lots and roofs. (And for comparison, one acre is about the size of three-quarters of a football field.)

What Will Property Owners Who Receive Permits Have to Do?
The property owners who receive permits will have to prevent or reduce the polluted stormwater from leaving their properties. They will be able to choose from a variety of options that may include, for example, directing rainwater back into the ground through rain gardens and by planting trees where the soil can filter the pollutants. Another example would be to direct rainwater from parking lots into the ground. Landowners may also choose to eliminate fertilizer and remove leaves from the land before stormwater carries them into rivers, lakes and streams, through activities like street sweeping of parking lots and streets.

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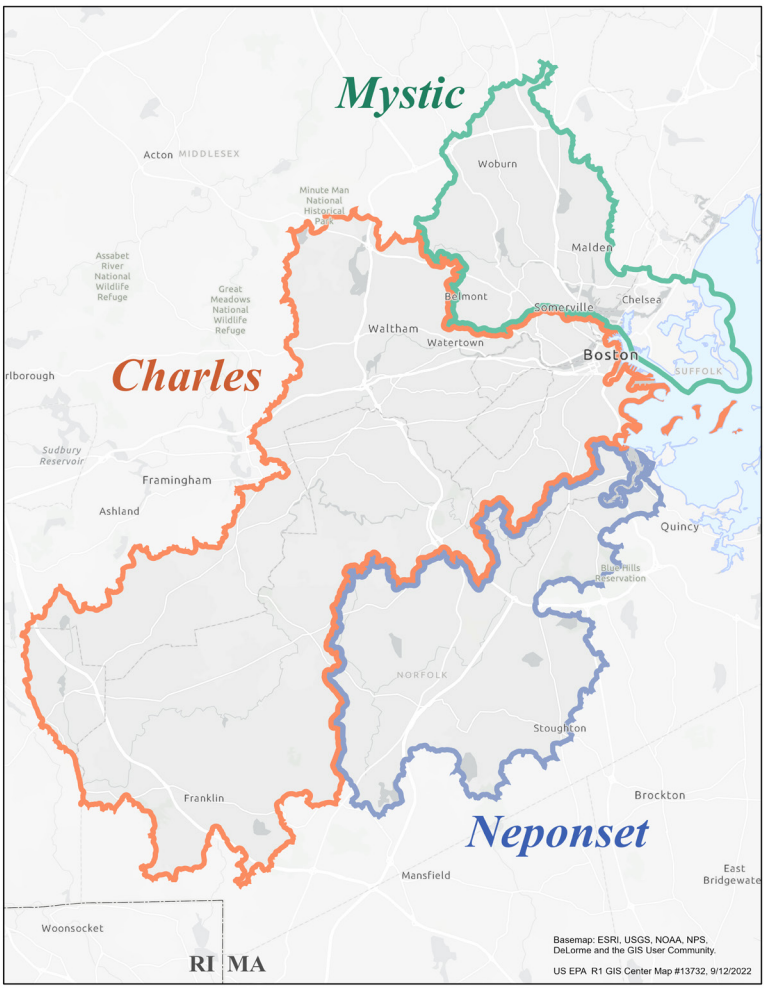
Residual Designation Authority under the Clean Water Act

What Are the Benefits of these Permits to Communities?
RDA permits will result in cleaner rivers, lakes, and streams. Additionally, these efforts may lead to better flood management in certain communities as landown-ers work to prevent rainwater from leaving their properties. These efforts could make neighborhoods greener and more beautiful, with potential benefits such as cooler urban temperatures on hot days due to increased tree planting. For more information on the benefits of these approaches, see https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure.

What Will Home-Owners and Renters Have To Do?
Residential homeowners and renters will not receive permits. However, everyone can help prevent stormwater pollution by reducing or eliminating the use of lawn fertilizer, sweeping up leaves from your streets and other hard surfaces, picking up and properly disposing of dog waste and replacing hard surfaces with gardens, trees, pervious pavement, and other surfaces that absorb rainwater.

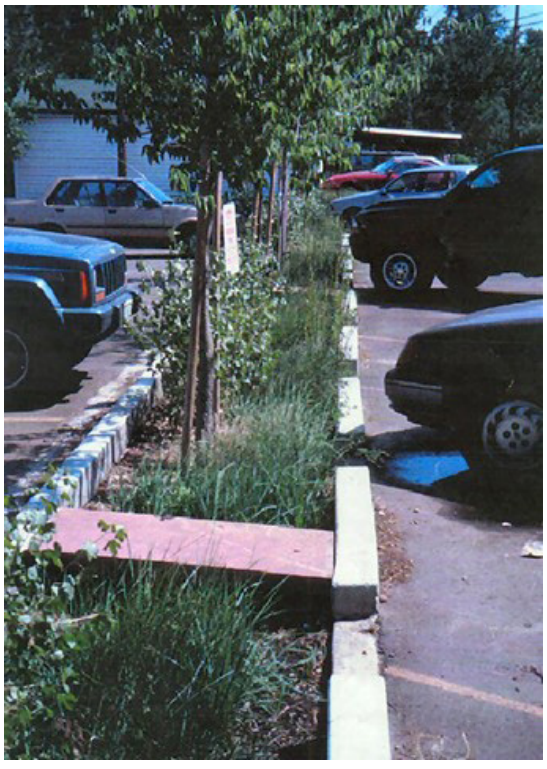


How Can I Get More Information?
EPA's website has a variety of useful information about this effort including the technical and legal basis for these permits, presentations, and other helpful tools and resources. EPA will also be accepting comments from the public on its draft permit which it plans to issue later in 2024. An announcement on how to participate in that public comment process will be posted on the website.

EPA RDA Website:
https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/watershed-based-residu-al-designation-actions-new-england

Who Can I Contact if I Have Questions?

- Please email - R1.RDA@epa.gov
- EPA wants to hear your thoughts and is available to answer your questions. The email box is checked regularly, and EPA responds to questions in a timely manner.



Raingarden solution to parking lot runoff.