

# Transforming stormwater to drinking water

By Joyce Kelly/Daily News staff

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FRANKLIN — Over the next six weeks, workers will convert the town's swimming hole into a stormwater filtration system to clean water staying in Franklin as well as water heading into the Charles River.

"In the old days, (storm) water would dump into the stream and go to Boston Harbor," said Department of Public Works Director Brutus Cantoreggi.

The new system, funded by a federal grant administered by the state Department of Environmental Protection, will filter out pollutants from rainfall that becomes contaminated when it lands on impervious surfaces like roofs, parking lots and roads.

Then the system will return the water to the earth, which is "the greatest filter in the world," and it ultimately will be drawn from Franklin's wells, Cantoreggi said.

"We're trying to do with water what nature intended," he said.

"The problem is, mankind has created a bunch of impervious areas. Water used to land on grass and work its way into the ground, but asphalt doesn't allow it to seep into the ground, and pollutants like antifreeze washes into streams and rivers," Cantoreggi said.

The new system, located next to the police station on Panther Way, will capture stormwater from places such as Highwood Drive and the police station parking lot, and treat the water before it goes into a stream, said Rich Niles, project manager with Comprehensive Environmental of Marlborough, the firm hired for the project design and permitting.

The stream eventually discharges into Mine Brook as it crosses Rte. 140, and that water heads into the Charles River, he said.

Keeping the Charles River clean is "a big focus point" in stormwater management, said Niles.

"Franklin's pretty pro-active with seeking opportunities to improve water quality in town," Niles said.

The new system is designed to treat 86,000 gallons of water per storm, which equals about 1.63 inches of rain, Niles said.

Most storms here average under an inch, so the system should cover at least 80 percent of the rainfall, he said.

The \$230,000 grant, which includes a 40 percent contribution from the town in "in-kind services" (DPW labor), will also fund filtering sites for Lockwood Drive and High Ridge Circle, Niles said.

Construction is already under way, and should be complete within six weeks, Niles said.

"It's really a good thing for the town we got this," said Cantoreggi. "A lot of towns aren't getting it."

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