This past summer, the Jones River Watershed Association, Massachusetts Audubon Society, Taunton River Alliance, and Save the Bay/Narragansett sent a notice of intent to sue, literally to taking on Washington, by charging the Environmental Protection Agency, State Department of Environmental Protection and the City of Brockton with the degradation of the Taunton River and the South Coastal Watersheds, including Silver Lake and the Jones River.

Though its mismanagement is having diverse negative impact on all of the regional watersheds, the impact Brockton has had on the Jones River is simply devastating. The reduction in flow caused by municipal withdrawal of water from Silver Lake which recharges the Jones River and tributaries is having a catastrophic effect on indigenous species of fish and other aquatic wild life. Populations of trout and herring that spawn in our waters are dwindling. Their habitat is stagnant more often than not. This is brought on by the City of Brockton’s poor stewardship and the misuse of our precious resources.

The effect of Brockton’s insatiable thirst for our water, lack of remorse for the damage already caused, and obvious continued disregard for its effect upon our watershed is totally irresponsible; and it would be irresponsible on the part of the JRWA and its counterparts if we allow this violation and devastation to continue. For the first time in the more than thirty years we have been addressing this problem, Brockton has a real alternative source of supply. It has a contract with the Aquaria desalination plant in Dighton to take water. Aquaria is ready to deliver, but Brockton is not committed to using that water to reduce its impact on our area.

Let me be clear: our issue with the city and government agencies is mismanagement, including over-use and the diversions of polluted water into what would otherwise be clean water. These are violations of the Federal and Massachusetts Clean Water Acts—which are the avenues we are following to achieve improved management of these regionally significant public resources. Mark our progress on the Jones River website—check out the right side panel of the home page for updates. Make no mistake: this is a civil action under the Clean Water Act with national implications that can help rivers and ponds everywhere. Please support this effort!