

Newsletter

Spring 2016

HPWA is a 501(c)3 Charitable Organization

Volume 7, Issue 1

Directors

Brian Harrington,
President

Lee Pulis, Vice Pres.

John Foye, Treasurer

Linda White, Secretary

Webmaster, open
Assistant Webmaster,
Lee Pulis

Paula Kuketz, Water
Safety Committee

Martha Sheldon,
Membership Committee

Geri Williams,
Newsletter Editor

Lee Pulis, Education and
Outreach Committee

Don Williams and Jack
Kedian, Water Quality
Committee

Dennis White,
Government Liaison

Jerry Levine & Phil
Angell, Members-at-
Large

Website

www.TheHerringPondsWatershed.org

Upcoming Events

April 23 & 24, 10 - 4
Plimoth Plantation's
Herring Run Festival
Grist Mill at Jenny Pond

May 16, 7pm HPWA
General Meeting
New Testament Church,
1120 Long Pond Rd.
Sharl Heller will discuss
conserving the Pine
Barrens and its rare
species.

May 17, 7am Bird Walk
Bournedale
Conservation Area just
off Herring Pond Rd.

May 21 10am-4pm
SEMPBA Pine Fest
Charge Pond Camp-
ground, Miles Standish
State Forest.

President's Message

Brian Harrington, President

As we anticipate the start of another summer season, I hope your thoughts will include a focus on the beautiful watershed that we share together. We are very fortunate to live in a place that still is quite unspoiled, a fortune many of our neighboring lakes and ponds cannot claim.

Sometimes I feel a little like a broken record saying this, but in the end, if we want to continue having a blessed environment for ourselves and our children, we need to take better care of what we have. A clear message was sent to us almost a year ago in a study of Plymouth's ponds; Little Herring and Great Herring Ponds were both identified as impaired, still safe and beautiful, but showing early signs of degradation and ecological strain.

Our Association is dedicated to better protection and improvement of our watershed. Those words are easy to put into a sentence, but represent enormous amounts of work needed if we are to succeed in our mission. We need lots of help, and we need the support of your neighbors as well as yourselves. Roughly 2000 families live within our adopted watershed boundaries, but only a small fraction are Members, and only a low fraction have a basic understanding of what a watershed is, much less understanding how to take care of it. Reversing threats to our watershed requires an informed public. Our education challenge is huge. We will be sending out a membership renewal packet in May. This will include a postcard you can use to give your neighbors a free 6-month membership to our HPWA, which includes a subscription to our informative newsletter. Please use those postcards-- they can help save our watershed.

Notwithstanding our size, your Directors have been working hard to better protect and manage our watershed. This has included lots of meetings with Town officials, attendance at hearings and meetings, and continued physical monitoring of our ponds. Our education and outreach committees have been working with schools, and each day our herring counters (see separate article) have been stationed to witness the spring fish migration. BUT we are working against a clock. Greater community participation – simple volunteer power-- could accelerate meeting the goals that we must meet. Help us if you can. Visit www.theherringpondswatershed.org to learn more. We also have a Facebook page.

Speaking of goals, your Directors are in an early stage of reviewing our goals for the short (the next year or so) and the long term. MEMBERS, please take note. We welcome having your thoughts about our goals. Simply mention your ideas to any Director, or send me a note (bharr41@yahoo.com).

One last note. Filing for an organizational tax-exempt status can be an intimidating process. I am delighted to note that our Treasurer, John Foye, has spent untold hours working through this process, and at last we have our 501(c)3 tax-exempt status. Thanks, John!



Herring from Michael Press's underwater video of the local herring run that can be viewed at <http://bty.link/31f>. Join the count team, contact DonnaGage@aol.com

HPWA Education Committee Report

by Lee Pulis, Committee Chair

HPWA is seeking a volunteer Web Services Committee Chair/ Webmaster/Social Media Administrator. The job description is on our website and advertised at various places including:

<http://internjobs.com/do/details/18580/webmaster-social-media-administrator>

2016 HPWA Herring Count News:

Donna Gage and Sara Grady are our coordinators, with the Town of Plymouth Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs (DMEA) Natural Resource Wardens managing and maintaining the count site. Our 2016 count began March 29th after a scout fish was spotted by DMEA at the Sandy Pond Rd bridge counting site the day before. 14 HPWA and Sagamore Highlands Association volunteers are each currently committed to providing 2-3 10-minute counts per week during April and May. We could use 10-15 more volunteers to spread the load and ensure the statistical validity of this important citizen science project. Try it...you'll like it. Contact Donna Gage donnagage@aol.com to sign up. Additional coverage is needed in the 11:00-3:00 time block and especially on weekends, as seen on the attached chart.

As of 4/4/2016							
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7am-11am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11am-3pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3pm-7pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Officers participate in workshops:

Brian and Lee participated with 30+ others in a NOAA Project Design and Evaluation workshop – Feb 17 & 18 at Waquoit Bay Nat'l Estuarine Research Reserve (WBNERR). The group helped develop a draft Pine Barrens Partnership plan while reviewing best procedures applicable to HPWA project planning and evaluation.

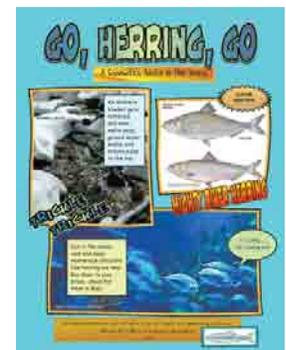
Lee attended the US Fish and Wildlife Service proposed Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge Public Information meeting hosted by SEMPBA at WBNERR on March 2. The public comment period closed on April 3, but hopefully personal comments submitted informed USFWS officials about the ACEC and may result in revised boundaries that include the watershed. The focus of the refuge is maintaining brushy pine barrens habitat for the New England Cottontail.

Upcoming Activities:

HPWA has provided 125 of our revised mighty river herring migration Superhero storybooks *Run, Herring, Run* (review/download at <http://www.theherringpondswatershed.org/news---events.html>) to Nathaniel Morton Elementary School. An accompanying Grade 3 Activity Guide written by Phil Angell and Linda White is new this year. Indian Brook Elementary School's 4th graders will also soon receive copies. Kids enjoying our decorate-a-herring activity table at Plimoth Plantation's Herring Run Festival (April 23&24), SEMPBA Pine Fest (May 21), and MSSF Fishing Derby will also receive copies.



New this year is our *Go, Herring, Go* edition for parents...what families can do to help river herring.



To view or download a PDF file of the Powerpoint slide program on HPWA's local river herring run, which was recently presented to the Sagamore Highlands Association, click the red button on the River Herring page of HPWA's website: <http://www.theherringpondswatershed.org/river-herring.html>



Check Us Out on FaceBook

“Like” and “Follow” HPWA on Facebook. Trail Cam daytime and night infrared videos captured by Lee and Phil Angell in the watershed were posted on our HPWA Facebook page and received the most “Reach” (likes, comments, shares) of 854 (74 views) of any posts so far – otters, fishers, cottontails, deer, coyotes, gray fox, raccoons, pine squirrel, turkeys, and screech owl. Our ACEC wildlife is all around us, even though not always seen. Take a look, and submit your plant and wildlife photos for posting too.



Invasive Species Monitoring

by John B. Foye, Chair

As we move into spring, we plan to re-organize our Invasive Species Monitoring Committee. We need committee members to help collect, identify and monitor all plants, clams, mussels, snails and other non-native species in and around our ponds. Many plants and creatures found in Massachusetts were originally brought here from other places around the world. Some exotic species are harmless but others have a detrimental impact on our environment.

The best method to control invasive species is to identify them and keep them from establishing in and around a body of water. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Lakes and Ponds Program offers aquatic plant identification training to citizens through the "**Weed Watchers Program**".

If you have interest in joining our monitoring committee, Please call John B. Foye at 508-888-5308 or e-mail at skipjbfoye@aol.com You could also sign up and take the workshop being offered by the Watershed Action Alliance on Sunday May 1, 1-4 pm at the Spire in Plymouth. HPWA is a co-sponsor of this workshop. More information is available at: <http://watershedaction.org/index.php/2016-workshop>.

Register to attend for \$15 at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nonnative-invasive-plant-control-workshop-in-plymouth-tickets-21465521954>

HPWA Meeting May 16

Our first public meeting of 2016 will take place on Monday, May 16 at 7:00pm in the large classroom of the New Testament Church and School on 1120 Long Pond Rd. Sharl Heller, President of the Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance and Co-coordinator for the Massachusetts Coastal Pine Barrens Partnership will discuss why many scientists believe the Earth is in the

midst of the sixth mass extinction and what plants and animals in our area are at risk. She will explain how building a Regional Conservation Partnership can help conserve the Massachusetts Coastal Pine Barrens, one of the most imperiled eco-regions in the world.

Glitch12

Spring Bird Walk. Tuesday, May 17, 7:00 am

Join Herring Ponds Watershed Association members and friends on a **Spring bird-walk**.

Meet at the Bournedale herring run park located at the junction of Bournedale and Herring Pond Roads at 7:00 am.

Raindate: Wednesday, May18, 7:00am

With luck we will find some migrant warblers and thrushes as well as resident bird species. The trip leader will be our own Brian Harrington, an ornithologist retired from the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences and President of the HPWA

Water Safety

by Paula Kuketz, Water Safety Committee Chair

Safety is what we need and want to enjoy a wonderful experience on our beautiful GHP. Following rules and regulations is very important. Safety rules on the water are as important as the rules we have on the road. To do this we must know what they are.

HPWA has invited Plymouth Harbor Master, Chad Hunter, to be the speaker at our **public meeting on July 11 at 7:00 pm**. This is a good opportunity to learn more of the common sense rules that promote boating and swimming safety on our pond and to voice your concerns. Rules and Regulations can be found on the HPWA web site:

<http://www.theherringpondswatershed.org/water-safety.html>

Water Quality Committee

by Don Williams & Jack Kedian, Co-Chairs

The Herring Ponds Watershed Association has been sampling water from Great Herring and Little Herring Ponds for 8 years. Results, until recently, have not caused concern either for the amounts of pollutants or for trends in pollutant levels, which have remained fairly constant. In 2014, a UMASS Dartmouth sampling of 39 of Plymouth's 450 ponds, revealed that "a significant number of the sampled ponds were impaired as defined by a combination of high nutrients, low dissolved oxygen, poor clarity and/or presence of bacteria." Both Great Herring and Little Herring Ponds were identified as being impaired. In addition, many of you noticed that there were earlier, more severe and more numerous algae blooms in our watershed ponds during the 2015 recreation season.

Your Board of Directors has been disturbed by these results and has taken action to alter the water quality focus in order to discover the source(s) of watershed pollution and to find ways to proactively reduce this pollution. Accordingly, an active partnership with the Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs of the Town of Plymouth was initiated to jointly develop a watershed management plan to assess the relative importance of the sources of pollution and to suggest methods of remediation.

As a first step in the process, the Town of Plymouth financed a runoff study at 6 known problem areas around Great Herring Pond; samples were collected and analyzed this fall during 3 rain storms. A report was recently issued ranking the 6 sites in order of their contribution to runoff pollution. A tentative timeline has been drafted for the two worst sites on Eagle Hill Road that includes survey, engineering, grant writing and construction components. While runoff remediation may be enough to remove our ponds from the impairment classification, your Board of Directors feels that the remainder of the

watershed management plan must be developed.

In most cases, runoff is not the leading cause of pond pollution, typically accounting for only 15 – 25% of the problem. Larger contributors are septic systems and pond sediment. A complete picture of pollution sources and amounts is essential for developing the best plan to ensure the health of our watershed.

The second step of the plan has yet to be financed but there has been much discussion between the Board of Directors and the Town of Plymouth as to how to raise the remaining \$28,000. Selectman John Mahoney has been instrumental in finding funding for Plymouth's Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs. Your Board of Directors has attended Plymouth Selectman and caucus meetings urging passage of Article 10 (earmarking monies from the solar panels for the DMEA) at Town Meeting. These funds could be used to complete the remainder of the watershed management plan study. We are happy to report that Article 10 was passed at the April 2 Town Meeting and work on the watershed management plan study could resume as early as this fall.

The Town of Plymouth has asked HPWA to raise \$5,000 of the \$28,000 cost to complete the study. This, along with the study will confer favored status on any remediation grants applied for and could bring hundreds of thousands of dollars to Plymouth to reduce pollution in our watershed. It is also hoped that the Town of Bourne (two of the Great Herring Pond runoff sites are in Bourne) will partner with HPWA and Plymouth to lend even more weight to all future grant applications.

The Board of Directors is eager to keep the HPWA membership informed and active in the effort to continuously monitor and improve our watershed's water quality. As always, we will continue to test the water in our ponds. If you are interested in helping out, give Don a call at 508-833-4355.



Jerry Levine is a Member-at-Large on the Executive Committee.

Member Profile: Jerry Levine

by Martha Sheldon, Membership Chair

Membership Chair Martha Sheldon sat down with new member, Jerry Levine to ask him a few questions and to learn why he joined the Association..

MS: Jerry, how did you learn about the HPWA? You moved here only recently.

JL: I had never heard of The Herring Ponds Watershed Association, but I had a friend who belonged, John Young. John lives right on Great Herring Pond, and we share a mutual love of cooking. He said I ought to look into joining.

MS: And I understand you are recently retired.

JL: Yes, that's right. I was involved in the corporate world producing Seafood flavoring for food processors and restaurant chains. Prior to joining the Seafood flavoring company I was the Director of R&D for the Legal Seafood's Corporation. When I retired in July of last year I was wondering what I was going to do. On John's advice I decided to go to a HPWA public meeting last spring. What I saw there was the enthusiasm of the Association, and I also strongly agreed with HPWA's goals and objectives. I decided to join and become an active member.

MS: We are glad you joined! Do you bring a special skill or talent to the Association (not counting the cooking skill)?

JL: I have a Master's of Science from the University of Rhode Island in Marine Fisheries Biology, and did a research on salmon aquaculture. So I can relate to the Association's concern with fish—in this case, the river herring—and it connects with my own training and interest in the environment. When the HPWA directors learned about my background, they asked if I would be interested in serving on the Water Quality Committee, which has collected water samples at GHP since 2008. I agreed to serve on this, and it has been really rewarding working with the team led by Don Williams and Jack Kedian.

MS: Yes, it's a really important issue in monitoring and caring for our pond. HPWA founders saw water sampling as a core activity.

JL: I agree, and want to see the ponds preserved not just for fish but for people, too. The uplands are important also as they protect the ponds. The Association was instrumental in Plymouth Town Meeting approval of Article 16B to purchase 43+ acres of environmentally sensitive land along the western shore of Little Herring Pond to protect water quality and our river herring run as well. I am enjoying being involved in an active organization that is protecting our watershed.

Membership Appeal

HPWA's membership year runs from June 1 until May 31 of the following year. So you can expect a mailing in early May asking you to renew your membership for 2016-2017. Enclosed with this request will be a postcard that you can use to give a neighbor or friend who is not already a member a free 6-month membership when you renew. With this free membership they will receive the HPWA newsletter and communications about our meetings and other events for 6 months. Please use these postcards to help us educate more of the residents of the watershed in ways to protect our beautiful but fragile environment.

Membership dues help us keep our pond water, ground water and our watershed clean and healthy for future generations.

Protection through education is our goal and we need you, your neighbors and friends to participate.

HPWA Membership Form 2016-2017

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

___ \$15 Individual Membership

___ \$25 Family Membership

___ \$55 Contributing Membership

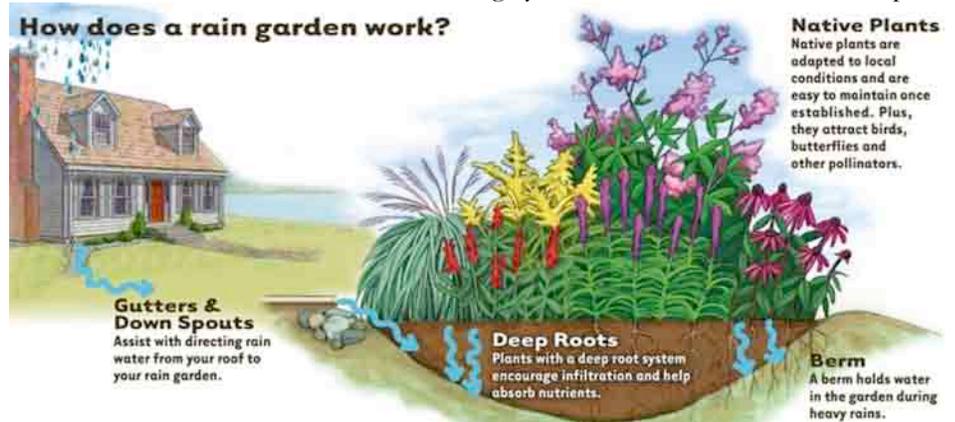
___ \$100 Sustaining Membership

Make checks payable to **HPWA**.

Mail to: Herring Ponds Watershed Assoc.
P O Box 522
Sagamore Beach, MA 02562

Geri's Tidbits

In the spring I clean up my gardens, divide perennials and plant new stuff and then mulch. Because our soil here is so sandy, I have been using an inch of compost (I purchase it by the yard from Emerald Landscaping) rather than wood mulch (the cost is comparable) to retain moisture, enrich my soil and keep down weeds. For those who use shredded wood mulch I looked into the safety of dyed mulches. I found out that much of it is made from recycled wood that can come from pallets and wood that has been treated with CCP, which contains chromium and arsenic. These can leach into your soil along with the dyes and harm young plants and enter the waters of our watershed. I urge you to use natural mulch or compost.



PINE FEST CHARGE POND
MYLES STANDISH STATE FOREST

SAT. MAY 21
10AM-4PM

FREE FUN ACTIVITIES

- CAMPFIRE
- ARTS & CRAFTS
- GAMES
- MUSIC
- FOOD

MULTI-CULTURAL CELEBRATION of THE PINE BARRENS
PineBarrensAlliance.org

Looking for an adventure, near where you live? Looking for an outdoor activity that family and friends can do together, practically in your back yard? Come to Pine Fest!

You will be able to learn to shoot a bow and arrow, paddle a kayak, and ride an Icelandic pony. You will be able to take a hike with someone who won't get you lost and learn the secrets of making charcoal and hone your skills baking bread in a campfire or meet some raptors! There will be games, arts and crafts and demonstrations.

Members of HPWA will be there with their decorate-a-herring activity and giving away *Run Herring Run* and *Go Herring Go* comic books.