



Newsletter

Winter 2019

HPWA is a 501(c)3 Charitable Organization

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Directors

Don Williams, President
Phil Angell, Vice President
John Foye, Treasurer
Peg Burke, Secretary
Beth Sobiloff, Webmaster
Lee Pulis, Education and Outreach Committee
Paula Kuketz, Water Safety Committee
Martha Sheldon, Membership Committee
Geri Williams, Newsletter Editor

Don Williams and Jack Kedian, Water Quality Committee Co-Chairs

Jerry Levine, Invasive Species Committee Chair

Ramona Krogman, Government Liaison

Website

www.TheHerringPondsWatershed.org

Upcoming Events

March 16, 2pm HPWA General Meeting

Wildlands Trust Barn. Learn about the Plymouth Redbellied Cooter and what is being done to save this unique turtle.

March 29, 8am-4pm WAA Water Conference
Camp Kiwanee, Hanson.

Many speakers concerned with ensuring adequate safe water supply.

April 27, 10am-4pm

Plymouth Herring Festival, Grist Mill on Town Brook. Join the fun sharing activities to learn about herring.

President's Message

Don Williams, President

These are exciting times for the Herring Ponds Watershed Association. We have a good working partnership with the Town of Plymouth that has resulted in grants to identify and remediate runoff sites, financial support for water analysis and purchase of the land west of Little Herring Pond to prevent development in this environmentally sensitive area of the watershed. We are monitoring swimming areas in GHP during the summer months for E. coli and have not found unhealthy levels. We are taking samples at Little Herring Pond's spring; nitrate analysis allows us to chart the effect of human impact on the aquifer below our watershed. We have found nitrate to be very low over the last year. We have sampled both Great Herring Pond and Little Herring Pond for invasive species (and will continue to do so on a yearly basis) and have found none. The fish we catch can be eaten. We stress safe boating and swimming.

The Board has given much thought to what needs to be done to get to the next level. What is the next level, you ask?

First, we must better understand how our pond works so that we can prevent practices that endanger the viability of our watershed. That ponds are always vulnerable and fragile can be seen by this summer's cyanobacteria outbreak in Bartlett Pond and Creek. It is not enough to be content with the current status – both Great Herring and Little Herring Ponds are considered “impaired” by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Second, and perhaps most important, our watershed constituency should understand

how our pond works. We have an excellent website but our residents have to access the website in order to learn how to help.

Third, we must develop new sources of funding for various remediation projects.

What will we be doing to reach the next level?

First, we need to find financing for a Watershed Management Plan that will quantify the sources of pollution. Second, we need to find better ways to spread the word to our residents. Your Board of Directors took an important step at its last meeting by welcoming Beth Sobiloff as a new Board Member. Beth will be redesigning and maintaining our website. The Board of Directors will continue searching for other new ways to encourage residents to use this website. Third, we need to tap into the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for funding. I have reached out to Senator deMacedo about the importance of uncontrolled runoff in pond pollution and hope that the algae cycle hypothesis will prove of interest to him.

To those of you who are reading this, we need your energy and ideas. Come join us. Ramona needs volunteers to help with the annual Herring Count. Lee needs lots of help with the Water-“Shed Faire” and with the activities at the Town Herring Run Festival. It's a great time to meet people and run educational activities for all ages. Come see us in action.



Saving the Plymouth Red Bellied Cooter

On **March 16 at 2pm** HPWA will have our first public meeting of the year - a program about the goals and methods associated with head-starting imperiled turtles with emphasis on the efforts to conserve the federally endangered Plymouth Red Bellied Cooter - Massachusetts' only endemic turtle. It will take place in the Wildlands Trust Conservation Barn at 675 Long Pond Rd in Plymouth. This will be a family friendly presentation by Brian Bastarache and some of his students at the Bristol County Agricultural High School. They are part of the Natural Resources Management program which provides students an opportunity to conduct environmental research and raise endangered hatchling turtles from September until May, when after their 'head start' care they are released into the wild with a much better chance for survival.

Bring your children or grandchildren to learn about these unique Plymouth turtles and the efforts being made to increase their population.

The program is free and open to the public, but we ask that you register for the limited seating at:

<https://conta.cc2HbJ6vE>

Education Committee News

by Lee Pulis, Education Committee Chair

HPWA education and youth involvement plans for 2019 were detailed at a committee meeting on February 13 and reviewed and approved at the Board of Directors meeting on February 26th.

HPWA camperships to increase youth nature appreciation and stewardship

A new initiative this summer is to fund several 50% camperships at our three watershed youth camps, [Camp Clark](#), [Camp Bournedale](#), and [Hedges Pond Preserve](#) summer Camp. Youth selection will be administered by the respective camp offices. Funds for this year will be advanced from treasury and replenished by any generous donations you would like to earmark, plus proceeds of our 2019 Shed Faire. Contact Lee at lee@theherringpondswatershed.org to donate or learn more about the camperships.



Shed Faire Planning and Contributing – Saturday, July 13, 2019 – Cedarville Fire Station

Free up clutter and storage space by donating items for other watershed and area residents to **Reuse, Recycle, and Repurpose**. Categories of items for donation and sale include, but are not limited to: fishing, boating, gardening, biking, riding, and wildlife gear, guides, art, etc. Start identifying, setting aside, and contributing items NOW, and HPWA will store and transport them to the event for you. Email Phil Angell angell_phil@yahoo.com or call (781) 775-5132 with any questions, to volunteer to help, or to arrange for dropoff of your items for interim storage.

“Water – New England’s Next Big Challenge”

HPWA is co-sponsoring and encouraging attendance at Watershed Action Alliance of Southeastern Massachusetts’ **March 29** Conference at Camp Kewanee in Hanson. As a WAA member and co-sponsor HPWA will

present a brief slide show to showcase our watershed issues and stewardship efforts. Review the topics, speakers, and agenda and **Register online** at <http://www.watershedaction.org/>



Town-wide 6th annual Herring Run Festival - Saturday, April 27 at Plimoth Plantation Grist Mill on Town Brook. Volunteers needed now to help prepare or be there to assist with our **new fun Herring Run kids’ activity!** Herring Woman is collaborating with us, and kids will receive our HPWA super hero river herring comics. Contact Lee for more info and to volunteer.

Milkweed and Monarch Project – HPWA member Teri Pekol Kreitzer will be coordinating with greenhouse operations at Tidmarsh Living Observatory to sprout native locally sourced milkweed seeds this spring to help you start a Monarch butterfly backyard habitat. Watch for more information about future seedling distribution and how to participate.



Monarch butterfly on milkweed

David E. Alper Nature Preserve – The QR-coded Pine Barrens plant identification tags have weathered well through the winter, walking sticks and wizard wands have been replenished, and littering is reduced. Town of Plymouth Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs wardens will use accurate mobile GPS devices to assist marking the boundaries, to document and discourage abutter view cutting and encroachment.

Hedges Pond Preserve Recreation Hall Renovation - status report –

Incremental steps have been taken by the Community Preservation Committee to stabilize the building foundation and prepare for electrical upgrades and interior renovation bids. HPWA donated \$5000 toward this project in November 2017, as a key historic space within the watershed for larger meeting space and advancement of our youth education programming. Bill Keohan, Chair of the CPC indicated that the CPC is currently entering a possible CPA funding request for Fall Town Meeting. Opportunity exists for HPWA members, area residents, or former campers to step forward with significant donation(s) for naming and memoriums for the building itself, the interior office, ADA compliant restrooms, kitchen, wagon wheel lighting restoration, gathering hall, etc. Contact Bill Keohan at billkeohan@gmail.com.

Water Quality

by Don Williams, Water Quality Committee Co-Chair



Zach Tympanick, our Rising Tide Charter School intern worked with me first semester analyzing water quality data from the last nine years looking for trends. His work has given us a deeper understanding of the factors causing algae blooms in Great Herring Pond and has suggested important changes in our testing program.

Great Herring Pond was clear of algae this summer until the middle of August, following a torrential downpour.

Typically, algae blooms start in June and run through the summer months into fall. Zach noted that in years following runoff remediation projects, phosphorus levels had decreased. Since phosphorus

controls algae blooms, we hypothesized that runoff may be a more significant factor than originally thought (septic and sediment are generally larger contributors of phosphorus to ponds in our area). Indeed, phosphorus levels in early August were the lowest ever seen in 9 years of data collection but had risen to normal levels after the torrential down pour. Since 2016 and 2017 had typical algae bloom behavior starting in June, Zach examined rainfall data from 2016 – 2018. The first pass through the data showed a day in June 2018 that had significant rainfall that should have started an algae bloom. We were discouraged but closer examination of the rain data revealed that this June 2018 rainfall was a gentle, all-day rainfall and not a gully-washer storm that would give rise to significant runoff.

We developed the following hypothesis to explain the influence of runoff on algae blooms. Runoff carries soil containing significant amounts of phosphorus into the pond. Most years, there is a gully washer storm resulting in significant runoff early in the growing season. The resulting shot of phosphorus causes an algae bloom that adversely affects pond clarity. The algae die relatively quickly and fall to the bottom of the pond where oxygen is required to decompose it. When the dissolved oxygen in the pond is lowered, phosphorus is released from the sediment. Phosphorus in sediment in southeastern Massachusetts ponds is the result of cranberry bog fertilization over the years. Sediment phosphorus starts algae growth anew and the cycle is repeated.

Several important outfalls result from this hypothesis. First, we need to continue to remediate runoff sites. Second, we should monitor dissolved oxygen (we have our own DO meter) more frequently and third we must get funding for our Watershed Management Plan to verify that in Great Herring Pond, runoff is a very significant source of phosphorus.

A big thank you to Zach for his insight and hours of work. If you would like to join us call me at 508 833-4355.

Our New Webmaster



HPWA is very pleased and excited to welcome a new member to our Board of Directors, **Beth Sobloff**. She has agreed to be our Webmaster and is in the process of updating our website: TheHerringPondsWatershed.org

Beth is the owner of Birchwood Web Design, a 19 year old web design, internet marketing and search engine optimization business. She is also half of *Two Grannies on the Road* on PAC TV. Beth grew up in Ohio. She is a graduate of Smith College, and received a Webmaster Certificate from Clark University. Beth has three children and six grandchildren. Her hobbies include knitting, kayaking and cake decorating. She played viola for many years, including six years with the Plymouth Philharmonic.

Beth has been on the Board of Directors of the South Shore Women's Business Network, President of the Hanover Chamber of Commerce and President of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy Parents' Association. She also served as a Director for BNI (Business Networking International) for 15 years. She is now on the Board of Directors of the National Marine Life Center. The Board is very grateful to have such an accomplished and energetic member join our efforts.

A New Tick Found in US

by Jerry Levine

The Asian Longhorned tick, which is not normally found in the Western Hemisphere, was reported for the first time in the US in 2017. In other countries where they are located, they can make humans and animals

seriously ill. So far, research on this tick in the US has not implicated it as carrying or transmitting serious illnesses.



Nymph and adult female, underside.

The CDC is monitoring the locations and the effect on humans and animals of this tick. As of Oct. 2018, the tick has been found in Ark., Conn., Md., N.C., N.Y., Pa., and W.VA.

At this time CDC and USDA are recommending using EPA registered insect repellents for use on humans and veterinarian approved medications for pets and livestock. Check for ticks after being in areas that would have the possibility of tick populations. Remove any ticks found as quickly as possible. Save the ticks in rubbing alcohol in a jar or in a zip lock bag. Contact the Plymouth Health Dept. for identification and tips for preventing tick bites and tick born diseases.

For additional information:
www.cdc.gov/ticks

Join the Herring Count

by Ramona Krogman

Starting in April, the count begins. A group of citizen scientists will take a few minutes out of their day or week to count herring returning to Great and Little Herring Ponds to spawn. Moving from salt to freshwater to lay their eggs is a critical stage in the life cycle of this important species. Herring provide a food source for larger fish such as striped bass, cod and yellow perch. In the past, they were an important source of food for Native Americans. The numbers of herring have diminished precipitously over the past decades. Loss of access as rivers were dammed, changes in water quality and other obstacles have contributed to the drop in populations. Restoration efforts led to

repair of fish ladders, which allow herring to move from ocean to fresh water. Confirming the success of restoration efforts is required for continued funding. The most straight forward confirmation of population increases is a count of fish returning to the ponds.



And so the count begins. For a period of 10 minutes, a volunteer stands in a particular location counting the herring passing into the pond. Counts take place at different times of day and under different weather conditions. Each counter records water and air temperature, weather conditions and the number of fish passing. The counts usually start April 1st when the water warms up and continue through May. Data from Great Herring Ponds count contribute to state and nation wide studies to determine the health of the populations.

Counting is a small 10 minute commitment with a big impact. We need a good number of counters to gather enough numbers to be statistically significant. To join the effort as a counter please contact Ramona Krogman, email ramiek99@hotmail.com or call/text to 781-8209290

Membership Appeal

by Martha Sheldon, Membership Chair

Our membership year is June 1 to May 31, and we will be sending out our annual dues appeal in May. If you would like to become a member of HPWA, you can join by mailing a check to HPWA, PO Box 522, Sagamore Beach, MA 02562. Giving levels are \$15 for an Individual Membership, \$25 for Family, \$55 for Contributing and \$100 for

Sustaining. We are an all-volunteer group, and your dues are applied directly to support our work protecting and preserving our unique watershed.

Think Green For a Better Lawn

Excerpted from Eco RI News

Americans spend some \$40 billion annually on the upkeep of their lawns, with much of that money spent on the overuse of fertilizers and pesticides. There are, however, better ways to grow green lawns. The easiest, safest and cheapest solution is to avoid synthetic chemicals and use alternative lawn-care methods, such as applying organic fertilizers, composting, and cutting down on watering — lawns only need an inch of water a week.

Here are a few tips to care for your lawn without relying on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides:

Grow a diversity of grasses and shrubs.

Keep the grass at least 3.5 inches to strengthen roots and shade out weeds.

Leave grass clippings on the lawn. Clippings provide about 50 percent of the fertilizer a soil needs.

Aerate the lawn to allow air, water and worms to cultivate the soil.

Apply ample seeds frequently with compost.

Apply organic fertilizer, especially in the fall.

Be careful of the terms being used to sell fertilizer. For example, “natural” means nothing. Look for organic fertilizers that contain insecticidal soaps, diatomaceous earth, milky spore, nematodes and corn gluten. Compost in air-tight packaging can't be alive, even if the label says otherwise.

In general, organic fertilizers improve the soil - instead of feeding the lawn or plant - making grass and landscaping more durable and safer. By contrast, lawns treated with synthetic fertilizers create shallow, weak grasses that require frequent treatments to eliminate weeds and bugs. To make matters worse, some 65 percent of chemical fertilizers are typically washed away in runoff.