



Newsletter

Fall 2015

Volume 6, Issue 3

Association Leaders

Brian Harrington,
President
Lee Pulis, Vice Pres.
John Foye, Treasurer
Linda White, Secretary
Ken Cannon & Kate von
Goeler, Webmasters
Claire & Emma Esterman
Student Assistant
Webmasters
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

Website

www.TheHerringPondsWatershed.org



Lee Pulis and Dennis White manning a herring decorating table at the Herring Festival

President's Message

Brian Harrington, President

Our watershed association is rightly celebrating the cooperative efforts that have set the stage for protection of a key 43.6 acre property near our watershed headwaters. The ecological and aesthetic value of the lands between Triangle and Little Herring Ponds was evidently recognized long ago by plans developed between the Town of Plymouth and developers of what is now the Ponds of Plymouth. But somehow that vision got muddied, eventually ending in a development proposal for the same land that had formerly been designated as open space by the Town and by developers.

The process that transpired over the last two years has many lessons for our Association. First, your Executive Committee (and probably most of our membership) initially agreed that development of the land between the two ponds could seriously risk water quality of the Herring River Watershed, including its biota such as our precious herring run, human recreational activities, and aesthetic qualities. Our next stage required active advocacy and education, and included presentations to Town of Plymouth boards such as the Planning Board, the Cedarville Steering Committee, the Open Space Committee, the Community Preservation Committee, and the Board of Selectmen. We also had several conversations with representatives of the developer. A huge amount of research was needed to back our positions. Your board members did this work, spending dozens of hours reviewing historical Town records, contacting key players involved in decisions made many years ago,

and basically building a sturdy case showing that a process to protect this key land had gone astray and needed repair. Certain Town departments and committees that we worked with meanwhile quietly negotiated with the developers to craft a solution and to negotiate approval by Town Meeting for purchase of the land, plus an abutting piece of land for conservation (see other articles in this and in previous newsletters).

As your President, I have some reflections on the process we went through on this issue. The first relates to your Board of Directors, and how quickly they recognized the importance of the isthmus between Triangle and Little Herring Ponds. After discussion about adopting an advocacy role, your Board quickly recognized the need, and moved forward. With rapid support of our membership, we were able to engage a renowned environmental law firm, which helped us to develop a strategy for action. This was a new step for HPWA.

We found a way to work forthrightly with Town of Plymouth to raise a problem, and then to work with the Town towards solutions. We took lots of new steps, mostly forwards, and in the end worked in parallel with Town bodies that have set the stage for protecting lands key to the welfare of the Herring River Watershed. I also believe this is a good case study showing how a local citizen group can constructively raise an issue with the Town, and the Town can and did respond with a great solution. Yea Plymouth!

Gosh, it's not over (closing by Spring), but it feels right! Take a stroll up the county right-of-way and preview this beautiful parcel for yourself (recently cleaned up on Town Clean-up Day by 15 HPWA volunteers).

Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Holidays to all!

We're all thankful for our successes protecting and preserving our special environment.

HPWA Education Committee Report

By Lee Pulis, Committee Chair

HPWA's New FaceBook Presence

Did you know that HPWA now has a FaceBook page [<Herring Ponds Watershed Association>?](#) Be sure to "Like" and "Follow" us, and interact by adding your comments to any post.

LHP/Triangle Pond Land Protection

On Oct. 17, Town Meeting authorized the purchase of 43.6 acres of Priority Habitat land lying between Triangle and Little Herring Ponds, extending along the entire west shore of LHP and around the northern end. The purchase price is \$525,000, with \$400K from the Community Preservation Act local tax plus state funds collected from real estate transactions, and \$125,000 donated anonymously from an HPWA member. See our web site or FaceBook page for a map of the parcels.

HPWA Transparency in Government Award

For those following the action for the past year and a half, the HPWA Transparency in Government Award (a large clear wind spinner) was earned by, and awarded to, Bill Keohan, chairman of Plymouth's Community Preservation Committee, for best explaining the reversion of the newly protected land in 2005 from Open Space to buildable, and working diligently with HPWA support to right that previous wrong.

HPWA Thanks Town with Land Clean-up

On Saturday, October 24, Town-wide Cleanup Day, 15 HPWA members put in 45 man-hours collecting trash that had been dumped on the LHP/Triangle Pond isthmus over the past decades. Dennis White oversaw Town removal of all the bags and piles. See our FaceBook page for "before" and "after" photos and more details.

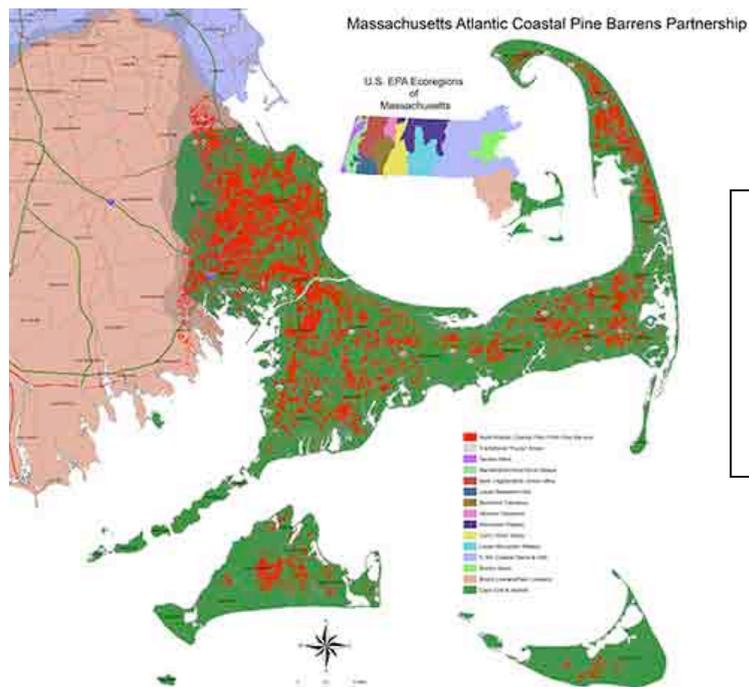


Clean up crew: Owen and James Wright, Lee Pulis, Fox Esterman, Carol Stone, John Foye, Linda White, Joan Pulis, in front Melissa, Mason and Finn Wakeman. Not shown: Dennis White, Rali Pulis, Ava Wright, and Nick Perryclear

Our Pine Barrens are not Barren.

HPWA is a partnering organization, with Lee as a partnership administrator, working closely with Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance (SEMPBA) to form a Regional Conservation Partnership. The Pine Barrens Partnership (PBP) is a movement to create unity and connectivity across towns, government agencies, and non-profit organizations for the protection and preservation of the locally special and biologically significant Massachusetts Coastal Pine Barrens eco-region.

Goals include protecting water quality, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and species diversity for present and future generations. See the new Pine Barrens Partnership website [<http://pinebarrenspartnership.org/>](http://pinebarrenspartnership.org/) for more information, PBP's Call to Action, detailed area land use maps, and an interest survey that you can fill out and submit to get personally involved. Lee attended a partnership network conference in Nashua, NH with PBP lead administrator Sharl Heller on Nov 17-18.



MA Coastal Pine Barrens Eco-region (green) showing Remaining PB Habitat (red)

Water Quality Committee - Moving in a Different Direction

By Don Williams & Jack Kedian, Co-Chairs

This has been a summer with many algae blooms. Three samplings of the watershed have confirmed that phosphorus pollutant levels were elevated and Secchi disk results have shown an increase in water cloudiness. What should be done? In the last newsletter, we told you that HPWA would be looking for funding to determine the sources of phosphorus and to conduct the studies necessary to identify ways to improve the water quality of our watershed. That has been done! The study will be performed by Ed Eichner of the School for Marine Science and Technology. Discussions between the HPWA and the Town of Plymouth's Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs led to a preliminary strategy that would culminate in a pond management plan for the watershed. The tasks will be to: 1) collect, review and synthesize the available watershed data, 2) complete a watershed delineation and use existing land use and water information to develop initial water, nitrogen and phosphorus budgets for the watershed, 3) complete comprehensive runoff sampling of 7 sites during 3 separate rain events and 4) complete a baseline assessment report that will lead to a management plan which includes suggestions for best remediating the causes of pollutants. Total cost of the study is \$46,629.

The Town of Plymouth has offered to provide the funding (\$18,400) for conducting the runoff studies. In addition, the Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs will ask for an additional \$20,000 at spring Town Meeting to cover more of the study cost. The remaining \$8200 will be raised by a special fundraising appeal by HPWA. In addition, HPWA will approach the Town of Bourne for help in this endeavor since part of the

HPWA watershed is located in Bourne. The partnerships with Bourne and Plymouth as well as the HPWA contribution of \$8200 will move our watershed closer to the top of the list for the limited grant funding available for the more expensive remediation projects. In addition, design plans for the first runoff remediation project will be done by the Town of Plymouth (cost of \$50,000) and could be completed by the end of 2016. Our thanks go to Kim Tower of Plymouth's Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs for being an excellent partner in this venture. When completed, HPWA's study will be the first ever done in Plymouth.

Please consider contributing to the special fundraiser for this study that will be launched soon. It is clear that HPWA will have to be proactive in reducing pollutants to improve water quality. We will need your help. Meanwhile we can all improve watershed health by maintaining septic systems and limiting the use of phosphorus in fertilizers. Hope you all had a great summer enjoying our ponds.

Lessons from our October Meeting

By Geri Williams

Michael Talbot from Talbot Ecological Land Care was our guest speaker at the October general meeting. Michael was a pioneer of organic lawn and landscape care and is also a recognized expert on Conservation Design and Restoration. His presentation was filled with advice for living in and enhancing our enjoyment of our sensitive and fragile environment. Here are a few of the tips I think are worth sharing. More and more the public realizes that our conventional human built landscapes tend to use too much water, energy, pesticides and fertilizers. Our lawns and landscapes are also a major source of pollution of both our groundwater and surface waters. Michael spoke about landscapes that are more self-managing and lower

maintenance, more in tune with nature, and more drought, pest and stress resistant. They use less fertilizers, water and toxic pesticides that can have serious impacts.

Lawns are only about 5% better at absorbing rain and runoff than impervious surfaces. So consider replacing some lawn with flower and vegetable gardens. Bioretention rain gardens or wet meadows are depressed gardens that gather rain and allow it to slowly infiltrate the soil along plant roots rather than run off carrying pollutants, soil and fertilizer. Plus they provide habitat for butterflies, birds and small animals.

Choose plants for drought tolerance and resistance to pests and other stress factors. Native plants such as black huckleberry, low bush blueberry, summersweet (clethra), wavy or coastal hair grass are tough, very drought tolerant and grow in sun or shade. More attractive plants well adapted to our pine barren environment are American holly, ink berry, bear berry, arrow wood viburnum, bayberry, little blue stem grass, switch grass and drought tolerant ferns. Increase diversity in your landscape; a variety of plantings will be more interesting, resist pests and will attract a diversity of wildlife.

A key to tough, low maintenance lawns is to choose turf grass blends that are high in fescue, one is called Ecoblend. Longer grass blades mean longer roots, so mow lightly. You shouldn't remove more than 1/3 the length of the grass each mowing and leave the grass at least 3 inches tall in the hot summer months. Leave the clippings on the lawn. Don't over fertilize, only in the spring after the first mowing and in late summer. Use slow release organic fertilizer, which is very low in phosphorus, and sweep up any off asphalt. Never apply fertilizer before a heavy rain, when soil is saturated or frozen, or when turf is not actively growing. These are all leading causes of nutrient pollution and algae growth in ponds and streams.

For more information see *Principals of Ecological Landscaping* by Michael Talbot on our website.

Think Water Safety

By Paula Kuketz, Water Safety Committee

The Committee is always striving to cultivate a culture of acting responsibly and considering safety first when recreating on our beautiful pond. So the Plymouth Harbor Master will be invited to be the speaker at our June 2016 meeting. This will also be an opportunity for residents to present their safety concerns to him. There will be more information in our Spring Newsletter.

This is the time of year for a reminder about the hazard of COLD SHOCK. MA State regulations require that life jackets be worn between September 15th and May 15th. Cold water removes heat from the body 25 times faster than cold air. Survival times can be reduced to minutes. Exposure of the head and chest to cold water causes sudden increases in heart rate and blood pressure that may result in cardiac arrest. Without a life jacket, a victim may inhale while underwater, involuntary gasping reflex, and drown without coming back to the surface. These life threatening hazards can only be prevented by wearing a life jacket at all times when on the water in the off-season.
SAFETY, IT'S OUR CONCERN
AND IT'S THE LAW!

Watershed Action Alliance to Host Invasive Species Workshops

From Lee Pulis, Education Committee Chair

The grant request is in process: [WAA](#) decision-makers have surveyed member organizations (HPWA included) and determined that invasive species training is a common priority concern and need. If all goes as planned, Saturday, April 2, 2016 could be the date for a 3-hour workshop in Plymouth. Mark your calendar now and stay tuned.

Amendment

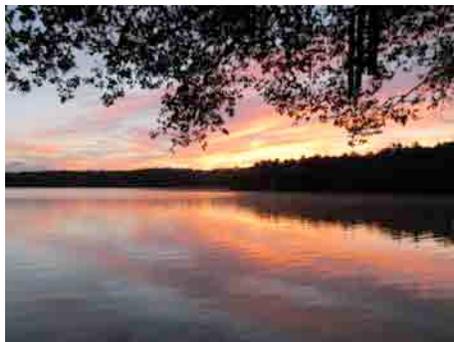
It was brought to our attention by our Attorney that we had a terminology problem with wording in our by-laws. In our Massachusetts Articles of Incorporation we call our officers a "Board of Directors" but refer to our officers in the The Herring Ponds Watershed LTD By-Laws as an "Executive Committee".

For the record, on 29 September we notified our Members of a proposed By-Law change, which was further highlighted at our 5 October Membership Meeting. The Motion to amend our By-Laws read as follows: **Amendment: In all Articles and Sections of The Herring Ponds Watershed Association LTD By-Laws where the term Executive Committee is used, the Executive Committee shall also be known as the Board of Directors of The Herring Ponds Watershed Association LTD.**

As discussed in the public meeting, we solicited an email voting response from the Membership. Effective October 30, 2015 (and after 3 mailings), we surpassed the required 2/3rds majority in favor of the change.

In all cases responses were recorded as one vote for single memberships and as 2 votes for family memberships. We had 101 "yes" (in favor of the change) and 0 'no' votes, a representation of 75% of our Members. With this vote, the Motion carried.

What is truly amazing is the percentage responding, and agreeing!



Early October Sunrise contributed by Ulla Daggert

Membership

By Martha Sheldon, Membership Chair

Not yet a member? Please join 100+ members who have pledged their support for the Herring Ponds Watershed Association this year.

Membership dues help us keep our pond water, ground water and our watershed clean and healthy for future generations by our continued education, advocacy efforts and water testing.

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

After reading all we're doing please renew today and invite those that live in your neighborhood and who use the ponds and the surrounding globally rare habitats of our watershed to join The HPWA.

HPWA Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

___ \$15 Member, vote & communications

___ \$25 Family, 2 voting members & communications

___ \$55 Contributing Member, vote & communications

___ \$100 Sustaining Member, receive all of above

Make checks payable to **The Herring Ponds Watershed Association, Ltd**

Thank you Ramona

Unfortunately due to greatly increased family and work demands, Ramona Krugman has had to resign from her at-large position on the Board of Directors. In her short tenure on the Board she worked hard on several projects including the FaceBook page and website revisions and contributed many valuable ideas. You will be sorely missed, Ramona. We hope that you will be able to rejoin us soon!