



Newsletter

Summer 2011

Volume 2, Issue 2

Association Leaders

Brian Harrington
President

Dave Clark, Vice
President

John Foye, Treasurer

Ken Cannon, Webmaster

Paula Kuketz, Water
Safety Committee

John Foye, Membership
Committee

Sara Grady, Invasive
Species Committee

Geri Williams,
Newsletter Editor

Dave Clark, Government
Liaison

Marleen von Goeler,
Education Committee

Eb von Goeler, Water
Quality Committee

Upcoming Meeting

June 20, 7:00 pm
New Testament Church
Long Pond Rd.

Program on how
individuals can mitigate
runoff on their property

August 15, 7:00 pm
New Testament Church
Long Pond Rd.

Annual Meeting with
election of officers

Website

[www.TheHerringPonds
Watershed.org](http://www.TheHerringPondsWatershed.org)



'Proof' that our Great Herring Pond is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. HPWA working together to keep it that way. Photo taken by Tom Clarke after a recent storm.

Message from the President

Brian Harrington, President

Our watershed is beautiful and we are privileged to live with and enjoy the Herring ponds and their rivers (Carters River and the Herring River). Moreover, our watershed is clean, in contrast to most other southern New England watersheds.

Because of its pristine state and importance as a herring run, our watershed is designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern by our state. While we are privileged to enjoy this wonderful resource, we also hold responsibility for ensuring that it remains clean and safe for ourselves and for future generations, as well as for the biological resources of the watershed. It is for these reasons that our Association was formed, and why we have a hard-working and

dedicated board of directors. But with the rapid growth of southern Plymouth, our Association board alone cannot do justice to needs of our watershed. So we have developed strong partnerships with both the state and the Town of Plymouth. But even this is not enough to meet the challenges at hand. Quite simply, the needs for nurturing our watershed fall to those of us who live and play within the watershed boundaries. Yet relatively few people living in the Herring Ponds Watershed understand this, and few of us live with the actions that are needed if our beautiful living place is to remain so wonderful.

So, I believe that the biggest task our Association faces is to engage residents of our watershed in the lesson plan we need to share and live by for the preservation of the Herring Ponds Watershed.

Our board of directors worked hard this past winter to seek funds for a more strategic education effort than our small Association can muster with its small treasury. Alas, our attempt to win funds for an educational campaign was not successful. This makes it even more important that we keep and build our membership so that we can maintain baseline monitoring and educational efforts. Meanwhile, we continue trying to win outreach funding.

Please renew your membership if you have not already done so. And if you have not done so already, can you encourage your neighbors to join us? Maybe bring neighbors and friends to our public meetings. (The next one is at 7pm on June 20th at the New Testament Church, 1120 Long Pond Road.)

We thank those of you who have renewed your membership support for 2011. Your reward (and ours) will be better protection of our cherished watershed!

Thank You

Many Thanks!!!

A sincere thank you to the **Massachusetts Maritime Academy** for lending us one of their Boston Whaler boats to use in taking the water quality samples on April 22nd, and to Tom and Mollie Clarke who took the samples. We really appreciate the efforts of the Water Quality Committee volunteers who braved the cold to take water samples and water level readings, especially Brian Harrington, Nelson Wilder and Eb vonGoeler.

Impact of Runoff

By Eb von Goeler

Two years ago in August, in the middle of a fierce rainstorm, two of our volunteer members, Nelson Wilder and Don Williams, put on their rain gear and ventured outside. They went to collect water samples from storm drains and other channels at several locations where storm water was rushing into Great Herring Pond. What were they looking for?

A good rainstorm clears the air, soaks the land and scrubs it, flushing away grime and dirt, oil and animal waste, fertilizer remnants and debris. While this is good for the land, it is not so good for the lakes and streams into which this mix pours. In fact, this kind of runoff may be one of the most serious forms of pond and stream pollution. Indeed, Nelson and Don found high concentrations of e-coli, phosphorus, and sediments in several of the water samples they had collected.

One of the most serious problem locations for runoff around Great Herring Pond is near the intersection of Pond Rd. and Shore Rd., along the Northwest shore of Great Herring Pond just north of the Boys' Camp. Our group has talked to the Town of Plymouth about this runoff problem area for several years. You may have heard about the recent good news already: Coastal Zone Management, a state agency, awarded the Town a grant of up to \$46,000 for an engineering study to mitigate this problem. This study is now under way, and will be submitted to the Town this summer. Hopefully, additional money will become available to implement the mitigation plan within the next year. With any luck, people in this area can hope to see a time when water will no longer cut ruts into their driveways or spill into their basements.

Runoff is largely caused by human activities. Houses, roads, parking lots, lawns prevent rain from soaking into the ground and getting filtered by the natural action of the soil before joining the ground water or open water in low lying areas. The water will find a way to run from higher ground to lower ground

along the surface, getting loaded with pollution, which then enters the ponds and streams directly. Slowing down the water and giving it a chance to soak into the ground is the preferred, natural way to mitigate runoff problems. What the Town will probably do in the Pond Rd/Shore Rd area is to build retention pools and rain gardens to stop and temporarily hold the water, and allow it to be absorbed.

The Herring Ponds Watershed Association is now starting a program to do more regular studies of runoff water around the Herring Ponds. We need information about the severity of other runoff problem areas. A number of members have already volunteered to collect runoff water samples during a major storm in a problem area they have identified near their residence. Kits for collecting water have already been distributed, and we are now waiting for Mother Nature to provide a storm with at least 1/2" of rain. We welcome and hope for additional people to join this effort. If you know of a location with a runoff problem or want to join this effort, please let me know. My phone is 508-833-2136, or use e.vongoeler@neu.edu.

June 20 Meeting

On June 20th the Herring Ponds Watershed Association will present its first program of the season - on storm runoff and ways individuals can minimize this major polluter of our ponds and streams. Runoff is a threat to aquatic life, the groundwater that we drink, and ultimately the aquifer we all depend upon. We'll see a DVD and slides showing solutions Plymouth and other communities have implemented. We'll learn about the creative methods - large and small - that households can use to mitigate storm runoff.

Following the presentation there will be a panel of experts to answer your questions and offer you ideas on ways to address the runoff problems in your own yard. We have a convenient new meeting place: the New Testament Church on Long Pond Road.

Summer Time and the Septic System

By Dave Clark

Summer is the time of year when the septic system is the last thing on anyone's mind. However, summer is the time of year that can tax a septic system to the point of failure. These are some important points to keep in mind.

Usage tends to increase with the advent of summer, increasing the loading on the septic system. Guests for the weekend, or week, combined with wet weather that increases the ground water table could mean that your effluent could be dangerously close to the ground water. If your system happens to be an older cesspool and you live close to the pond, there could actually be a direct flow to the water you swim in.

What can we do? If you are expecting large crowds for the weekend, and you have a questionable system, you could consider renting a Port-a-Potty. It might not be a great addition to your yard, but it could save your system from a costly, and embarrassing, failure. If your system is an early design septic tank with a drain pit, have it pumped prior to your guests arriving. That will buy the drain pit some valuable time as your guests enjoy their visit.

What else can we do? If your system has not been pumped and inspected for more than five years, it's time to call a pump out provider. If a problem is discovered, maintenance can be done to allow you to enjoy the summer. I heard on the radio someone say they had a sign in their cabin bathroom "If it's yellow, let it mellow. If it's brown, flush it down". This would be a good idea for those still using a cesspool, or early system with a soil absorption pit.



New Bridge on Sandy Pond Rd. replaced the decrepit one that endangered the Herring Run and motorists safety. HPWA members lobbied Bourne for improvements for more than a year.

Biological Sampling on the Ponds

Lee Pulsis, Education Committee
The Town of Plymouth has contracted with biologist David Worden to survey/sample the aquatic life in Great Herring and Little Herring ponds on June 18. Later he will report his findings to HPWA membership at one of our meetings, adding biological context to our ongoing water quality sampling data. Tom Clarke will captain a Mass Maritime whaler (thank you MMA) for the sampling on GHP, and Gean Richards has graciously offered her boat with electric motor to get around LHP for the sampling. Several HPWA members will accompany to assist and learn.

Nominations for Officers

Tom Clarke, Nominating Committee Chair

The association will be holding elections for the two offices of Vice President and Secretary at our Annual Meeting on August 15th. Officers serve two year terms and are elected on alternate years. At the June 20th meeting the nominating committee will present their nominations to the membership and will accept any additional nominations from the floor. The Committee nominates Dave Clark for another two year term as Vice President and Carol Wilder as Secretary for two years.

Brian Harrington will continue for another year as President and John Foye will continue as Treasurer.

We need your help!

John B. Foye, Membership Chairman
Did you know that the water of our planet is stored in many areas:

- 94% fills our Oceans.
- 4% lies underground.
- 2% remains trapped in glaciers and snow caps.

Only 0.1% of all the water on earth is fresh surface water, more reason to protect our valuable ponds and watershed.

The Herring Ponds and watershed area create a diverse habitat for wildlife and provides a home for hundreds of animals, including threatened species; most importantly it provides us as residents of the watershed with:

1. Drinking water
2. Irrigation
3. Recreation
4. Aesthetic value
5. Flood control

There are a number of reasons to now join your neighbors and friends as members of The Herring Ponds Watershed Association.

· Help us keep our watershed, ground water and pond water clean and healthy for future generations.

· You can have meaningful involvement in a community association that is working for the good of all residents of our watershed.

· Membership contributes to the strength and longevity of our watershed association.

· Protection through education is the goal of our association and we need you, your neighbors and friends to help spread that message.

Please invite those who live in the surrounding area of our watershed to join us at HPWA and support our endeavors to preserve our watershed and ponds. Your membership dues will allow us to provide extra water quality tests and to purchase much needed testing equipment for the collection of water samples so we can provide you with data on the condition of our watershed area. Please use the application below to assist us.

HPWA Membership Application

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**

Mail to: Herring Ponds Watershed Assoc.

P O Box 522

Sagamore Beach, MA 02562

WATER SAFETY COMMITTEE

Our goal is to educate residents and visitors of our pond to promote SAFETY for all by using the RULES & REGULATIONS adopted by the Town of Plymouth on 4/16/74 and amended on 4/11/78 by the Annual town Meeting.

At all our General Meetings copies are available, and the committee plans to distribute copies to Home Owner Associations.

Our focus for 2011 is SAFETY FIRST. With an increase of recreational activity on the pond by motorized and non-motorized boaters, paddle sports, sail boats, swimmers, etc. the need for all to practice SAFETY is greater then ever.

Just a few significant rules to mention:

Safe distance is 150' from shore for motorized boats and jet skis.

According to MASS LAW for Personal Water Crafts (PWC), it is illegal to tow any person in any manner behind a Jet Ski.

Persons under 16 years of age are prohibited from operating a PWC or jet ski even if they have a Massachusetts Safe Boating Certificate.

The maximum speed is 45 mph.

Between sunset or 7:30pm (whichever comes first) to 9:00am, 7 days a week, speed is restricted to Headway Speed, which is 6 knots.

By encouraging everyone who uses our beautiful pond to observe the safety rules and use common sense when in and on the water the Association, and in particular the Water Safety Committee, hope a safe and fun filled summer will be enjoyed by all.

Chairperson Paula Kuketz 508-888-2705

Bournedale Herring Run Weekend Event

Lee Pulis, Education Committee
 On Saturday morning April 30 about 20 of us gathered at the Cape Cod Canal visitors' center on Route 6 in Bourne for a Ranger presentation on the annual herring run. We learned that the action is about two weeks late this year, as the 8 to 10-inch adult Alewives are waiting for the water temperature exiting Great Herring Pond to reach 51 degrees. They enter the mouth of the Herring River from the canal and assemble in two very small pools on the south side of the highway, swimming round and round for about a day, acclimating to the change from salt water to fresh. They then make their way against the current through the fish ladder into the pond at night. Later when the temperature reaches 54 degrees, the Blue-backed Herring will also migrate in to spawn. Last year about 105,000 fish passed through the automatic counter behind the Herring Run Motel. Historically this is a very significant herring run. Above right is a photo of adults assembling in another pool in the Herring River Park.



Herring swimming in one of small ponds at the start of the herring ladder by the canal.

Report on water sampling in the ponds.

Eb von Goeler, Chair Water Quality Committee
 We received the analysis results of the April water sampling. Compared with the December 2010 measurements they showed a steep rise in the nutrient (phosphorus) content of all the samples from both the Great and Little Herring Pond areas to levels that are seriously eutrophic. Nitrogen levels were low, which is good. The high phosphorus seems to be a seasonal effect we have noticed for several years, although we don't quite understand the cause. This is the first time the laboratory performed an analysis more appropriate

for pond water rather than for drinking water, as was done in previous sampling, because it was cheaper. The detailed results of the laboratory analysis are posted on our web site theherringpondswatershed.org. The new water analysis is required by our QAPP (Quality Assurance Project Plan), recently approved by the State of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. The QAPP is the protocol under which all sampling and analysis has to be done to be fully recognized by the EPA. Yours truly wrote the first draft of this document, acceptance of which allows us to apply for Federal Grants from the EPA. On June 9, we had our second water sampling event in 2011, with the crew consisting of John Foye, who is already an old hand at this, the Solimini family (Joe, Barbara, Alexis), all of whom are new at this, and me. The Little Herring Pond area was not sampled because of the weather. The samples were submitted the same day to the laboratory in Sandwich. Results have not yet been returned. The next sampling event will be held late in July. Anyone interested in participating in the water sampling is welcome. Please contact me at 508-833-2136 or e.vongoeler@neu.edu.

