

Newsletter

Summer 2013

Volume 4, Issue 2

Association Leaders

Brian Harrington,
President
Dave Clark, Vice Pres.
John Foye, Treasurer
Rali Esterman, Secretary
Ken Cannon & Kate von
Goeler, Webmasters
Claire & Emma Esterman
Student Assistant
Webmasters
Paula Kuketz, Water
Safety Committee
John Foye, Membership
Committee
Geri Williams,
Newsletter Editor
Lee Pulis, Education and
Outreach Committee
Eb von Goeler, Water
Quality Committee
Marleen von Goeler,
Program Committee
Robena Haigh,
Volunteer Coordinator

Upcoming Events

July 15, 7:00 pm
HPWA General Meeting
New Testament Church
Long Pond Rd

Learn about the inter-
connection between our
watershed and aquifer

July 26, 5 pm to dusk
HPWA Picnic

Join us for a picnic on
the beach of the
Weston's property at
173 Herring Pond Rd

August 19, 7:00 pm
HPWA General Meeting
New Testament Church
Long Pond Rd

Election of officers,
septic system care and
social time

Website

TheHerringPondsWatershed.org

President's Message

Brian Harrington, President

One morning, early in May I struck up a brief conversation with two young men who were launching a small boat to go fishing on Great Herring Pond. It was a beautiful morning, and I commented about that. One of the fellows agreed, and then said that it was especially nice with no big power boats at that early hour. He added that he did not like them on the Pond. I 'got' that, but surprised myself a little when I replied that I thought that people in those bigger boats were having fun, just as we were in our way, and that they had just as much right to use the pond as we did.

I love peace and quiet, and so I find plenty of times when I can enjoy quiet solitude on the Pond. Although I sometimes find my peacefulness broken, I know that I have chosen to use a 'fully recreational' pond, and I respect the rights of all others who are using the pond responsibly. After all, I could choose to go to other ponds that might have more restrictions. Little Herring Pond would be a good choice for quiet boating opportunities.

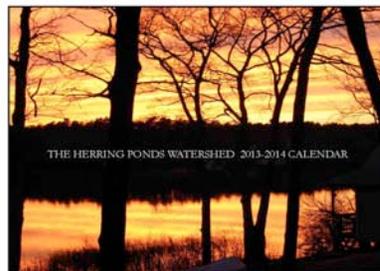
As I continued with my rowing that morning I thought more about how our watershed association now has a history of respectfully engaging all-residents and users of our watershed. Notwithstanding our record (and our stated purpose), some residents still consider our Association to be *against* certain

types of boats or certain types of recreation. This simply is not true.

Our Association is against actions that can spoil the ecology of our watershed. Quite simply, we live in one of the most beautiful and pristine watersheds in coastal New England, and our Association exists to help keep it that way. We want to engage all residents –power boaters, sailers, canoers-- everyone who cherishes our precious resource. To ensure this happens we need all the 'players' we can muster. Our ability to prevail and to protect our great watershed grows stronger with increased numbers of members and supporters.

While on the subject of watershed protection, I want to thank our education and outreach committee and the A.D. Makepeace Neighborhood Fund for enabling production of a terrific booklet that talks in more detail about how all residents can help protect our watershed. An electronic version of the booklet is on our web site and a physical copy (made of real paper!) will soon be delivered to all watershed residences. Take time to read it.

Finally, remember that it is in your interest – along with the rest of us – to help our organization grow and become stronger. Enjoy your summer, and when you find a moment, enlist a neighbor or friend to join our association. Remember – our strength and ability to protect our watershed grows with our numbers!



We have produced a beautiful 18 month HPWA Calendar with winning photos from our Fall contest taken by members around the Pond and watershed. It is filled with interesting information on many dates. It will be sold at meetings for \$15 as a fundraiser. You can also contact John Foye at 508-888-5308 if you would like to purchase one or more for gifts.

HPWA July Public Meeting

By Marleen von Goeler

At our next General Meeting on July 15th at 7pm, at the New Testament Church, Neal Price, a hydrologist will present a fascinating graphic program on the elements of our watershed that provide our drinking water and beautiful pond environments - namely the aquifer, ground water and surface water. He'll show how what happens above ground affects the underground part of the water cycle, how it affects the watershed's health, and how existing runoff problems can be alleviated.

Election time is here again for the HPWA. Our Nominating Committee this year consisted of Lucy Winship, Dave Clark and Marleen von Goeler. They have chosen a slate of nominees to fill the offices of Vice President and Secretary for a two year term. The slate will be announced at the July 15th meeting. Nominations may also come from the floor at that time. The election will take place at the August 19th Meeting.

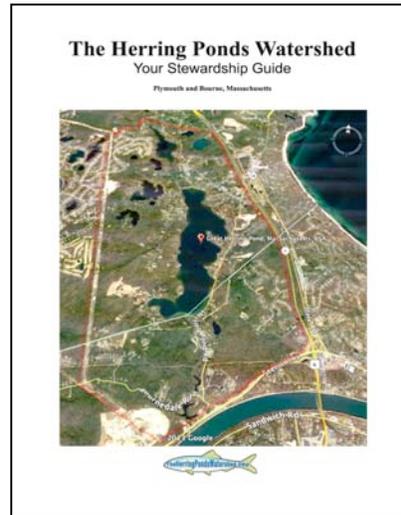
A supper picnic for Association members and friends is being planned for July 26 from 5pm until dusk on the lovely Great Herring Pond beach located on the Weston property at 173 Herring Pond Rd.

Volunteer coordinator Robbie Haigh is organizing the event and needs some help. Contact her at herringswan@verizon.net or 508-833-0304 if you are willing to put in a little time preparing for the event, or directing parking or games. We hope to have many families join us for a potluck and fun evening getting to know each other better. We plan to provide hot grills, ice, paper goods, some tables and chairs and games. More details will be provided as plans progress.

A red phase Screech Owl in a nesting box at the Esterman home. Rali reports her eggs have hatched and they have seen two owlets in the hole.

Your Herring Ponds Watershed Stewardship Guide is here!

By Lee Pulis



2400 Herring Ponds Watershed Stewardship Guides (600 pounds) have arrived from the printer. This 24-page booklet was produced by HPWA members over the winter and printed with a grant from the Makepeace Neighborhood Fund plus a member donation. It is packed with protection and conservation information, history, and even some kid's activities.

Board Members are delivering them to watershed residents. If you can help us distribute a dozen or more to residents in your neighborhood and save HPWA the \$1.72 postage per booklet, please let Lee Pulis know at lee@theherringpondswatershed.org or 617 216-4921.

An electronic version can be viewed or downloaded from the HPWA website Education and Outreach page: http://theherringpondswatershed.org/Education_Outreach.html



Safety First

By Paula Kuketz

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

A few significant rules pertaining to fully Great Herring Pond:

The safe distance is 150' from shore, other boats, swimmers, or docks for motorized boats and jet skis on any inland waterway.

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.

PWC (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 18 years of age are prohibited from operating a PWC or jet ski, except a 16 or 17 year old may operate a PWC with a Massachusetts Safe Boating Certificate.

BE SAFE!! IT'S THE LAW!!
MA ENVIRONMENT
POLICE WEBSITE at
www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dle

By encouraging everyone who uses our beautiful pond to observe the safety rules and use common sense in and on the water we hope all will enjoy a safe and fun filled summer. Water Safety Committee Chairperson Paula Kuketz 508-888-2705

A Boating Safety Course will be offered to the public by the Harbor Master, Chad Hunter early summer. All who pass will receive a certificate, which could lower the insurance rate on your boat. It will allow 14 year olds to operate a boat and 16 or 17 year olds a jet ski. The course will be 10-12 hours total over three days. There will be no cost for the classes. When we find out more details we will post them on the website.

Report of the Water Quality Committee

By Eb von Goeler
Water Quality Committee Chair

We had the first water sampling event of the year on the last day of April. It was a beautiful, sunny Spring morning as we assembled on the dock of Mass. Maritime Academy, who was graciously lending us one of their Boston Whalers and pilot. The sampling crew for Great Herring Pond consisted of Rali Esterman, John Foye, Lee Pulis and myself. Brian Harrington collected water samples in Little Herring Pond and Carters River. We noticed immediately, to our great delight, that the pond water was unusually clean and clear, and during the whole cruise the pond bottom could be seen almost everywhere. We confirmed the unusually high water transparency, when the bottom water sampler was still clearly outlined at a depth of 25 ft, and when our Secchi disk disappeared from sight only at 26 ft – clear as drinking water, someone remarked. For comparison, in the summer the Secchi disc typically disappears at about 8 ft, and sometimes as little as 6 ft, so the transparency on this day must have set some sort of record. One cause for this probably was the unusually cool March and April, which slowed down algae growth.

The results of the lab analysis of the water samples taken that day also are a cause for great cheer. The nutrient level was very low (phosphorus at or below .020 mg/L), continuing a trend first noticed last year, and making us hope that it will impede algae blooms for the remainder of the season. E-coli also were very low and safe, except at the outflow of Carters River where it was unpleasantly but not dangerously high, as it has been several times before, indicating a problem we have to look into. The pH was close to that of clean water, just a bit alkaline. All the other water parameters monitored were at normal levels, indicating a healthy pond. If

you are interested in the full details of the analysis results, they are posted on our web site:

<http://www.theherringpondswatershed.org>

Our next sampling event is scheduled for the end of June. Please contact me at 508-833-2136 if you can volunteer. No volunteers – no sampling! We also will need a boat. Furthermore, Brian has been our sampler for Little Herring Pond and Carters River for a long time. He ought to have a backup.



Photo by Eb von Goeler taken from his window of the Herring spawning

Interesting Bird Walk

By Brian Harrington

Our annual Association spring bird walk was on a beautiful Saturday morning along the Herring River in Bourndale. A small group of friends and members found 46 different kinds of birds in about 2 hours. We had especially good looks at a family of



Rough-winged Swallows, a relative of our more common Tree and Barn Swallows, which we also saw. Yellow warblers were singing often, and gave all of us good views. For a complete list of what was seen visit our web site <http://www.theherringpondswatershed.org>

We are Counting on You

By John B. Foye, Membership Chair

There are a number of reasons we need you to help us recruit your neighbors and friends to join the HPWA:

- Help us keep our pond water, ground water and our watershed clean and healthy for future generations by our continued education and water testing.
- A meaningful involvement in an organization that is working for the good of your watershed and community, and your families.
- Membership contributes to the strength and vitality of our association.

We are now 120 members strong, and many using our web site. We look forward to your continued support in the protection of our valuable resource. *Protection through education is our goal and we need you, your neighbors and friends to participate.*

We are asking you to invite those that live in your neighborhoods and who use the ponds and the surrounding area of our watershed to join The HPWA. Your support helps us to preserve our ponds and watershed. Please use the application to support and help us increase our membership.

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**

Mail to: Herring Ponds Watershed Assoc.

P O Box 522

Sagamore Beach, MA 02562

TANK TALK

By Dave Clark

Welcome to “Tank Talk” where we will offer tips on the care and feeding of your septic tank and system and answer questions you might have.

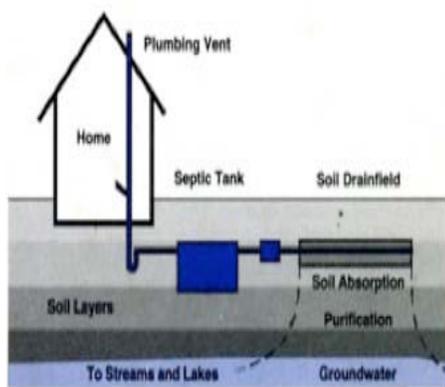
I will start off with a question often heard.

Q: At times there seems to be a smell like a sewer near my house. Do I have a problem?

A: Possibly. If the sewer smell is fairly constant try to locate the source with your nose. If you know where your septic tank and leach pit/field are located, check for any wetness, or ponding, in the area. If nothing is found, you may not have a problem.

But your neighbor might have one. It is also possible that you smell the odor from your vent stack on the roof. This pipe, called a stack, is 4” in diameter and is directly connected to the septic tank allowing it to “breathe” when filling with fluid. If the wind is just right, you may be catching a smell from this stack.

Basic Septic System Components



Q: We have a leaching field for our septic system on a fairly small lot. When we have company there is not much parking area. Is it permissible to park cars on the leaching field?

A: No! Not unless it was designed to accommodate vehicles. The leach field

consists of perforated pipe set on a bed of stone placed on the sand. Some installers then place more stone over the pipe before covering with earth, while others cover the pipe with either plastic or concrete protection structures before covering. Only the strongest concrete structures designed to weight bearing specifications can support vehicles.

Property Tax Abatement

By Carole Clark

I would like to share with you my experience in applying for property tax abatement from the Town of Plymouth. Perhaps it will help you if you are considering applying for your own abatement.

I noticed that our property tax bill, due on February 1st of this year had climbed steeply. At the Assessor's Office, I learned that the last day to file for an abatement for 2013 was the February due date. January is the only month each year in which an abatement request can be filed. I was given an Application for Abatement of Real Property Tax for the Fiscal Year 2013 along with a detail sheet for our property. I had not previously been aware that this detail sheet existed, and was surprised at the extent of the information provided.

I discovered that our 20 year old wooden dock was valued at \$13,000. We have never been asked for any information on our dock. Also, our garage, made of salvage material from an 1890's camp, and built during the 1930's was valued high. I learned that any patio or walkway made of cement or other paving material was now being valued as an asset.

I returned the abatement form, and was given a date for inspection of both the interior and exterior of the property. The inspection was made by a member of the assessors department. I received the abatement in the middle of March.

Lawn Care Program

By Rali Esterman, Secretary

At our May meeting Debbie Cook, Program Manager of the Greenscapes Program for the North and South Rivers Watershed Assoc., presented a program entitled *Greenscapes: Beautiful Landscapes That Protect Our Water Resources*.

Ms. Cook noted that we are currently starting the season with a huge water deficit. Because of an increase in the number of impervious surfaces such as roads, roofs, and driveways, water is currently shooting directly into ponds, instead of percolating down into the ground to recharge the aquifers. Lawns treated with fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides, kill microbes needed for the water to sink into the soil. Summertime watering of lawns (the largest crop grown in the US) constitutes 65% of the total yearly water consumption.

Greenscapes recommends a wide variety of changes that can be made to reduce water use and protect the environment: The first step is getting your soil tested, so that your soil can be amended for optimal growing conditions.

Next, synthetic fertilizers (80% of which run right off the lawn) should be replaced with organic fertilizers such as compost, compost tea, and fish meal. Pesticides and herbicides, which run off into streams and groundwater and are tracked into our homes, posing a health risk, should not be used.

When mowing, use a sharp blade, cut no more than one-third the height of the grass at a time, keep the grass three inches tall, and leave mulch clippings on the lawn. Longer grass will increase photosynthesis and reduce weeds.

Before watering your grass, test it to see if you can see footprints in the grass after walking on it. If not, there is no need to water yet. If necessary, water your lawn at dawn to reduce water loss by evaporation and to protect plants. The Greenscapes Guide, is available online at www.greenscapes.org, with further tips how to conserve time and money, and protect our water as well.