



# Newsletter

August 2017

HPWA is a 501(c)3 Charitable Organization

Volume 8, Issue 3

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Large

## Website

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

## Upcoming Events

**August 5, 3-6pm HPWA Picnic** Weston Bog, 173 Herring Pond Rd. Join us for a fun afternoon. Bring something to share.

**August 21, 7:00 pm HPWA Annual Meeting** New Testament Church Learn all about Solar panels for your home from Board member Phil Angell. Election and committee reports followed by refreshments and socializing.

**September 25, 7 pm HPWA General Meeting** New Testament Church

## President's Message

Brian Harrington, President

July 21<sup>st</sup> was a happy day! The David E. Alper Nature Preserve was dedicated in a ceremony hosted by our Association and the Town of Plymouth.

Some of you will recall that this 46 acre property includes an isthmus of land that slopes steeply into Little Herring and Triangle Ponds, both of which are key elements influencing the health of our Herring River Watershed. Not long ago, this property was approved for development; phosphorus from lawn fertilizers and septic systems from the 10 homes would surely have led to degradation of the entire Watershed. Our Association and its friends worked hard, along with the Town Community Preservation Committee, to find a better outcome. Happily, a celebration was in order.

But there also are lessons to be learned. We learned how easily an insult to an entire watershed nearly happened, how there were precious few ways that it could be prevented, and how a good partnership (HPWA and Town) came to prevail. Another lesson was seeing how difficult it can be to balance long-term planning against short-term outcomes. This particular property had once been designated as open space through a Town process but that open space designation somehow came undone. We learned how critical commitments to long-term planning can be fragile, and how they need to be locked tight when created. It also was a reminder of how there must be careful vigilance over long-term plans. HPWA did that.

Another side to this discussion is how difficult it can be for a democratic government to make, and then stand behind, long-term plans. Complexities include finding ways to balance public needs against private property rights. Key topics that involve our Herring Ponds Watershed Association include

protection of our aquifer (upon which our Watershed is almost completely dependent). How can a Town, or a group of contiguous towns, find ways to plan decades ahead when the thinking of most of our voters is on a scale of months and years? Our Plymouth-Carver Aquifer (PCA) is the major source of fresh water for southeastern Massachusetts. In 1990 the US EPA noted that the PCA has very porous soils, making it especially vulnerable to contamination. Most of the PCA lies in Plymouth, and the best possible protection for it is open space, which serves as rainfall recharge areas for the aquifer. More widespread municipal sewage treatment would help reduce the pollution, but we have balked at the high costs.

Plymouth is one of the fastest growing communities in Massachusetts. Our population increased by 26% from 35,913 in 1980 to 45,608 in 1990, and another 30% to about 60,000 today. Much of this growth has been in the rural residential areas (read septic systems) of South Plymouth. Plymouth has identified and struggled to protect open space for protection of our aquifer. Balancing private property rights against public protection of water supplies has been difficult and, at times, contentious. A recent example in our own watershed is the private sale of 211 acres of land by the Boy Scouts of America. Plymouth unsuccessfully tried to purchase the property (at appraised value) as open space. Negotiations between the Town Planning Board and the developer who purchased the land have identified 140 acres of the property to be preserved as open space, with the balance used for 60 homes encircling Elbow Pond. Although not ideal, this probably was the best outcome that could balance private property rights and public need for open space for aquifer recharge land. Your HPWA is watchful, and we work to help keep our watershed healthy. If you have not joined and paid your dues, please consider helping to support us.



## HPWA 5th ANNUAL POTLUCK PICNIC

Saturday, August 5  
3-6 pm

Weston's Bog 173 Herring Pond Rd.

Come one, come all to the annual HPWA picnic on the pond. There will be land and water activities and all children are more than welcome. This is a great opportunity to meet your neighbors around the Herring Ponds in a casual and enjoyable environment, each year the number of picnickers increases.

You can come by car or boat where there will be ample parking for both. We ask you to bring an appetizer, salad, main dish or dessert to share with your old and new friends. We will provide hamburgers and hot dogs, plates, cups, napkins and dinnerware, and a grill. Some seats will be available but you may want to bring some as well.



The event will be held on Saturday, August 5th with a rain date on Sunday the 6th.

Please rsvp to Jack Kedian at [jkedian1@hotmail.com](mailto:jkedian1@hotmail.com) and let him know what you plan to bring and how many in your party.

## Education Committee News

by Lee Pulis, Education Committee Chair



The David E. Alper Nature Preserve dedication took place with ribbon cutting by 11 Alper descendants and spouses at the north end of Little Herring Pond Road on Friday morning, July 21st. More than 50 were in attendance including speakers Selectman Ken Tavares, Town Manager Melissa Arrighi, David Gould of the Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs, and Bill Keohan, chair of the Community Preservation Committee. The preserve protects 43.6 acres of ACEC habitat along the entire west shoreline of Little Herring Pond and east shore of Triangle Pond.



“HPWA Volunteer” logo T-shirts were on full display at our post-dedication coffee and donuts hospitality table deeper in the preserve. Available while supplies last, at \$12 each: Contact [leepulis@theherringpondswatershed.org](mailto:leepulis@theherringpondswatershed.org)

**Plant tagging** - Harvard Arnold Arboretum botanists Irina Kadis and Alexey Zinovjev with Tidmarsh Farms’ Claire Esterman are helping HPWA’s *ad hoc* Media Communications committee

develop plant identification labeling within the Alper Preserve. Eighteen temporary tags with plant names only have been in place along the main trail since the dedication, and are proving popular with visitors. A permanent tagging system is in test development, featuring QR codes that can be scanned to display descriptive text and photos on mobile phones and pads. See example at: <http://salicicola.com/temp/dangleberry.html>



**sweet pepperbush**

*Clethra alnifolia*

<http://www.salicicola.com/photos/gallery/mobile/1419/7057>

## Watershed Water Quality

by Don Williams, Water Quality Co-Chair

The Water Quality Committee is pleased to report that it has two new members. We welcome Birgitta Kuehn, a new resident to our area, who will help out with the sampling program. We are also fortunate to have Jim Smith, a long-time resident of Little Herring Pond, who will lend his expertise to a comprehensive sampling program on LHP, the source of much of our watershed water.

With the help of the Green Team, Jack Kedian, Jim Smith and Joe Solimini of the WQC and Kim Tower of the Town of Plymouth took 11 samples at the primary swimming sites around Great and Little Herring Ponds and sent them for E. coli measurement. These bacteria can cause severe cramps and digestive problems if ingested during swimming. We are pleased to report that all swimming sites had E. coli levels well below the state minimum. The next E. coli sampling will be in August. Kim Tower submitted the grant application for the construction of the runoff remediation at the two Eagle Hill sites. The decision should be made by the end of September. Kim is optimistic that the construction grant will be awarded.

Jack Kedian and his sampling team will be closely monitoring the dissolved oxygen level on the ponds. Dissolved oxygen is important for a healthy fish

populations and at the end of the fall season, we should have enough data points to know more about our watershed health. More frequent water clarity measurements that will also be taken will further contribute to our knowledge.

## Ensuring Safe Swimming

By Jack Kedian, Water Quality Co-Chair

The HPWA continually tries to assure that the quality of the Herring Ponds is as high as possible. In our efforts we have initiated an additional testing program to monitor the level of E.coli in all locations where people swim and play in the ponds.



Our first test was conducted on July 19th ably assisted by the 'Green Team', a crew of boys and girls ages 15-18, from Plymouth and Brockton. These teenagers are volunteers eager to learn about different career paths available in the conservation field. The group is sponsored by the Wildlands Trust, an organization that works throughout Southeastern Massachusetts to conserve and permanently protect native habitats, farmland, and lands of high ecological and scenic value. Rachel Calderara, Program Coordinator and Maura Coughlin, Education and Stewardship Assistant, from the Trust also accompanied us on the outing. During the morning we collected samples from 11 locations on Great Herring. During that time, Jim Smith and Lee Pulis sampled Little Herring. Following the outing, Brian Harrington led the group on a birding walk through the surrounding trails. The results are back and both ponds are very clean and healthy.

## Annual Meeting Solar 101



Join Phil Angell for a discussion about the current state of solar in Massachusetts at the HPWA Annual Meeting on **Monday, August 21 at 7pm** at the New Testament Church. We will cover ownership versus lease, SRECs, selling your home with solar, payback times, equipment choices, and more. If you ever wanted to ask questions of someone in the industry without sitting through a sales pitch, this is your chance to get your questions answered. Phil Angell is a founding member of the Marshfield Energy Committee, a licensed builder, home efficiency expert, a licensed realtor, and a HPWA board member. He and his wife, Sandi have installed solar on their last two residences.

At the Annual Meeting we will also elect our Vice President and Secretary for the coming 2 years, and hear brief committee reports to keep informed about HPWA efforts to preserve our watershed. After the business meeting we will enjoy refreshments and time to socialize with each other. If you would like to bring some bite-sized dessert to share, it would be welcomed.

## Nominating Committee

At the July Meeting of the HPWA Martha Sheldon chair of the Nominating Committee presented the slate of nominations: Vice President - Don Williams and Peg Burke for Secretary. Nominations were closed, as there were no nominations from the floor at that time. The election will take place at the August 21st Meeting.

## Membership Appeal

by Martha Sheldon, Chair

Thank you very much if you have already renewed your membership in the Association for 2017-18. If you have not yet sent in your dues, or would like to join, you may fill out the form below and mail in your dues. Your email address helps us to save on postage and be "green." (We will not share your email address).

We keep our dues low to encourage residents to join and learn more about preserving our precious watershed.



Invite a neighbor or friend to learn more about HPWA by giving them the herring postcard you received in our membership mailing

If you have any questions, please contact Martha Sheldon, Membership chair at [martha.sheldon205@gmail.com](mailto:martha.sheldon205@gmail.com).

### HPWA Membership Form 2017-2018

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ \$15 Individual Membership,

\_\_\_ \$25 Family Membership

\_\_\_ \$55 Contributing Membership

\_\_\_ \$100 Sustaining Membership

Make checks payable to:

**The Herring Ponds Watershed**  
**Association, Ltd.**

Mail to: HPWA

P O Box 522

Sagamore Beach, MA 02562

## Activities of the Invasive Species Committee

by Jerry Levine, Chairman

This spring the HPWA Invasive Species Committee has been involved in activities that will ultimately have a positive effect on our watershed. Members of the committee attended a seminar at Wildlands Trust by Russ Norton from Cape Cod Extension on terrestrial invasive species. He discussed and presented many of the invasives that are currently found within our local watershed. The seminar included discussion on control and removal of these species. After the seminar, we walked on the Wildlands property and located and identified several invasive species.

On June 20<sup>th</sup> HPWA Invasive Committee offered a seminar on Aquatic Invasive Species at Wildlands Trust. Jim Straub from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation presented a hands-on seminar on species found within our local area. The seminar included introduction to various publications and keys that are available from DCR. The publications and keys allowed us to identify the various plants that Jim provided.

The invasives often displace native species and reduce biodiversity. They can affect water quality, recreation activities, and reduce the value of our property.

On July 21 committee members Jerry Levine, Don Williams, and Sara Grady along with Kim Tower performed an invasive weed survey of Great Herring Pond, examining the lake bottom at the same 11 points that had been surveyed several times in the past. They found no evidence of aquatic invasive plants, a very encouraging result. We will continue to be vigilant and survey on a yearly basis.

The objective for this summer is to increase our ability to identify and monitor various invasives in our area. By training and monitoring we can identify and control the invasives. It is to our advantage to be proactive and deal with

this issue before it becomes a major problem.

If you are interested in the Invasives Issue and want to protect our watershed, JOIN THE INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE. My contact information is: Jerry Levine

781-985-5225

[Jersail123@gmail.com](mailto:Jersail123@gmail.com)

## Water Safety Committee

by Paula Kuketz, Chair

We should be enlightened about following the Safety Rules of Mass. Why!! To prevent harm to ourselves and to protect our loved ones. What about protecting those we don't even know. Alcohol was the leading factor contributing to boating deaths across the country (not wearing life jackets).

Wearing Life Jackets is the biggest factor in preventing death from drowning.

Jet Skiing: it is against the LAW for a person under age 16 to operate a jet ski.

Let's all be safe, use common sense.

Know the laws and responsibilities of the waters we share together.

SAFETY IT'S THE LAW

## Attracting Birds and Butterflies

At our July public meeting Michael Talbot of Talbot Ecological Land Care provided an excellent presentation on 'Making our yards more inviting to birds and butterflies'. Michael started with an astounding fact: *Forty percent (40%) of municipal water now goes to watering lawns!* This is not sustainable or ecological. He encouraged planting a range of "natural habitats" and edge environments in your landscape. A variety of plantings will make our yards more interesting and will attract a diversity of wildlife, including bird and butterflies. To enhance diversity include a variety of plantings and gardens, where possible, that create woodland, scrubland, meadow, wetland and other habitats. Another rule of ecological landscaping is 'the right plant in the right place'. Use more native plants. Many native plants are attractive and are generally well adapted to local pests and conditions. The native Black

Tupelo tree has very nutritious fruit for migrating birds and great fall color.

Flower families that attract pollinators include umbellifers (dill, yarrow, carrot family) and the aster family (daisy, goldenrod, coneflower.) Hybrid species with multi-petaled flowers may be more attractive, but actually have little or no pollen and nectar, and are difficult for the pollinators to access. Attract birds with habitat plantings, feeders and nest boxes. Incorporate a water feature into your landscape, even if just a birdbath. Conifers in dense clusters provide shelter and cover from predators.

There are many more practical tips on a monograph Michael sent 'Principles of Ecological Landscaping' which can be found on the HPWA website Education page, or: <http://bit.ly/2v9bmct>

## Before You Clear or Alter...

your pond front (within 100 feet of the pond) or wetlands property, you must get permission from the Plymouth Conservation Commission. Richard Vacca, Plymouth Conservation Planner (508 747-1620 x140), is an excellent resource for advice on what needs to be done. This is not just another frivolous regulation to raise more money for Plymouth. Runoff results from clear cutting property adjacent to ponds, particularly if there are steep slopes involved. Studies funded by Plymouth have shown that runoff contains high levels of harmful E. coli bacteria and excessive amounts of phosphorus. The former can cause severe intestinal discomfort when ingested and the latter contributes to algae blooms that are harmful to fish and adversely affect boaters and swimmers. The Herring Ponds Watershed Association has been working closely with the Town of Plymouth to remediate the major runoff sites around Great Herring Pond. The design and construction of rain gardens and catch basins are expensive but effective and could raise property values by eliminating algae blooms. Please join us in becoming part of the solution and not part of the problem.

by Don Williams