

# Newsletter

Fall 2014

Volume 5, Issue 3

## Association Leaders

Brian Harrington,  
President  
Lee Pulis, Vice Pres.  
John Foye, Treasurer  
Rali Pulis, 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  
Eb von Goeler, Water  
Quality Committee  
Marleen von Goeler,  
Program Committee  
Dave Clark, Government  
Liaison  
Dennis White, At Large

## Upcoming Events

**Nov. 17 7:15pm  
Planning Board  
Meeting on LHP  
development**  
Mayflower Room, Town  
Hall. Continued hearing  
on development  
variance request, lend  
your presence and voice  
to save this precious  
parcel from  
development.

**There are no HPWA  
public meetings  
planned until next  
spring.** Watch for  
announcements in the  
next newsletter.

## Website

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

## President's Message

**Brian Harrington, President**

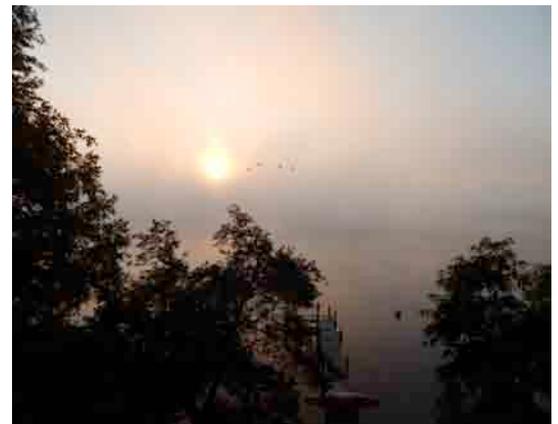
I hope that all of our Members know that our association has been opposing a 10-home development proposed for a narrow, sandy ridge (properly called an isthmus) between two of our watershed ponds. Triangle Pond has no inlet or outlet. Think of it as a looking glass into our precious Plymouth-Carver Aquifer. Little Herring Pond is the headwaters of the Herring Ponds Watershed. It is shallow, and could easily be polluted. Did you know that 80% of the water in Great Herring Pond originates from the springs in Little Herring Pond? The watershed is considered the most productive and healthy herring run in Massachusetts.

Now return to our small Association and the isthmus. The land involved was identified as open space in plans adopted by our Town Planning Board some three DECADES ago. But somehow that designation was reneged in an executive session of our Planning Board in 2005. There does not seem to be ANY record that explains the reason for this shift. And suddenly, in summer 2013, citizens of Plymouth, including your Association leadership, learned that the land is no longer designated as open space, and that it is being seriously considered for a dense development by our Planning Board. Each of the 10 houses would have a septic system located uphill of these pristine ponds and critical environmental habitat and the paved road will contribute runoff.

Consider this: your Association volunteers have scrambled to build and make our case. We are deeply opposed to a housing development plan that we believe is a travesty of environmental sensibilities and ethics, as well as a real threat to the health of our entire

Watershed. In contrast, the professional staff of our opposition has been laying its plans and strategies since the 1970's. We only learned of their development proposal this past summer. In short, it is a volunteer staff only recently alerted versus a professional staff that has been planning its way for more than 30 years. While WE are doing an incredible job, it is public understanding and support that will carry the day.

Do your part. Don't "let the other guy" do it. Be an engaged citizen! Be indignant, yet constructive with your voice. Pay attention to when there are public hearings, the next scheduled Planning Board meeting is Monday, November 17 at 7:15pm (we sometimes will remind you!) Believe in the power of citizen interest and oversight, persuade your neighbors to add their names to our mailing lists (better yet, pay dues and become a member!), and pay attention to your LOCAL NEWS! And finally, believe in democracy! Indeed, it is UP TO US to make sure that our future, and that of our grandchildren, gets due consideration in our Town's decisions.



Peaceful morning sunrise over Great Herring Pond, one of the reasons we love living here and work to preserve our watershed

## Water Quality Committee Report

By Eb vonGoeler, Chair

This year we have had water samplings in Great and Little Herrings Pond (GHP and LHP) on 5/7, 6/30, 8/19 and will have another one on 10/20, weather permitting. Quite a few of your neighbors participated as the volunteers who collected the samples.. Our samples were analyzed by Envirotech Laboratory in Sandwich. The results continue to exhibit a positive trend that began as a delightful surprise three years ago: algae producing nutrients (mostly phosphorus) and pollutants have been low. Water transparency, an indicator of algae content, has been around 8 m in May, meaning that the water was very pristine and clear. It was not as good, between 2.5 and 3 m in June and August, but acceptable for this time of the year. Oxygen has been close to 100% all the way to the bottom. Stratification, the rapid change to 0% oxygen at about 20 feet water depth, indicating a dead zone below that for plants and animals, and which usually occurs in Summer and Fall, has not been observed. Temperature also did not show stratification in either June or August. E-coli were low everywhere in LHP and GHP except at our sampling point at Carters Bridge, where it was exceptionally high at several, but not all, times. We are investigating. If you know a possible reason for the high count, please let me know. The actual data for all our samplings can be obtained at [theHerringPondsWatershed.org](http://theHerringPondsWatershed.org).

The Town of Plymouth and UMass Dartmouth jointly received a grant from Mass Environmental Trust to produce an atlas of Plymouth ponds. The idea is to collect depth information (barymetric maps), and a snapshot of water cleanliness. The first stage of this program examines 35 ponds including GHP and LHP. The Town got about 40 volunteers to assist in the collection of water samples,

including some of our members. We also loaned some our instruments for this task. Results will be published within the year.

In November I am planning a storm water runoff event, for which I need 6 – 8 volunteers. Each person will be assigned one location for sampling, preferably near their home, where they have to collect one set of water samples from a storm drain, or another location just before it enters a pond, in the middle of a rain storm delivering at least ½ inch of rain. You'll get wet, but it's for a good cause. You can contact me ([e.vongoeler@neu.edu](mailto:e.vongoeler@neu.edu)) for more information and to volunteer. The Town will make use of this water analysis data if and when they pursue new runoff mitigation work, as was done 2 years ago in the Pond Rd/Shore Rd area, to the tune of about a quarter million dollars. If you know of an area where significant runoff into one of the ponds occurs, please let me know.

## Federal Non-profit Status

From Eb von Goeler

John Foye and Eb von Goeler spent many hours recently working on the application for non-profit status to the IRS. On 10/10/2014 they filed the electronic application for 501(3)(c) status, as required by the IRS. It is not known when and if they will approve it, but our understanding is that approval will mean our non-profit status would be effective as of 10/10/2014.



Great Blue Heron on GHP  
Picture contributed by Dave Clark

## Tank Talk

By Dave Clark

**Question:** Can I plant a vegetable garden over the drain field?

**Answer:** No. Vegetable gardens require frequent watering which would soak down into the drain area. This area needs to be reserved for the effluent.

**Question:** Can I plant shrubs, or trees, over the drain field?

**Answer:** Again, no. Trees, bushes, and shrubs need to be kept 30 feet away from the drain field to prevent root damage to the area.

**Question:** We have a neighbor who had to have their cesspool pumped on an emergency basis. What does this mean?

**Answer:** In Massachusetts, it means that the system has failed and needs to be replaced. A cesspool that operates properly will not need replacement until the property is sold, or renovations are undertaken and a building permit is issued. The failure is most likely caused by overuse, or misuse. Misuse could be the addition of food scraps with a grinder, heavy use of a washing machine, and flushing items that are not meant to be introduced into a septic system.

**Question:** I have a new septic system and the plan shows a "reserve area". What does this mean?

**Answer:** This is the area set aside to replace the drain field when required. This area must be kept clear of structures such as tennis courts, car ports, sheds, etc.

**Question:** How often should my septic tank be pumped?

**Answer:** It depends on the use. If the system is used as designed, it could last 5 years or more without the need for pumping. However; if the system is abused by the frequent use of a grinder, heavy use of chemical cleaners such as bleach, washing out paint brushes, flushing anything not intended for introduction into the system, flushing unused medicines, then the system may need to be pumped every 1 to 2 years.

## Program Committee Report

Marleen von Goeler, Program Chair  
Geri Williams, our Newsletter Editor gave an incredibly interesting and informative program at our Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> General meeting. She did a Powerpoint presentation on the three environmental treasures left by the receding glaciers 12,000 years ago, namely the Coastal Plain Ponds; the Plymouth-Caver aquifer and the Atlantic Pine Barrens Ecosystem. We all learned a lot.

If any members have suggestions for a special program or are prepared to present a program themselves, please contact me at: 508-833-2136.

## Free Membership Offer

By Martha Sheldon, Chair

Do you have a local friend or neighbor who would benefit by receiving our HPWA newsletters and announcements? Spread the word! If you provide us with their email address (get their permission first), we will add them to our membership *for free* for the year 2015.

### 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

## Education Committee Very Active

By Lee Pulis, Chairperson

The education committee has focused on the 10-home project proposed for the narrow isthmus of land between Little Herring Pond and Triangle Pond. The proposed project site is an area of Priority Habitat formerly designated Open Space. HPWA contends the proposed development is inappropriate for the environmentally sensitive site.

The Sept 29 public hearing on permitting is continued on Monday, Nov. 17 at 7:15 PM. We encourage all concerned HPWA watershed stewards to attend and be counted at this Planning Board meeting in the Mayflower Room at Town Hall.

If you would like more information visit the HPWA website, <http://www.TheHerringPondsWatershed.org>, for links to:

- Lee's Oct. 22 letter to the editor  
- [media reporting](#) of the Sept. 29 Planning Board hearing on LHP VOSD

- slides from HPWA's Sept. 29 public hearing: [Lee's PowerPoint presentation](#)

- [text of Lee's oral presentation](#) made in public comments to the Board of Selectmen on September 23, 2014.

- text of a Sept.27 OCM front page lead article online at: <http://plymouth.wickedlocal.com/article/20140927/NEWS/140927131/?St.art=1>

- Brian's Sept, 24 [letter to the editor](#)

Leave comments on the OCM's Facebook page coverage at: <https://www.facebook.com/OldColonyMemorial>

For questions, offers to help, or to pledge to the Watershed Protection Program legal fund contact: [lee@theherringpondswatershed.org](mailto:lee@theherringpondswatershed.org)

## Upcoming Conference

If you are concerned about the Future of Water in Southeastern Massachusetts, please join Watershed Action Alliance at its 2015 conference addressing this issue at Plimoth Plantation on April 24. The conference is intended for people working to keep our waters clean, free-flowing, plentiful and full of wildlife. You will learn about water issues in the region, network with other with similar interests and get your voice heard by legislators and other regional decision-makers. To find out more and to register, please visit: <http://watershedaction.org/index.php/2015-conference>.

Dorie Stolley, Coordinator and Outreach Manager  
Watershed Action Alliance of Southeastern Massachusetts  
Office: 508-746-0769

## Think Water Safety

From Paula Kuketz

In Massachusetts, life preservers are required to be worn by: (1) youth less than 12 years of age (2) personal watercraft users (3) waterskiers (4) **canoeists/kayakers from September 15 - May**

**Invasive Plants** are non-native plants that are capable of aggressively invading natural areas and displacing native vegetation. They are certainly a problem in our area. If you would like to check out the plants that are prohibited in Massachusetts you can go online to <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/farm-products/plants/massachusetts-prohibited-plant-list.html> or for the most common plants <http://www.massnature.com/Plans/Invasives/invasiveplants.htm> I like this website because there are links to pictures of the plants.