



# Newsletter

Spring 2012

Volume 3, Issue 2

## Association Leaders

Brian Harrington,  
President  
Dave Clark, Vice  
President  
John Foye, Treasurer  
Rali Esterman, Secretary  
Ken Cannon & Kate von  
Goeler, Webmasters  
Paula Kuketz, Water  
Safety Committee  
John Foye, Membership  
Committee  
Sara Grady, Invasive  
Species Committee  
Geri Williams,  
Newsletter Editor  
Dave Clark, Government  
Liaison  
Lee Pulis, Education  
Committee  
Eb von Goeler, Water  
Quality Committee  
Marleen von Goeler,  
Program Committee

## Upcoming Meeting

**April 28, 10:00am**  
Canal Visitor Center Rt 6  
Herring Run Watch  
**May 21, 7:00pm**  
New Testament Church  
Long Pond Rd.

David Gould will discuss  
the Plymouth Carver  
Aquifer and our Ponds

**July 9, 7:00pm**  
New Testament Church  
Long Pond Rd.

The Harbormaster will  
answer questions.

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

## President's Message

By Brian Harrington

Many of our Association goals require *beaucoup* dollars in amounts that we cannot hope to raise within our small organization. But with no modesty whatsoever, I will *shout* that our Association has done an incredible job in building partnerships, especially with the Town of Plymouth. Our partnerships are leading to achievements that we could not accomplish alone.

One of the major sources of pollution in lakes and watersheds is from uncontrolled water that runs – sometimes in torrents-- down our streets and slopes and into our lakes and streams. Runoff carries all manner of materials from automobile fluids to poop from dog pens and yards. This stuff (to use a polite word) can degrade our lakes and streams into environments where you and I would not want to play and live.

So it is exciting to report that our Association has been working closely with the Town, and that construction will start this spring to restrain a major source of runoff into Great Herring Pond. We hope this is just a start, because lots more needs to be done.

How much can we achieve? We all know that the strength of an organization can grow as its membership grows. Our Association is very small and membership growth will improve our effectiveness; and that will result in better protection and nurturing of the ponds and streams we all share and love.

*Are you 'with' us?*



As it happens, even though our membership is small, our Association has been exceptional in meeting a variety of needs and goals that are benefiting all of us. Quite simply this is because we have an amazingly hard-working and effective group of directors. I have not calculated our average age, but suffice to say that the number is not low. So with huge respect to the Board we have, I also say that we need 'new blood' in the ranks of our Association committees. We are happy that there has been some new enlistment, but we would like to see even more. If you cannot join our paying membership, then why not join the ranks of our volunteers? Best of all, do both!

As I write this missive our ponds are at the lowest level I have seen in the last 25 years, our woods are dry, and no meaningful rain is in the forecast. I hope to see some gentle rains soon. But I also know that our rainfall patterns are changing. Today our rains tend to be infrequent downpours rather than frequent gentle showers. This certainly changes how water moves into and through our watershed, and how much runoff pollutants it is carrying. This is just another reason why we need to maintain careful monitoring of our watershed.

Help us.

Brian Harrington, President HPWA

## Shed Faire Fundraiser Needs Your Support

Your HPWA Education and Outreach Committee is organizing a one-day “Shed Faire” to be held **Sunday, July 29** in the Community Room at the Cedarville Fire Station on State Road. Rather than being a typical multi-family garage/yard/tag sale, this event is about freeing up your storage space and donating specific types of items for other watershed residents and visitors to **Recycle, Reuse, Repurpose**.

Categories of items for donation include:

- Fishing rods, reels, nets, tackle boxes, lures
- Boating, kayaking, canoeing accessories
- Gardening, native plants, composting, rain barrels, lawn/yard care and ornamentation, backyard water feature items
- Bird/bee/bat/butterfly/squirrel feeding, housing, and watching
- Biking, riding, hiking, (trail maps, walking sticks, canteens, etc)
- Natural history books, puzzles, wall art, note cards, book marks
- Area history books, maps, photos
- Other related items we haven't even thought of...

Proceeds from items donated and resold at the 2012 HPWA Shed Faire will be used for water quality lab tests, resident outreach, and awareness and stewardship education. Unsold items will be donated to charity.

Committee members will be on hand for educational activities for adults and kids, information and general Q&A.

Take a look at what you could part with and call or e-mail event chairperson Rali Esterman at (203 554-6082, raliesterman@yahoo.com) to arrange for local drop-off or pick-up of your contributions prior to the event.

Consider also whether you would enjoy helping out and being part of the fun and action at this first annual watershed benefit event. Volunteers to assist will be appreciated. Even if you can't be there yourself please be sure to tell your friends and neighbors to attend.

Our list of actively involved members is small and we could sure use your help with this ambitious effort.

Thanks for caring about and promoting good stewardship of our watershed, a state-designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern!

## Herring Watch!

On Saturday, April 28 join members and friends of the Herring Ponds Watershed Association in a visit to watch and learn about the migrations of herring. We will meet (sun or showering) at the Canal Visitors Center on Route 6 (roughly half way between the two canal bridges). A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers naturalist will tell us about this important herring run, along with other information about herring natural history, and answer your questions. **Meet at 10:00 AM on Saturday, April 28.**

## Spring Bird Walk

Join Herring Ponds Watershed Association members and friends on May 26th for a Spring bird-walk along a section of the watershed that is conservation land in Bourne. Meet at the Bourndale Herring Run Park

located at the junction of Bourndale and Herring Pond Roads, **7:30 am, May 26<sup>th</sup>**, light rain or shine. With luck we will find some migrant warblers and thrushes as well as resident bird species. The trip leader will be Brian Harrington, an ornithologist retired from the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences and President of the Herring Ponds Watershed Association.

## May 21<sup>st</sup> Membership Meeting with David Gould

David Gould is the Director of Environmental Management for the Town of Plymouth and the town's Delegate to the Aquifer Committee. He and Kim Tower have been valuable resources to the Herring Ponds Watershed Association Executive and Water Quality Committees. He will share his expertise with a presentation on *Our Aquifer and it's relationship to our Ponds and Watershed*.

Plymouth is underlain by the Plymouth-Carver Aquifer, the second largest sole source aquifer in the Commonwealth. This resource influences the natural resources of our community. From our cold, groundwater driven streams that are ideal trout and anadromous fish runs to our unique coastal plain ponds the aquifer is vitally important. Equally important is the drinking water resources that are derived from the aquifer that is shared by seven neighboring communities. What makes ideal conditions for the aquifer also make it vulnerable to pollution.

Come and see how the aquifer contributes to our natural resources and local wildlife and how and why we need to protect this most valuable source of drinking water now and for the future on **Monday, May 21, 7:00 pm** at the New Testament Church on Long Pond Rd.

## SEPTIC SYSTEM UPGRADE

### WHY, HOW & HOW MUCH

By Dave Clark

#### WHY

A few years back we decided to upgrade our 1970 septic system. This was prompted by several factors. First: the old system was starting to drain slowly due to the normal biomat buildup around the drain pit. Second: we plan on selling our present home in the fairly near future and will need to upgrade to a Title V design in order to pass papers. Third: the economics of spending money on band-aids for a system that is at the end of its useful life.

In addition to the reasons above, a system could have actually failed. If you have ever had your system overflow out on to the ground, if there is ponding in the vicinity of your drain field, or you have a strong odor emanating from your system there is a good chance that it has failed. Title V calls for all failed systems to be repaired and/or upgraded.

This is a general guideline based on our upgrade to document what is involved and the anticipated costs.

#### HOW

You need to start with a Title V inspection of your current system, which should cost between \$250 & \$300.

The next step will be to hire an Engineer experienced in Title V Septic Design. He will review the existing system as detailed in the Title V Inspection Report and survey your property for the optimum siting of your new system. He will then prepare the detailed engineering drawings for your system. These professional services should range between \$2500 and \$3500 depending on the complexity of the design and the need for local variances. Keep in

mind that you will need to have suitable space to accommodate 110 square feet of gallery drain system for each bedroom of your home. For four bedrooms roughly 11' by 40' or 30' by 15' would be needed.

It is now time for the Percolation Test Application and Trench Permit from the town, which is presently \$250.

Next will be the actual "Perc Test" which needs to be coordinated between your Engineer, the Health Department, and your contractor. The contractor cost will be in the \$200 to \$500 range depending on accessibility of the site. The contractor digs a hole to the depth of the new system. The Engineer will confirm the proper depth and then carefully pour a certain amount of water into the hole recording the amount of time required for the water to drain, or percolate. This is done while a representative of the health department is in attendance. You are now ready for your Application for Disposal System from the town. The plans from your Engineer and the results from the perc test are reviewed and possible changes noted along with any variances. Once any required changes are made to the plans, the application can be approved after payment of another \$200 plus \$50 for each variance. Such variance could include insufficient lot size, system too close to the lot line, etc. At this point you can take the plans to contractors for competitive bids. Depending on the size of your system, the configuration of your lot, and the existing composition of the soil material, this price could run somewhere in the \$7000 to \$10,000 range. In our situation, the existing septic tank was re-used at a savings of about \$1300. To accomplish our installation the septic tank was pumped first thing in the morning and we were able to use the system during the day of installation. Installation will take one to two days.



*Digging up the yard.*

Once completed, the final inspection and Certificate of Compliance from the town will cost you another \$75.



*Two chambers in place.*

Finally, should anyone close to the pond wish to upgrade to include an Innovative/Alternative recirculating sand filter which would pretty much eliminate all harmful nitrogen discharge, the added cost would be \$7000 to \$9000 for a three to four bedroom dwelling. Depending on the size of your lot, number of bedrooms, and/or proximity to the pond the town could require this I/A addition to be in compliance with state requirements.

And, some good news: the state allows a tax credit of \$6000 over 4 years to help offset the cost of upgrading a failed or under performing system.



*Completing the installation.*

## Membership Committee

By John B. Foye, Chairman

As concerned citizens, The Herring Ponds Watershed Association has reached out to all the residents of our Watershed, which was declared by the State of Massachusetts as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Each resident received a post card with a map that depicts our area and explains our Associations thoughts and concerns. Our mailing went out to over 2300 homes in the ACEC that includes the towns of Plymouth and Bourne.

Check with your friends and neighbors to see if they received this important message from the HPWA and help us in recruiting your neighbors and those friends and all others who use this valuable resource, to join our association. There are a number of reasons why they should join this voluntary association:

1. Their meaningful involvement in an organization that is working for your good, the good of the community as well as the whole watershed.
  2. Membership contributes to the protection and strength of our watershed and the longevity of a clean and protected water supply as well as a beautiful recreation area.
  3. Membership helps us to continue our growth in the protection of our valuable resources. Protection through Education is our main goal and we need you, your neighbors and friends to help us spread the word and protect these resources for future generations.
- Please use this application to increase our membership.

Members' dues will be used for:

- Water testing
- Testing Equipment
- Educational Materials
- Storm Watering Monitoring
- Web Services
- Mailings

Thank you for spreading our message.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ \$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**

Mail to: Herring Ponds Watershed Association  
P. O. Box 522  
Sagamore Beach, MA 02562

## Clean Boats Mean Clean Water

By Sara Grady, Invasive Species Committee Chair

Great Herring Pond is currently free of aquatic invasive species, according to monitoring surveys during the summers of 2010 and 2011. Fortunately, this means we have a pond that is not overgrown with "weeds". Unfortunately, this means we are vulnerable to invasions brought from other ponds. Any time a boat enters our pond it could be carrying invasives with it, particularly if it has recently been on another, invaded pond. The state boat ramp, which attracts boaters from all over to use Great Herring Pond, is a likely point of entry for a potential invasion. The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation conducted boat ramp surveys all over the state from 2004-2008 and found 19.5% of boats inspected had plant fragments, of which 41.2% were non-native (so 8% of boats had non-native plant fragments overall.) So, what can we do, and more importantly, what should responsible boaters be doing? We/they should keep their boat clean by checking it before and after boating and not transporting organisms from one pond to another. The basic guidelines are CLEAN, DRAIN, and DRY. Please note that these guidelines apply not only to motorboats but also to jetskis, non-motorized craft like kayaks and canoes, and trailers for transporting them.

### **CLEAN:**

Remove any plants or animals from all parts of your boat, paying special attention to places where plant fragments might get tangled (like your propeller) or any rough spots there could be microscopic settled mussel larvae. Dispose of anything you find in the trash.

Do not transport bait from one pond to the next. Dispose of unused bait in the trash.

### **DRAIN:**

If you've been fishing, dispose of live well water away from any water body. Even if you can't see anything in the water, there could still be fragments of plant or planktonic larvae of animals like mussels present.

Drain all water from your boat away from any water body.

### **DRY:**

Wash your boat, preferably with hot water. Allow it to completely dry before bringing it to another pond. Preventing the spread of invasive species into our ponds is going to be increasingly important as invasion pressure from other water bodies grows. One potential and well-known invader is the zebra mussel. They have been documented in Laurel Lake in the Housatonic watershed in western MA.

Hopefully we will stay as lucky as we have been thus far, and continue to enjoy a pond free of invasives for years to come, but some additional effort by users of the pond will help us maintain that status. The Aquatic Invasives Committee is investigating the idea of having a volunteer Boat Ramp monitor to educate those using the ramp.

*(Information from Massachusetts DCR Lakes and Ponds Program)*