

West Harbor Pond Watershed Association  
Annual Meeting Minutes  
August 8, 2021

The West Harbor Pond Watershed Association (WHPWA) held its Annual Membership meeting at 1:00 p.m. at Jill Bryant's residence. The meeting was well attended. Merritt Blakeslee, Board President, welcomed everyone.

**Welcome from Merritt Blakeslee, President:** Merritt provided brief overview for the meeting, offered thanks to Jill Whitehead Bryant and her brother Paul Whitehead III for the use of their home, as well as Nate Cagle and his committee for organizing this Annual Meeting. On behalf of the Board and members, Merritt extended new members a warm hello and asked them to please stand and introduce themselves. Merritt took a moment to review some housekeeping items for COVID and rain contingency.

Merritt moved onto the topic of the Board, allowable number of members (11), current number of members (8) and the desire to have more individuals serve on the Board. Also stressed the need for volunteers to meet the needs of our initiatives and activities. Merritt proceeded to introduce current members of the Board, having each stand to be recognized.

The members were reminded they are welcome to attend meetings of the Board of Directors, which are currently in-person which, however, is subject to change. Merritt confirmed Association members were aware of and voted for the two proposed new board members (already ratified interim appointments), Judy Kildow for Treasurer and Maggie Fairbrother for Secretary. Ballots were available at the check-in table.

**Membership Report:** Maggie emphasized the need to identify potential new Association members. Membership has grown since the creation of the Association and with an active real estate market, the Association's growth should continue. The Association will reach out to potential new members, apprise them of the Associations activities and its ability to create for them a sense of community.

**President's Report:** The members were reminded a written Treasurer's report was available to all members at the check-in table. Additionally, if they hadn't already done so, members should check-out the updated website made possible by Will Anderson. Maggie Connelly's FaceBook page also provides information on the Pond.

*A. Association Initiatives*

At present the Association has five initiatives: (1) LakeSmart; (2) New Water Gauge; (3) Education; (4) Do-Not-Spray zone; and (5) Water Quality Testing.

## **1. LakeSmart**

LakeSmart, a program developed by the Maine Lakes Society to educate owners of waterfront property about the dangers of runoff, to aid in remediating runoff, and to recognize waterfront property owners who have successfully dealt with runoff problems on their property.

Ron Reinhart oversees the program for our community. Check with him if you would like a formal or informal evaluation of the erosion issues on your shoreside property or if you would like to be trained as a LakeSmart evaluator.

## **2. New water gauge**

A new water gauge was installed at box culvert in August of last year. This water gauge will assist us in using the siphon intelligently to regulate water level. The gauge is sited so as to be visible from causeway.

## **3. Education**

During the past year, several informational emails have been sent discussing issues relevant to the Pond and by extension, to us, including the American eel study being conducted on the Pond by Maine's Department of Marine Resources, light pollution and the dark sky initiative, threat posed by invasive plants, the importance of ice cover and the wonderful, multi-part, fisherman's guide to West Harbor Pond. If you missed any of these emails, each is posted on our website.

Most recently, in response to inquiries, we have added information about Canada geese and fireworks.

## **4. Herbicide spraying**

Please take note of the "Do-Not-Spray" and "Resume-Spraying" signs that the Department of Transportation (DOT) erected adjacent to West Harbor Pond along Rt 27 and Lakeside Drive. Through Judy's efforts, the DOT placed signs on Lakeside Drive at either edge of Pond thus lessening the introduction of herbicides into the Pond. We have requested that DOT move the signs farther from the Pond and are awaiting results. DOT will not spray again until next fall.

## **5. Water quality testing**

The Association continues in earnest with three types of water testing including using the Secchi Disk, water column testing and resumption of E Coli/fecal coliform testing.

**Secchi Disk testing:** As a refresher, the Secchi disk is a black and white disk, eight inches in diameter, attached to a rod, pipe, rope or chain with intervals marked thereon, which is lowered into the water while observing the depth at which the disk disappears. The Secchi disk is used to monitor the clarity (an important indicator of water quality) of the Pond's water. Ron and Leslie Volpe take Secchi disk readings twice a month between May and October at the midpond monitoring station and report the results to the Maine Lakes Society.

**Fecal coliform testing:** We are resuming collecting water samples to be tested for fecal coliform. The goal of this testing is to determine impact of geese and/or malfunctioning septic systems on the Pond's water quality. The Sewer District has graciously offered to run tests on

the samples at no cost to the WHPWA. Maggie and Will volunteered to oversee the collection of samples. Additional volunteers are always welcome.

**Water column testing:** Water column testing for temperature, dissolved oxygen, salinity, and surface test for ortho-phosphates, continues to be conducted once a month, year-round, ice conditions permitting.

### ***B. Unfinished Association Initiatives/Business***

#### 1. Old Siphon

The Members, along with the support of the community, were successful in replacing the siphon in our Pond in 2019. At present, however, the old siphon remains in place and partially operational. During certain high tide events, saltwater flows back into the Pond from the harbor. Starting in February 2019, the Association began reaching out to Maine's Department of Transportation requesting the Department close off the old siphon. Due to personnel changes and pandemic concerns, discussions with the Department stalled. The Association is reaching out to the Department seeking to develop a plan/timetable for plugging the 1880 siphon.

#### 2. Watershed Plan

In 2018 and 2019, the Association conducted a watershed survey to locate where erosion is taking place allowing the flow of harmful nutrients into the Pond. When the survey was completed, the data was used to prepare a report detailing and categorizing the problem areas in the watershed. The results of the survey are available on our website at <https://www.westharborpond.org/news-events>.

The next step in this multi-year process is to prepare a watershed plan which will be used to apply for federal 319 grant money to fix the problem areas. Preparing such a watershed plan is a big undertaking and volunteers are needed.

Please use the Renewal and Information Form to let us know if you are able to help with this or any of our important projects.

### ***C. Association Activities***

The Association continues our many activities including the following:

1. Moonlight paddles (August 22, September 20, October 20)
2. Potluck supper this fall (Covid permitting)
3. Plant sale (every other year). This year, we raised nearly \$1,000
4. Plant Identification Paddle: Hope to get Elin Haugen to take folks on such a paddle.

### ***D. 2020/2021 Review***

The Association had considerable success with the siphon in 2020. A quick refresher on the siphon's role. Salt water is heavier than fresh water; Cold water is heavier than warmer water.

Temperature differences are responsible for seasonal turnover and reoxygenation of the Pond. However, the salinity difference inhibits seasonal turnover. Removing the saltwater will allow natural seasonal turnover.

The new siphon is effective in removing salt water thereby promoting pond seasonal turnover. It removed all the salt water in the Pond's lower basin which is 25 feet deep. The siphon also removed all the hydrogen sulfide-laden water from the Pond. In addition, the siphon has significantly increased the oxygenation to the bottom of the lower basin and down to 20 feet in the upper basin which is 37 feet at its deepest point.

A few decades ago, Maine's Department of Environmental Protection placed a buoy in midpond to mark the station that it used in its water testing. Now, a few months ago, we discovered what appears to be the true deep part of the Pond. The Association identified a ridge crossing the Pond from east/west. To the northeast of the big island is a deep hole reaching 37 feet below the surface of the Pond. The Association now has a buoy over the true deep part of the Pond.

Several Association members have, over the years, been keenly interested in the loons. This year for the first time in many years we had at least two loons spend the entire summer on the Pond. Many were hoping to see a loon chick but our hopes were not realized. Should the situation change next year, try to avoid the nest(s). At this time we'd like to remind our anglers to avoid using lead lures, sinkers and jigs. Lead poisoning is one of the largest causes of loon deaths.

#### ***E. 2021/2022 Plans***

In light of discovering the ridge, coupled with the siphon's great success, the Association is exploring getting a bathymetric survey of Pond. Such a survey will add to our understanding of the Pond and help shape our approach to maintaining and improving the health of the Pond.

The Association may also examine the possibility of removing trapped salt water from the deep trench along with identifying equipment allowing us to measure dissolved oxygen in the deep trench.

Also, a reminder that a boat cannot create a wake within 200 feet of a pond shore.

#### ***F. Recognition of Retiring BoD Member***

##### **1. Libby Reinhart**

Libby Reinhart has been a Board of Directors member since 2012. Sadly, she is stepping down after serving three 3-year terms as director. During her tenure Libby

Has been the Association's treasurer, serving as our accountant and ensuring that the filings required of a 501(c)(3) organization were made.

Has been in charge of membership;

Has been a strong voice on the Board of Directors;

Has been our institutional memory.

Fortunately, she leaves behind on the Board of Directors her husband Ron, now serving his fourth term as director.

We owe Libby a deep debt of gratitude, in token of which we would like to present her with a Pond Association hat and, as a more tangible expression of our thanks, a gift certificate to the Carriage House Restaurant.

Thank you, Libby.

### ***G. Recognition of Special Friends of the Pond***

#### **1. Pat & Kipp Farrin**

Our replacement siphon has two parts, the HD pipe that extends into the Pond and our siphon extending into the harbor. These are linked by a set of valves.

Pat and Kipp were responsible for laying the pipe, attaching weights, in brutally cold weather on a tippy work platform in the harbor in December 2018, then using chain saws to drop the pond-side pipe into place in March 2019.

They worked for a discounted fee, effectively donating a part of their labor, something that they have done in the past where a project has an environmental dimension.

The next three people have in common the fact that they have been here for the Association on an ongoing basis.

#### **2. Chris Higgins**

Chris is the head of the Boothbay Harbor Sewer District. Unable to attend because of a memorial service for a family member. Our water quality testing would have been impossible without Chris, who

- \* Tests our orthophosphate and e coli samples;
- \* Lends us the meters for DO, salinity, H<sub>2</sub>S, and PH testing;
- \* Is a constant source of guidance and information; and
- \* Most recently, persuaded his board to donate the DO and salinity meters to the Association when the Sewer District bought new equipment.

#### **3. Dale Harmon**

Dale is the head of the Boothbay Region Water District's distribution department. He and his team are the folks who get your water from the water district's treatment plant to the tap in your kitchen. In his connection to our Association, Dale wears three hats.

First, he is here as the representative of the Water District, which donated the pipe used in the siphon and the labor to fuse it. Without that donation there would have been no siphon.

Second, Dale single-handedly built the other part of the siphon – the set of ball, gate, and check valves that allow us to turn the siphon on and off and that prevent the siphon from operating in reverse, pouring harbor water into the Pond during king tides\*.

Third, the siphon is a large piece of hardware operated by us amateurs. Dale has made himself available whenever we have had an equipment question or an equipment problem, as he did recently when I was unable to get the gate valve to work.

#### **4. Jason Bartlett**

Jason's contribution to the Pond Association is of a different sort. Jason is in charge of the multi-year life cycle study of the American eel that the Maine Department of Marine Resources is conducting on West Harbor Pond. Read his article on the website.

In the spring, Jason is down in the box culvert counting elvers.

During the summer, he traps, tags, tracks, and releases mature yellow eels. Those white buoys around the Pond are his.

In the fall, he is back at the box culvert with a huge net catching, tagging, and releasing silver eels on their way to the Sargasso Sea to spawn and die.

This means that for three seasons a year Jason is on the Pond virtually on a daily basis – far more than any Association member. And he understands our issues with pond level, king tides\*, and saltwater intrusion. He contacts us whenever necessary about inserting and removing gateboards and turning the siphon on and off. He is truly our eyes and ears on the Pond.

The meeting was concluded and members then moved on to enjoy the food provided by each other and the Association.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maggie Fairbrother, Secretary  
West Harbor Pond Watershed Association

\*When the alignment of the Earth, moon and sun create extra gravitational pull resulting in higher-than-normal tides.