

West Harbor Siphon Woes May Be Closer to Solution (Morgan Callan Rogers, *Boothbay Register*, March 30, 2017)

A determined West Harbor Watershed Association continues to seek ways to repair or replace a broken siphon in West Harbor Pond. The group's ongoing efforts took them to the Boothbay Harbor selectmen's meeting on March 27.

The siphon runs under a causeway along Route 27. It was installed during the 1880s to help keep the freshwater pond free of saltwater below the 22-foot mark. In 2008, it failed, allowing saltwater from the inner harbor across the road to seep into the pond. Water quality tests have revealed that the heavier saltwater on the pond's bottom has created an oxygen-free layer high in hydrogen sulfide, making it unsuitable for aquatic life.

Merritt Blakeslee spoke on behalf of the association. "We were here in September and you expressed moral support. We said that we'd be back. Two things have happened since then to open a door our way. We can't go through it without you," Blakeslee said.

The Boothbay Region Water District volunteered to donate a six-inch Sessel water pipe to go over the box culvert as an alternative to replacing the siphon; the district will also donate the labor to put the pipe in place, Blakeslee told selectmen. Both offers are contingent on the association obtaining designs from a competent engineering firm. "They steered us toward Dirigo Engineering," Blakeslee said.

In addition, Blakeslee said the Maine Coastal Program of the Department of Agriculture has grants for projects that improve water quality. "We're here to ask you to be the signatories for a grant application to fund this next step," said Blakeslee.

Blakeslee said Bob Faunce at the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission has agreed to write the grant. If awarded, the grant would fund Dirigo Engineering's efforts to figure out the best option, prepare a design and supply a cost estimate for the entire project.

Town Manager Tom Woodin had already spoken to Faunce. "He said that Lincoln County would manage the funds, not the town of Boothbay Harbor. This is an administrative courtesy," said Woodin. He asked Blakeslee to supply him with an application.

The association already has letters of support from the commissioners of Maine's Environmental Protection, Marine Resources and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife departments.

Woodin plans to go over the application and run it past the town attorney. The association will meet with selectmen April 24. The application is due at the end of April.

Published in the *Boothbay Register*, <https://www.boothbayregister.com/article/west-harbor-siphon-woes-may-be-closer-solution/84033>; reproduced courtesy of the *Boothbay Register*.