

West Harbor Pond Siphon Project Nears Completion: Community Effort Resulted in Replacing 138-year-old Siphon (Bill Pearson, *Boothbay Register*, December 24, 2018)

For 138 years, the West Harbor Pond siphon has reliably removed salt water from the Pond. But in 2009, the West Harbor Pond Watershed Association discovered a problem. After a heavy rain, association members didn't see a steady outgoing of water.

High water levels coupled with concerns about the pond's low oxygenation led association members to conclude the siphon wasn't working. In 1880, Eben Haley constructed the siphon for his ice business. The tides power the siphon, so the association was never concerned about the apparatus until it ceased operating. In 2012, members began seeking funding to repair or replace the broken siphon. The association received a \$19,000 Maine Community Grant in 2016 and in the summer of 2018 raised over \$53,000 in local cash donations, enough to begin the project this year.

The project received a major boost from a local business and the local water utility. Pat Farrin & Sons discounted its labor toward the installation. The Boothbay Region Water District provided surplus 6-inch pipe from a completed seasonal water project and free labor. On Dec. 3, installation work began with water district crew members fusing pipes together. Pat Farrin's employees pulled the siphon pipe into place from the harbor's side and through a hole in the dam in the box culvert, and out the pond's side.

Concrete weights weighing 300 pounds are in place 10 feet apart, securing the piping. WHPWA President Leslie Volpe and Board of Directors member Merritt Blakeslee credited "an outpouring of community support" with the project's success. "It's been a community effort from the beginning," Volpe said. "I met with Jon Ziegler at the BRWD who wanted to help us preserve this source of fresh water because the peninsula had so little of it."

The cold December weather presented difficult challenges for Farrin's and the water district's crews. Blakeslee said it was so cold, his i-Phone couldn't take pictures. "None of this is possible without the water district or Farrin's," Blakeslee said. "The community really upped their participation in contributing to this project. I watched Pat Farrin's crew struggle in some difficult conditions. They worked without gloves wrestling with those 300-pound weights."

The project will be completed once the siphon pipe on the pond side is connected to the manhole cylinder that is installed near the dam. This final step in the project may reach completion in a couple weeks.

The association would also like to better monitor the siphon's operation by installing an apparatus to measure the amount of water moving through the siphon.

The association would also like to update a 1940s map of the pond's contours showing how deep fresh water goes down into the pond. But the map would be a separate project, according to the association.

WHPWA was founded in 2009. The membership consists of concerned neighbors who banded together to preserve the pond's water quality.

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