

The Long Pond Sentinel

On Guard and Working to Save and Preserve Our Pond

Published by the Committee for the Preservation of Long Pond

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If you care about:

• The beautiful presence of Long Pond near where you live (with its positive effect on property values),

- about swimming,
- fishing,
- boating on the pond...

you will read this newsletter with both trepidation and hope, because there is cause for *both*.

The Clear and Present Threat to Our Pond:

Our pond has been infested with an invasive water weed called hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*). We will explain that below. But the first thing to know is that unless decisive action is taken now, within only a couple of years the eastern (town beach) end of the pond could be nothing but a green wetlands; and eventually the whole pond could be choked under this insidious plant hydrilla. If we let that happen, we can say, "Goodbye to all the pleasures, beauty and real estate value of Long Pond!"

- Some of us (those reviving the Committee for the Preservation of Long Pond) have already gotten the State, the Town and other experts directly involved. (See "**What's Been Done So Far**" below.)
- The State is very alarmed by this first reported and confirmed infestation; and promptly sent a team of experts to inspect and evaluate the condition of the pond. Their first findings define the clear and present danger to the pond, and the absolute necessity for quick action.

Fortunately, however, their knowledge re solutions, gives sound hope for restricting the otherwise-rapid growth of the hydrilla. (Unfortunately, it cannot be a "one-shot and it's over" treatment. We will have to remain ever alert and the pond will very likely have to be re-treated periodically from now on.) While there

are reassuring reports of controlling hydrilla, we've been told you can't get rid of it forever without retreatments.

- The Town of Barnstable is equally alarmed; and it has already taken action (e.g., closing the town beach to boat launching) and has started plans to control this terrible weed.
- There are state and town funds available to fight such infestation. Getting them used -- and quickly -- for Long Pond, however, will take continual action AND, critically important, a long list of residents visibly and actively supporting this effort.

REPEAT: "A long list of residents visibly and actively supporting the effort." Because those State and Town funds will not come easy. We must organize and "lobby" and *quickly!* The State bulletin explaining its lake program says, "...priority will be given to those proposals which actively involve groups such as...lake associations..." The State and Town officials must see a large, strong and active organization here, calling for a clean-up of our pond.

Hence the reviving of The Committee for the Preservation of Long Pond...and this first newsletter, with it's enclosed Enrollment Form. (The preparation of both, and postage, was paid for by "seed money" contributions from members of the Steering Sub-Committee.)

What is Hydrilla?

It once was used as a decorative fish aquarium plant sold in retail pet shops. Then somewhere in Florida, someone dumped a hydrilla-containing aquarium into a lake there or into a stream leading to one. And, with that careless and ignorant move, the infestation of Florida lakes began. Sale of hydrilla is now prohibited, but too late. The fast-growing weed is now a *very* serious problem there; and it's rapidly spreading northward and westward.

Ours is the first lake in Massachusetts to be reported and confirmed as infested! (Probably brought here either by off-lake

boats launched from the town beach or in the talons of birds – especially osprey.)

Once it gets into a lake, hydrilla starts a stringy green weed growing on the bottom and it grows rapidly...spreading across the bottom and up closer and closer to the surface of the water. (In large areas at the eastern end right now, the hydrilla is three or four to five feet thick or high, with only a foot of water above it. And, in almost 50% of that end, it's shocking to see the weed on the surface of the water!)

If something is not done by no later than early this Spring, you will, as already noted, very soon see nothing but ugly green weeds at that end of the Pond. And eventually but not too far out, it will spread to the western, deeper end. (It has been reported to grow 20 feet high.) Eventually, unless we control it, hydrilla will take over the whole pond, making swimming, boating, fishing impossible, and viewing the pond something to make you cry. And, of course, bringing the possibility of decreased property values for every house in proximity to the pond.

What can be done – must be done, and no later than early this Spring – is the taking of some effective and safe action to arrest and decrease the growth of this "cancerous" weed. (See **Encouraging Note** and **More Good News** below.)

What's Been Done So Far:

We who have anxiously been noting the rising green and ugly "bottom" at the eastern end of the pond, have revived The Committee for the Preservation of Long Pond.*

Now, Jerry Gilmore, Ron Sirch (the first to get the State and Town alerted and involved), Dick Teel, Kallie Garoufes, Bob and Barbara Enos, David Dunbar, Michael Murphy, David Elmer and Tony Antin are seeking to enlist you as an Active Member of it. (See Enrollment Form attached.)

On Friday, November 2, the State sent a team of experts here; and they spent hours on the pond, taking samples of this invasive plant; and evaluating the condition of the pond. Their first informal comments are scary. But, as noted above, also give hope for controlling the problem.

Encouraging Note: Just last spring and "right next door," (Bears's Pond) the Town made what Conservation Administrator Rob Gatewood reported as a "more successful than anticipated" application of a product called Sonar to control another invasive weed, fanwort.

More Good News: Both the U.S. and *all 50 states* have approved Sonar as effective and safe. Report from Florida: "With Sonar we were able to put lakes back to the condition they were in before hydrilla...We have used Sonar for 12 years and have seen no adverse environmental effects." And from the State of Washington Dept. of Health: "There are no swimming or fishing restrictions associated with [Sonar] treatment." And, from Texas, "...the efficacy of Sonar has been phenomenal. Areas previously dominated by hydrilla have seen the return of diverse native plant population."

What About...

Harvesting? That can aggravate the problem by dispersing plant fragments which can form new plants. Also it removes sport fish and other aquatic organisms necessary in the food chain..

Biological Control? Grass carp, the most commonly tried, are unpredictable and nonselective; they can devour all aquatic plant life. That's why they're not recommended for fisheries or waterfowl management areas.

We all must stay on this to assure the next step in fighting the infestation. For all the reasons noted above, at this writing, government and private experts believe this would be the application of Sonar in April or early May of 2002. The State is attentively watching and noting what's being done in Florida and other states.

*About The Committee

For the present, here are the members of the Steering Sub-Committee. (If anyone wants to step up to do any of these jobs, please come forward ...and welcome!)

Chairman: Jerry Gilmore
Vice-Chairman, Dick Teel
Vice-Chairman, External Affairs: Ron Sirch
Secretaries: Bob & Barbara Enos
Treasurer: Kallie Garoufes
Membership: (to be filled)

Newsletter: Tony Antin
 Members-at-Large: David Dunbar,
 David Elmer and Michael Murphy.

The New Danger Now is Hydrilla

On Wednesday, November 7, Tony Antin and Ron Sirch attended a workshop called "Ponds in Peril." There, they learned that many of the Cape's some 400 ponds are endangered; and it seems that for every problem Pond, there is already a volunteer organization working to solve it (so typically American).

The Wequaquet Lake Protective Assoc. has been working for some seven years ...protecting that lake against several kinds of threats, and now the latest one, another invasive weed called fanwort.

We talked to the leaders of such organizations at the seminar, and it immediately became clear that a key to success – **in every case – was having (by names and addresses) as many members and supporters as possible.**

Because experience shows that *whatever* is proposed to save a pond brings out some individuals and/or organized groups opposing the solution. And the other pond associations told us that the only way to counter such pressure is to **show a long list of residents wanting it done.**

That's why it's vitally important for us to have 100% enrollment with our preservation committee. Don't make the mistake of thinking you can just "leave it to the few." The job demands you, too.

First, The Committee must have you signed up by name and address as an Active Member.

With that, it needs you to chip in your \$25 as concrete evidence of your commitment to action. The Treasurer will provide to-the-penny reports on expenditures (e.g., for future newsletters, or, for example, if we should need outside expert testimony to assure swift action).

From Here, You Can Go Directly to the Enrollment Form...

Unless You Want to Know More About Action-to-Date

After the "Ponds in Peril" meeting, Rob Gatewood, head of the Barnstable's Conservation Division, got Ron Sirch together with Gerry Smith, a top aquatic biologist, and Gerry agreed to come see our problem first hand. That led to an e-mail letter from Gerry to State and Town officials. The letter emphasized the need for quick action. Among the tasks he believes and wrote should be performed ASAP: "Develop a plan for managing hydrilla next spring/summer at Long Pond...Any [such] management will have to be permitted [meaning government approved] over this winter!" i.e., URGENT!

Officials & Other Experts Working on Our Problem:

Thankfully, we have, at State and Town levels and in the private sector, people with expertise and authority already planning for Long Pond:

Dale Saad, Ph.D., from the Town's Health Division. The first town official to come and take samples of "an unidentified and unusual under-water growth."

Rob Gatewood, Head of Barnstable's Conservation Division, has guided and helped us in many ways, especially in advising us where to go to get what done.

Roy Richardson, President of the Barnstable Town Council, who also has been "out on the pond" with us to see the problem first-hand.

Myron L. Gildesgame, Director, Office of Water Reserves, Department of Environmental Management. This very high State environment officer came to Long Pond to pull samples himself.

James Straub, Lakes and Ponds Program Coordinator in the Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Management. Another important environment officer who came to evaluate the problem.

Gerald N. Smith, Aquatic Biologist and President of Aquatic Control Technology.

Lee Lycott, President of Lycott Environmental, who did the first test for hydrilla free of charge.

Please don't waste the stamp on the Enrollment Form return envelope!