

FALL/
WINTER
2022



WEQUAQUET LAKE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

People that care about Lake Wequaquet



A Word from the WLPAs President

Hello All,

Well another beautiful summer has passed and although our water levels were at their lowest since sometime in the 1960s everyone was able to enjoy themselves with very rare incidences of cyanobacteria. I optimistically think that we all contributed to that end by not fertilizing our lawns and controlling road runoff when possible. We need to keep up our efforts while the town is doing theirs by installing the long awaited sewer system around most of our lake. It is difficult not to notice the construction taking place near our lake, but your patience and support for this necessary endeavor will ensure future generations are able to enjoy our lake the way we do. The town has been and will continue to be as transparent as possible with the progress of this massive project. We truly are fortunate to have such great leadership enabling us to control both the costs and timeline at the local level rather than it being determined at the federal level. We hope you join us in spreading the word of support for the preservation of our spectacular resource. From the board of the WLPAs, we want to wish all our members a happy and healthy holiday season.

Best regards, Alan Horvitz, WLPAs President



Town Officials spoke and answered questions at the June 5, 2022 WLPAs Annual Meeting. Seated left to right are: Town Council President Matthew Levesque, DPW Director Daniel Santos, Town Manager Mark Eells, and Barnstable Police Chief Matthew Sonnabend. WLPAs President Alan Horvitz is at the podium. June 4, 2023 is reserved at the Wequaquet Yacht Club for the next Annual Meeting.

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WLPAs Annual Meeting held on June 5, 2022

Notes compiled by WLPAs Secretary Mary Ann Anthony

Guest Speakers: Police Chief Matthew Sonnabend, Town Manager Mark Eells, DPW Director Dan Santos, Town Council President Matthew Levesque

Chief Sonnabend said the lake police boat will be present this summer. It is currently at Paul Canniff's dock awaiting new lights and siren. The boat will be deployed as staffing allows. There are 22 vacancies on the force, but crime is trending down in Barnstable. If there is a problem on the lake don't hesitate to call the dispatch number 508-775-0812. Calls help to build data, as well as summoning police help. Without data, resources cannot be focused where needed most. 911 is for emergencies, and calls will go directly to Barnstable Headquarters for help to be dispatched. Use a cell phone which logs where the call originated, and get a docket number when you call.

Mark Eells gave an overview of the state of the town, which he described as doing well, with an operating budget of \$250M. The challenge is lack of staff to fill vacancies. Only 80% of needed staff are in place, for example there is a shortage of lifeguards. The town is adapting to a changing workforce, with 20- 25% of town employees working remotely to some degree. The demands on the DPW have become much more challenging with road closures as the sewer project progresses. There is a new school superintendent and 5 principal changes in the school department. Demographics are changing requiring more ESL teachers, and resource officers in the schools to address safety issues. He asked for patience as the town works on the problems, and to please contact him directly with issues. His email is mark.eells@town.barnstable.ma.us. His office number is 508-862-4610, and his cell phone is 508-509-7210. He ended by saying a massive change in EPA Title 5 regulations may require upgraded septic systems for those who don't sewer their properties. He remarked that in terms of PFAS contamination Barnstable is ahead of the curve in monitoring and addressing the issue.

Dan Santos, updated the membership on several DPW town projects and then provided an update on the CWMP.

The CWMP (sewer project) to bring the town into compliance with the clean water act, created 8 new positions for managing the project. \$100M has been appropriated so far. Upon completion over 3 ten-year phases, the town will install 190 miles of new sewer infrastructure, with 87 pump stations, to provide sewers to 11,823 homes. Up to date information as the project proceeds can be found on the water resources pages on the town's website. Mr. Santos described how the first 10 year phase is expected to affect the lake. Between 2020 and 2030 4,735 properties are expected to be added to sewer service. This should remove 40% of nitrogen. 90% of lake properties will be included. The remaining 10%, in the northeast corner of the lake, will be addressed in the second phase, between 2031 and 2040.

- Strawberry Hill Rd, from Covall's Beach to Phinney's Lane has been underway, with Wequaquet Lane scheduled for this summer and Phinney's Lane for the fall. That is the main infrastructure for the east side of the lake.
- Scheduled for completion in 2024-2025 will be a pump station at the intersection of Rt. 28 and Phinney's Lane to extend sewers to the western part.
- The Marstons Mills School will be another pump station slated for 2025
- The waste-water treatment plant is being upgraded to reduce nitrogen in the waste water by half. The disposal of effluent is being studied with a consultant for the best place to dispose of treated effluent. They will choose the most cost-effective location, which could be on the Base.

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2022 Bearse-Wequaquet Fanwort Removal Project



Fanwort suction harvesting boat working in Barse Pond Photo by Alan Horvitz

(Excerpts from report provided by New England Aquatic Services)

In August 2022 New England Aquatic Services commenced a project to Suction Harvest Fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*) from Barse Pond, Wequaquet Lake, and Gooseberry Cove. The scope of the project was for 30-7 hour days of removal for a total of 210 hours of harvesting time as well as a diver lead survey to provide harvesting locations to the crews. 98 hours were allocated to Barse Pond, 70 hours were allocated to Gooseberry Cove, and 42 hours were allocated to Wequaquet Lake. The project was completed utilizing two suction harvesting boats and increased hours each day to increase efficiency and decrease the actual duration of the project. In total 225 bags of Fanwort were removed from Barse Pond and 299 bags of fanwort were removed from Gooseberry Cove, and 92 bags of Fanwort were removed from Wequaquet lake for a total of 616 bags. 616 bags is roughly the equivalent of 1,232 five-gallon buckets of material.

The project was started utilizing divers to lead a survey to identify Fanwort locations for removal. As work was completed throughout Barse Pond and Gooseberry Cove in past years and those locations were well known to the crews the focus of the survey was on Wequaquet Lake proper where data had not been available before. Very Light growth was found in the area of point 11561 (ID from map provided in full report) spread out over a large area. Individual plants were picked to prevent large patches from establishing. Some very dense spots were located to the immediate east and the south of the area we refer to as the Northwest Cove. Light growth was also found in the Northeast Cove. The survey results were very encouraging as we did not know what to expect in areas around the lake where work was not performed in the past but we did not find massive growth areas like have been found in Barse and Gooseberry Cove. No significant amounts of growth were found in the southern end of the lake.

Conclusions

We continue to see very positive results from the Suction Harvesting efforts in these three locations. In many cases the goal of Suction Harvesting maintenance programs is just to stop continued spread of invasive species, but in Wequaquet and Barse we are seeing reduced plant populations, smaller and fewer beds of plants, and less scattered growth throughout the areas worked.

While we did not get the opportunity to address every area of growth in the lakes this year, I recommend the same scope for the maintenance project in 2023.

What is that big green blob?

Have you ever looked in the lake water and seen one or more large green blobs hovering over the bottom and wonder what it was?

Those green cotton candy like masses are filamentous algae. Filamentous algae are a type of phytoplankton that create green slime over the rocks on the bottom of the lake. In the summer when conditions are right, they also form green free-floating masses near beaches and in coves. While these blobs may look gross, they are an important part of our aquatic ecosystem providing oxygen and food for fish and other organisms. Unlike cyanobacteria, filamentous algae are not harmful to humans and do not secrete toxins. Instead filamentous algae secrete a mucus like substance that enables the filaments to stick together forming a mesh-like cluster or blob.

Sometimes people mistake these green blobs as cyanobacteria. One way to distinguish between the two is to do the "stick test". This is easily done by putting a stick into the green mass and trying to lift the mass out of the water. If the stick comes out with a bundle of green threads attached then it is most likely green filamentous algae. On the other hand, if the stick comes out with no threads and instead disperses the green mass into tiny particles it is probably cyanobacteria. A bloom of cyanobacteria may look like paint floating on the water surface and moving a stick through it creates swirls. Cyanobacteria and filamentous algae may occur together so if you have any questions it is best to notify the Barnstable Health Department and to send a picture to cyano@apcc.org. noting the location, day and time.

Submitted by Gail Maguire, PhD

Great Pond, Eastham, October 26, 2022



Above photo accompanies a Cyanobacteria Alert issued by APCC

CAPE TOWNS OPT TO RESTRICT FERTILIZERS

Several years ago Barnstable and Chatham adopted regulations that include standards for non-certified and certified applicators. Certified applicators are permitted to apply fertilizers in accordance with the UMass Best Management Practices for Soil & Nutrient Management in Turf Systems, and not the more restrictive town performance standards.

The Town of Yarmouth Posts the following warning on its' website; **Message from Yarmouth Conservation - Read the label: Choose zero phosphorus fertilizers! Too many nutrients in our rivers, lakes and ponds cause excessive growth of aquatic plants, algae and harmful cyanobacteria in the summer. Phosphorus is a nutrient that occurs naturally in soil. But when it runs off lawns into water it acts like Miracle Grow.**

A healthy lawn with deep topsoil will need little fertilizer or watering. So if you need to buy fertilizer, get the one with a middle number of 0: zero phosphorous.

At their Oct. 17, 2022 Town meeting Orleans approved, by narrow margin, a partial fertilizer ban. An Oct. 19 report in the Cape Cod times states: "The article lacks an enforcement mechanism and exempts organic fertilizers used on vegetables, fruit trees or berries or for agricultural purposes. The state Legislature still needs to approve special legislation for the ban."



Ice Safety from CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

How Can You Tell if Ice Is Safe?

Ice is never 100 percent safe. You cannot judge the strength of ice just by its appearance, age, thickness, or the temperature. Other factors, including water depth, size of the water body, water chemistry, currents, and local weather conditions, all impact ice strength.

New ice is usually stronger than old ice. Four inches of clear, newly-formed ice may support one person, while a foot or more of old, partially-thawed ice may not.

Ice seldom freezes uniformly. It may be a foot thick in one location and only an inch or two just a few feet away. Continue to check the conditions as you move around on the ice.

Ice formed over flowing water and currents is often dangerous. This is especially true near streams, bridges, and culverts. Also, the ice on outside river bends, and inlets and outlets of lakes and ponds is usually weaker due to the undermining effects of the faster current.

The insulating effect of snow slows down the freezing process. The extra weight also reduces how much weight the ice sheet can support. Also, ice near shore can be weaker than ice that is farther out.

Booming and cracking ice isn't necessarily dangerous. It only means that the ice is expanding and contracting as the temperature changes.

Content reviewed January 2022

Annual Meeting - Continued from page 1

Mr. Santos concluded with the following updates:

- Storm water runoff improvements are being implemented, to reduce contaminants entering the lake, through a drainage program. Projects underway are the Wequaquet Beach and Holly Point boat ramps as well as Huckins Neck Rd.
- Amber Unruh is the manager of lakes and ponds for the town. She oversees PALS (Ponds and Lakes Snapshot) doing testing for water quality. Nutrients from septic systems around the lake are a major concern. Cyanobacteria monitoring has been contracted to APCC (Association to Preserve Cape Cod). They have an interactive website to display up to date cyanobacteria conditions in the lake.

Matthew Levesque stated that he wants to be a conduit of issues to town staff for questions concerning such issues as private roads – can they be “taken” by the town once sewers are installed and the road repaved?

Speakers addressed an audience question period. Some concerns posed included the following:

- **Hayes Rd loses power in storms. Who owns the poles? EverSource? Verizon?**
 - ◊ Poles are owned by different utilities. Mark Ells will follow up.
- **Fanwort pulling happens annually to prevent proliferation, and over recent years with the same company, the quantity of fanwort has decreased. How does chemical treatment affect cyanobacteria?**
 - ◊ There is nothing currently appropriate to use for it.
- **When the 4th of July fireworks end there are many small boats on the lake. Could the police boat be on the lake then?**
 - ◊ Alan Horvitz asked if the Harbor Master might help out since the police will have their hands full that night.
- **What part of the staffing problem is related to housing costs?**
 - ◊ Mr. Ells said it is impossible to even rent, never mind buy housing in town. It's difficult to get young people to stay in Barnstable, even for good paying jobs. It is a major issue – people who work on Cape live off Cape.
- **Will there be wind farms on Craigville Beach?**
 - ◊ Mr. Ells gave a brief chronology of the US government giving out grants for wind farms. There were 3 phases: Vineyard Wind, Park City Wind, and Commonwealth Wind. Covell's Beach was identified as the best place to bring the electric cable onto shore, with Craigville Beach as the next best. The wind turbines will be miles out to sea, and not visible from the beach.
- **In the issue of lush green lawns versus “Cape Cod” lawns, who is enforcing the regulations? Are landscapers educated about the regulations?**
 - ◊ Mr. Ells said the challenge is educating both landscapers and residents. Any change in regulations would have to come from the town council. Frank Ward interposed, citing Chapter 78, which requires soil testing to verify the need for soil amendment, and landscapers are required to keep those records, as well as documentation of what was applied and when. He noted that green lawn homes have algae in front of their property. 25 lawns around the lake have been identified with this phenomenon.



Warning signs at each end of Wequaquet Lane to Centerville Lane redirect drivers while sewer work is being done.

To best prepare for ongoing road closures, download the Mobile APP **WAZE** or **Google maps**.

Also weekly updates are provided on the website: www.BarnstableWaterResources.com

Reminders & Numbers to Know:

• Septic Pumping

Until you are hooked up to the incoming sewer system, don't neglect septic pumping.

The US Environmental Agency advises that household septic tanks be pumped every three to five years. Alternative systems with electrical float switches, pumps, or mechanical components should be inspected more often, generally once a year.

• Fall Leaves

Whether you leave leaves, mulch them or rake the lawn clean, for the sake of our lake, keep leaves out of the water. Also keep them off the road where they can clog drains and/ or become nutrient run off.

• Cyanobacteria Alerts

Fortunately, the blue green algae was only found in Wequaquet and Bearse in June this year. Many other lakes had worse news. The Association to Protect Cape Cod conducts regular testing in over 100 fresh water Cape lakes and provides a user friendly map to track the bacteria test results. In addition, by going to the apcc.org website, one can subscribe to receive cyanobacteria alerts that will be sent directly to your email.

• CWMP Questions

In addition to the Town of Barnstable Water Resource comprehensive newsletter updates, Paul Ruzsala, senior project manager, has provided a phone number and website for answers to questions concerning the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plans.

His number is 508-790-6400. Mr. Ruzsala's email address is: paul.ruzsala@town.Barnstable.ma.us

• WLPA Website

Our Association continues to create an email database. To be added to this list, please go to the website: Wequaquetlake.com.

THE FISHING REPORT.....

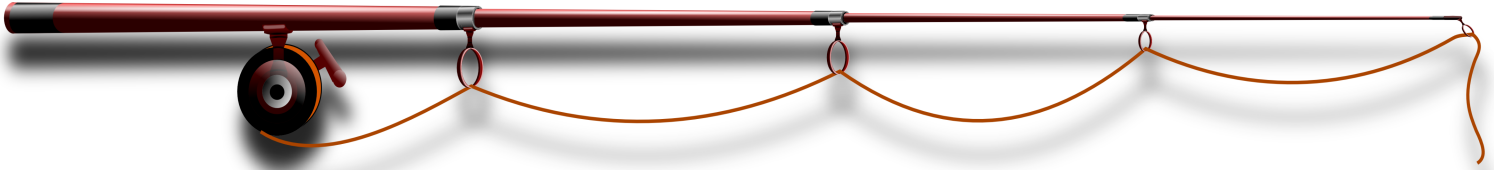


Photo by Ahvi Spindell

Watching a young child reel in their first fish and seeing the excitement in their eyes is something both you and they will never forget. Even if you have never fished before, you can make lifetime memories with a young person.

To start a child fishing, all you need is a small rod, closed face reel, small hooks and an unbreakable bobber. An old gardening glove and needle nose pliers can also be helpful to hold the fish and remove the hook. All these things can be purchased inexpensively and used for many a fishing season.

Much of the fun is in handling the worms (Dug up earlier or bought from the bait shop). A child quickly goes from shrieks of "Ich!" to the pride of, "I did it!" A child can easily learn to cast and catch sun fish or perch from a dock or near the shore.

Allowing a child to get away from their screens, be outside, learning about the lake and nature is invaluable. But do keep your camera handy. Catching a photo (with or without a fish) will be treasured for years to come.

By Frank Ward

I first visited Lake Wequaquet in 1984 and it reminded me of the 800 acres I grew up on in western Massachusetts. For the last fifteen years, I estimate I fish Lake Wequaquet 50-75 times per year. Half the time in a kayak and half the time in a small bass boat.

In 2022, the fish have been plentiful. My biggest observation is the water is as clear as ever, the healthy weeds are beginning to return, we have growing Muskrat population, and Pickerel in the 18-24-inch range have become the dominant predators.

Overall, the fishing has been very good this year, albeit still muted versus a decade ago. I have come to accept that rather than just Bass, the Pickerel and Pike may be hitting the rubber worm or crank bait that I tend to utilize. Interestingly for me, this was the first year that I ever struggled to get the Bass to hit top water lures. This used to be the most exciting way to fish the lake.



As for my most exciting fish of the year, I was lucky enough to catch several larger Bass in the lake - my best, just over 5 pounds. (All on rubber worms) In addition, I caught several Northern Pike in the 6-8-pound range. The Pike were caught on both crank bait and rubber worms.

See you all on the lake.

By Ian Levine



Northern Pike photo by Ian Levine

So, I've seen this hull before. Small boat with an electric motor that hums steady annoyance. How's a bass supposed to take a cool nap in the weeds?

This guy doesn't know what he's doing. It's the middle of the day! I've already eaten this morning. And as usual, here comes that funny looking worm bouncing like it just slipped out of a Narragansett beer can. And it's the wrong color! Blue? What a moron. You gotta be kidding!! Plus, I've seen this all before. I'm a largemouth, and you don't get to be my size without seein' all kinds of ridiculous bait.

Thank goodness it's the end of season. Having survived the Spring tournaments, the shore casters, those pesty pickerels and uppity Ospreys, I'm lookin' forward to a deep freeze.

But this guy doesn't give up. Over and over with the in ya face action, I'm getting a bit teed off. Wait a minute - a red-glitter with a splashy tail! That's it!

Oh man, I can't believe I fell for it and now I gotta put on some Larry Bird moves to get free. Jump man, Jump! Oh yeah, Oh yeah! Nothin' like a barbless hook to set a fish free.

See ya next season, pal - NOT!

By Ahvi Spindell

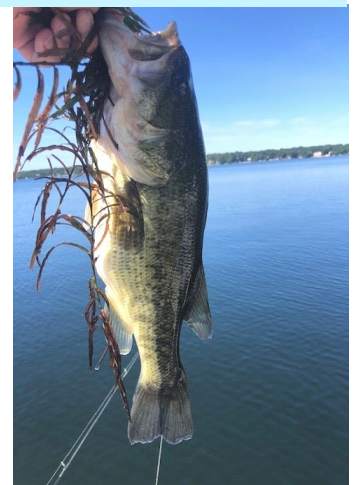


Photo by Ahvi Spindell