

Six Ponds News

December 2000

An Occasional Publication Of The Six Ponds Improvement Association

ORVs in the State Forest

A Miles Standish State Forest citizens panel continues to meet to discuss a proposed plan to re-introduce "off-road vehicles" (i.e., motorcycles) in the Forest. This is being heavily lobbied by ORV riders. The national trail bike lobby is a strong group, and they are making progress in spite of experts who have said it is bad for the environment, noisy, and destructive of the fragile Forest resources.

The ORV folk make a strong showing at each meeting, and have proposed more than 48 miles of trails a minimum of 9 feet wide. The location of the trails, if approved, is still under discussion - proposed sites have included a route along Mast Road or a route south of that near the Wildlands Trust properties at Halfway Pond. The Six Ponds Executive Committee has taken the position that the entire forest is too environmentally sensitive for ORV use, but that if the vehicles are approved they must be contained at least 100 feet west of Alden Road (the main road off Long Pond Road into the Forest).

An **important public meeting** to consider the latest draft of the plan will be held at Plymouth North High School on Wednesday, December 13, at 7pm. This is the time for Six Ponders to be present and be heard!

206 Acres

We continue to monitor the agreed upon transfer to the Town of the 206+ acres of woodland south of the High School, to be preserved as open space and for passive recreation (hiking, cross-country skiing, etc.). The property deed is now in escrow, and the conservation restriction language has been agreed upon. The transfer will take place when the Eel River Watershed suit is settled and the groundwater discharge permit is finally issued.

News Briefs:

- Selectman David Rushforth has talked with all towns adjacent to Plymouth on the **jet ski** issue, and has written a long letter to the State challenging the veto of Plymouth's jet ski bylaw.
- The School Committee is at last acting on the **erosion problem** at the Plymouth South Middle School. They have talked with both the architect and the contractor to get the erosion fixed.
- If you live near a pond and are planning improvements to your property, please read the **Conservation Commission** article now posted on our website. It will help you understand what changes you can and cannot make without Town approval, saving you headaches and helping to protect the ponds!
- **Reminder: Life vests** are **REQUIRED** to be worn by canoe/kayak users from Sept 15-May 15th.

Land Acquisition Drive

A community effort is underway to preserve 103 acres of woodland along Long Pond Road and Clark Road, near Long Pond.

The property has been under a Purchase and Sale Agreement with a developer for \$1.15 million, but the Town has a right of first refusal to purchase the land when it comes out of Chapter 61 (forestry). The Town also has the right, exercised just once before, to assign its right of first refusal to a non-profit organization. Area residents set to work to raise commitments for donations to the Wildlands Trust so that the Trust would be able to buy the property if the Town agreed to assign the purchase right to them. In a very tight 3 to 2 decision, the Selectmen voted to do so.

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Land Acquisition

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Instead of the 30 houses planned for this land, it appears that at most 5 homes, and at the least 2 homes, will be all that will be built on it, near existing houses. The successful save of this land makes it clear that the Town will help to preserve land IF a case can be made for why the land is important. In this case, the land fits neatly into the continuous 2 1/2 mile green belt which runs south from the High School along Long Pond Road to Ship Pond Road.

The Wildlands Trust still needs \$200,000 to complete the purchase. To participate in this effort, please send a check to The Wildlands Trust, P.O. Box 2282, Duxbury, MA 02331 (refer to Six Ponds so it is allocated properly).

For additional information or to make a pledge, e-mail info@sixponds.org. Every donation, small or large, is very much appreciated! Please consider a year-end tax-deductible contribution to the Trust to be used for this land!

Makepeace

Makepeace continues to present concepts for their 10,000 acres in southwest Plymouth, Carver and Wareham relating to the "overlay zoning" they want approved at each town's Town Meeting next spring.

The locations of Makepeace's "village centers" are important for their impact on traffic in the Six Ponds area. For the time being, Makepeace is focusing on 6,000 acres west of the Miles Standish State Forest, and has "taken off the table" the

3,000 acres immediately west of Six Ponds that includes the Halfway Pond area.

We continue to be hopeful, and we are working to generate interest in public and private organizations to band together to purchase the most environmentally sensitive land.

A tri-town committee meets with Makepeace consultants every other Thursday, alternating the meeting places among the three towns. Public attendance is encouraged. Committee members tell us that it does make a difference on the tenor of the discussions.

Fire Station

The funding for the proposed new Fire Station in the Pinehills Village Green is a top priority item for our area and will have our attention in the weeks ahead.

The Selectmen's Budget Review Committee had recommended postponing the funding of the station, but there appears to be strong Selectmen and Town officials' support for funding this project at next April's Town Meeting.

Fire Chief Fugazzi makes a strong argument for the need for a fire station to serve our area. He says that the large majority of houses built in Plymouth this year have been in the south part of Town, with many more to come through the Pinehills development. He notes too, that there are serious safety concerns raised by the additional numbers of children in the area while schools are in session. Also, by building the Station in the Village Green the Town

saves significant monies on town services, and keeps the Long Pond Road-Clark Road corner as permanent open space.

If the Town turns down the funding at the next three Town meetings, the station location would revert to the Long Pond Road-Clark Road corner, which would remain an available site until 2008.

Your Executive Committee believes it is very important that Six Ponds be heard loud and clear on the need now for the new Station as the Town's budget goes through the hearing process leading up to next April's Town Meeting.

What is the "Plymouth/Carver Sole Source Aquifer"?

"Sole Source Aquifer" is a US Environmental Protection Agency designation which mandates EPA review to reduce the risk of ground water contamination of any project that receives federal financial assistance in the area. The Plymouth/Carver Aquifer has been so designated because:

- 1) It is the principal source of drinking water for the residents of the area;
- 2) There are no reasonably available alternative sources of sufficient supply;
- 3) Its boundaries have been reviewed and approved by the EPA; and
- 4) If contamination were to

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Aquifer

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occur, it would pose a significant public health hazard and a serious financial burden to the area's residents.

The 200-square mile Plymouth/Carver Aquifer's borders extend roughly from Cape Cod Bay in the east, the Canal/Buzzards Bay in the south, the Jones River in the north, and to the Weweantic River and associated brooks and wetlands in the west. It lies under parts of 8 towns including all of Plymouth.

Because the water resides mainly in a large sand and gravel deposit which offers little resistance to the flow of water or contaminants, disturbances or pollution in one part of the aquifer might quickly be felt far from the original disturbance. Growth and development in the region threaten the continued purity of the whole resource.

In essence, we're all drinking from the same fragile glass of water! We need to heighten awareness of the vulnerability of our shared water source and encourage protection efforts.

Dark-Sky Bylaw

Several streetlights in the Six Ponds area seem too bright to be Dark Skies compliant. Pole numbers for these should be reported to Mr. Manfredi, the Building Inspector (508-747-1620). As for the lights at the new South Middle School, the architect says that they are "Dark-sky" compliant but look brighter because you see them from a lower level.

It is still possible to enjoy the stars in the night sky here, in part because of Plymouth's Dark-Sky Bylaw which limits the amount and types of lights which can be used outside commercial or public buildings and in parking lots and along streets. There are no such limitations on residential properties as yet -- perhaps something we should all consider as there is more and more development in the area. If you are interested in learning more about the International Dark Sky Association, you can visit their website at www.darksky.org (see "Links" at www.sixponds.org) or write to them at:

International Dark Sky Association
3225 N. First Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85719-2103.

They publish a quarterly newsletter to members, and membership is "open to everyone interested in preserving and protecting our nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies through quality outdoor lighting." Individual dues is \$30 per year.

Executive Board

Bill Abbott (President)	508-224-6629
Ed Russell (Vice-President)	781-646-7464
Peggy Briggs (Secretary)	617-479-6132
Walter Morrison (Treasurer)	508-224-8409
David Buckman	Terry Donoghue
Steve Fairchild	Jean Loewenberg
Doug Post	Janette Somerville
Lucy Wilson	

Sharing Information

Because of an inquiry, the Executive Committee has discussed appropriate policy regarding sharing our mailing list with other people or organizations. It was agreed that e-mail addresses should continue to be protected by our "blind copy" procedure, and that e-mail, regular mail and telephone lists will also be protected, and not sold or shared with others. Requests for limited, specific information may be considered on an individual basis. If you are a member and would like to be on our "e-mail alert" list, please send an e-mail to: membership@sixponds.org and we'll happily add you to the list. Please include your name in the e-mail to help us keep our membership list accurate.

Alerts are also posted on our website, www.sixponds.org. Please check the website as well for the time and location of area meetings which may include discussions important to Six Ponds, such as Selectmen, Planning Board and Conservation Commission meetings. We'd like the website to be your "go to" place for information about the area.

Six Ponds Association Membership

If you haven't already, please join or renew. Dues are just \$10 per year.
Mail to:
Six Ponds Improvement Association
P.O. Box 1580
Plymouth, MA 02362

