

Six Ponds News

April, 2010

(www.sixponds.org)

An Occasional Publication of the Six Ponds Improvement Association, Plymouth Mass.

Plymouth Rock Studios Update

Much has changed with the proposed Plymouth Rock Studios (PRS) project since our last newsletter in May 2009.

The massive studio and commercial real estate project to be situated on the Waverly Oaks golf course had its \$50 million I-Cubed application denied by the state in June. These monies were needed by PRS for development of water and sewer lines, access road construction and improvements to exit 3 and the Clark Road/Long Pond Road intersection to accommodate a large increase in traffic to be generated by the project.



On September 24th PRS announced it had secured a \$550 million loan from a Florida financing company.

In October PRS received necessary environmental approval from the state.

On November 10th PRS announced it was severing ties with the Florida financing company and that it was searching for alternate funding.

On November 15th the Boston Globe's Spotlight Team (group of investigative journalists) published the results of an investigation detailing, among a number of things, various legal and financial problems both the project and it's founder were experiencing.

Around the first of this year PRS laid off a number of employees, moved out of it's Cordage Park offices and relocated to the Waverly Oaks Clubhouse.

This past February the Town of Plymouth was denied a federal TIGER grant it had applied for to help pay for the access road, exit 3 and Clark Road/Long Pond Road construction.

With PRS still searching for funding and Waverly Oaks open for golf and functions in 2010, it appears PRS's timetable has been significantly set back. In addition, the road and exit 3 construction projects which we discussed in our last newsletter are now on hold indefinitely.

Stay tuned.

County Land Abutting Long Pond Road

Finally, a real success story! For the last 20 years we have been concerned about the 52-acre rectangular parcel on the east side of Long Pond Road across from the Bongio-vani property, running from Long Pond Road to Route 3.

At various times it has been owned by the George Briggs family, Jordan Hospital, and, for the last several years, Plymouth County.

Although this parcel is surrounded by Wildlands Trust land and should also be protect-ed, it has been the subject of proposals ranging from hundreds of houses to a big-time

(continued on pg. 2)

County... (continued from pg. 1)

sand and gravel operation involving hundreds of truck trips a day.

Now, after a harrowing number of meetings of the County Commissioners, and a Herculean effort spearheaded by the Wildlands Trust, the Commissioners finally voted 2-1 to sell the land for \$466,000, with the monies coming from the Town of Plymouth CPA funds, Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife, the Wildlands Trust, and local fundraising.

With the permanent protection of this parcel, we can enjoy a substantial contiguous block of open space and conservation land stretching all the way from Myles Standish State Forest and along the east side of Long Pond Road to the Plymouth coast in Ellisville.

Now that's something to celebrate!



Living with Long Pond Road

While we all use Long Pond Road, you'd have to have been here a while to know how much it's changed in 50 years. Starting as a Native American trail, and then a colonial cart path, it evolved over time into a dirt country road that connected the town of Plymouth to its southern hinterlands and the Cape, and stayed this way for a couple of hundred years. In the twentieth century it was widened and paved, the northern section first and the southern section, south of Halfway Pond Road, in the 1960s. In the late 1950s Route 3 was built, making the area even more accessible and accelerating south Plymouth growth. Since then, not only has traffic increased, but travel speeds as well.

For those of us who use or live along the road, this has created new problems. While the road is posted for maximum 40 mph speeds, with curves posted at 25 to 35 mph in our area, people drive on it a lot faster. Those speed limits were established 30 years ago and have never been updated in response to increased traffic, new roadside homes, and increased accidents. We all know the difficulty of entering Long Pond Road, either from our driveways or intersecting streets. We've all experienced people hanging on our tails as we try to

stay within speed limits, riding their horns or jumping the double yellow line to pass. And we know that Long Pond Road, part of the Saltonstall Memorial Bikeway, is heavily used by racers and recreational cyclists and many of us have had close calls... as cyclists, drivers, or both.

The issues of safety and increased traffic on Long Pond Road have become subjects of discussion at Six Ponds Association meetings. We all know that major new developments are planned for this area, and it is hard to imagine how additional traffic can be accommodated safely without some major changes. Some of us are beginning to question the Board of Selectmen, Public Works, Planning and Police departments about what can be done to make Long Pond Road safer for everyone.

Towards that end we would like your thoughts. If you have any suggestions, are interested in helping the Six Ponds Association pursue this issue, or simply have some old photos or stories you'd like to share about Long Pond Road, please contact us at: info@sixponds.org

Water Quality: Be Vigilant and Be Involved

For many years, the Association has been keeping a watchful eye on water quality in the ponds in this part of Plymouth. Concerns have been prompted by trying to guard against *E. coli* pollution, by occasional but extensive blooms of algae and pond weed in some of the ponds, and by analysis of water samples showing indications that the chemical balance of the water signaled other problems.

In 2002, with the assistance of a resident who was a Woods Hole scientist, we obtained the financial support of the Town to conduct more intensive and more comprehensive testing of the ponds. Among other water quality measurements that were taken, water samples were tested for over 20 chemical, biological and ecological parameters affecting water quality.

Sufficient data was gathered over the next few years to provide a solid baseline against which to examine evidence of trends in the quality of the water in our ponds. Since then we have been monitoring water quality by analyzing just a few water samples per year from each pond, and the Town has been assisting financially with some of this testing.

One thing that the data have revealed is that Little Long Pond and Halfway Pond have consistently and persistently higher levels of phosphorus than our other four ponds. Moreover, data from many locations within these two ponds show that phosphorus levels are well above the “eutrophic” level which signals that the health of a pond has seriously deteriorated. Problems with these two ponds were recognized in the 1980s, and the situation has gotten worse since then.

Little Long and Halfway ponds are the two ponds which have had the most serious blooms of algae and pond weed over the years. While we have not had serious problems with blooms of algae and pond weed for a couple of years now, there is nothing in the data to suggest that anything has improved or changed to reduce the possibility of this happening again.

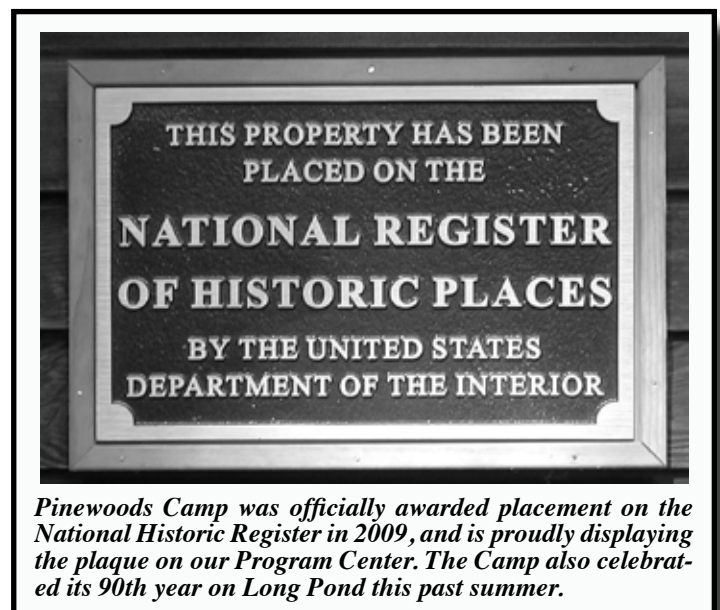
Analyses of water samples gathered over several years from a large number of locations on all six of our ponds has revealed some subtle but important trends which appear related to road runoff. Specifically, the chemical components of various types of salts (sodium, calcium, magnesium and potassium in smaller quantities along

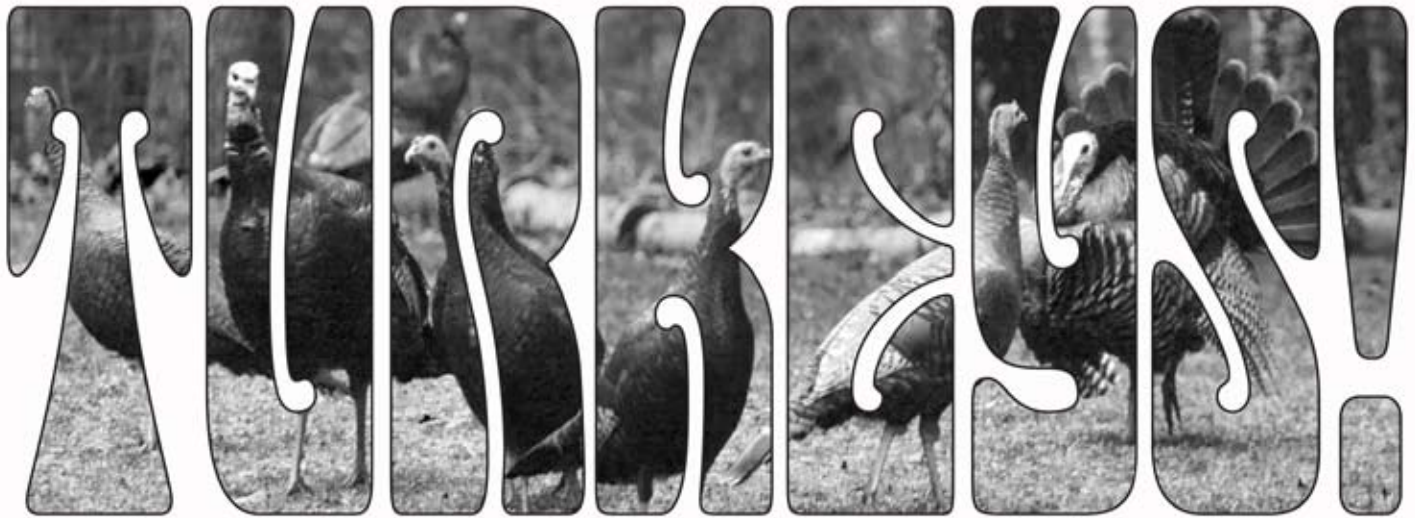
with chloride in much larger quantities) are consistently found in samples from Bloody Pond and Little Long Pond, and they are found in lesser quantities at the northern end of Long Pond. It appears that, respectively, the salts come from runoff from Route 3, Long Pond Road, Oar and Line Road, Clark Road and other paved roads. The other three ponds do not have these problems.

The Town is continuing to support our water quality testing efforts, and they have made it possible to double the amount of testing in 2010. The Town is also supporting the work of a biologist to study plants, algae and weeds which are growing in our ponds. So far, analyses of the water samples have not uncovered any new problems, and the observations of the biologist have not revealed any big surprises.

On the other hand, it is important for residents to watch for signs of emerging problems that stress the environment. It is also important for residents to avoid doing things which let pollutants, fertilizer and chemicals get into our ponds.

Overall, the quality of the water in our six ponds is relatively good; however, as residents, we bear responsibility for the quality of the water in our ponds. We can gather data forever, but unless we take active responsibility for the future of our water resources, nothing will improve and the situation will gradually get worse as development continues in the Six Ponds area.





About our Wild Turkeys

(Courtesy of Mass Audubon © 2010)

NATURAL HISTORY When Europeans first settled in Massachusetts, Wild Turkeys were plentiful throughout the state. With an increasing population, however, forests were gradually cut down for farmland, thus eliminating the turkey's habitat. In 1851, the last Wild Turkey in Massachusetts was killed on Mount Tom.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, as we moved from an agricultural to an industrial economy, humans began to concentrate in factory towns, and eventually old farmlands reverted to forests. In 1972, the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (now known as Mass Wildlife), in cooperation with the University of Massachusetts, received permission to live trap turkeys in New York state and release them in Massachusetts. Between 1972 and 1973, 37 birds were released. Today, the estimated fall population is over 15,000 birds.

IDENTIFICATION An imposing figure, a Wild Turkey can stand four feet tall, with a large, bulky body covered with bronzy, iridescent feathers. The tom (male) has a reddish blue head, and a hairlike "beard" protruding from the breast. The smaller female is duller in coloration than the male.

NESTING In the spring, tom turkeys make their famous gobble in order to lure in females. Courtship begins when the tom spreads its tail, fluffs out its feathers, swells out the facial wattles, and struts in front of the females. Males are polygamous, and will mate with several females if given the opportunity.

The nest of a turkey is a shallow depression lined with leaves or grass. The female lays 10-15 eggs, which she incubates for 25-30 days. The precocial downy young are able to follow the female and search for their own food almost immediately after hatching.

FOOD The adults feed largely on plant material, including nuts, berries, grains, seeds, grass, roots and bulbs, but they will also supplement their diet with small invertebrates. The young feed mainly on insects.

BEHAVIOR Several weeks after the young are born, the female and young may join with one or more broods to form large flocks, which will stay together until late fall or early winter. At this time, the males (who are now larger than the brood hen) will leave to join flocks of adult males.

In the winter, turkeys form separate flocks comprised of males and females, which do not break up until spring. In April, the female flocks break up into groups of typically four individuals, usually attended by a single male.

FEEDING TURKEYS Massachusetts Audubon Society and MassWildlife recommend that homeowners not feed turkeys, both for the sake of the birds and the humans feeding them. The size of wild bird populations is controlled by food availability, and a steady supply of human-provided food allows weak birds to reproduce thereby diminishing the vitality of the species as a whole. Turkeys can also become aggressive, chasing people, pets, cars, and practically anything else that moves.

SITUATIONS AND SOLUTIONS:

TURKEYS IN YARDS When turkeys show up in yards in suburbia, it is almost always because the homeowners have bird feeders in their yard, and seed that has fallen to the ground has attracted them. Homeowners should keep the area under the feeders clean and, if necessary, stop feeding altogether to avoid attracting turkeys into the yard.

Stringing silver mylar streamers (found in party supply stores) may help to exclude turkeys from areas where they are unwanted. Place stakes that are two and a half feet high, around the area and attach the mylar to the stakes. The mylar blowing and reflecting the light at eye-level should discourage the turkeys from entering the area.

AGGRESSION If turkeys become aggressive, try to find out if anyone else in the area is feeding them, and suggest that they stop. You can attempt to discourage the turkeys by harassment, such as banging pots and pans together. This disturbance has to be repeated frequently, and is sometimes not successful at all.

BIRDS AND THE LAW All birds are protected by federal laws under the Migratory Bird Act of 1918, as well as by Massachusetts state laws. It is illegal to destroy, relocate or possess birds, their nests or their eggs. The only exceptions are non-native species: House Sparrow, European Starling, and Pigeon. Trained and licensed wildlife rehabilitators, who have passed a federal and/or state-administered test, are permitted to care for injured or orphaned wildlife.

Six Ponds Clean Up Day

Saturday, May 1 at 10 a.m., (with rain date of May 2)

Where: pickup bags and organize at the corner of Long Pond and Clark Roads.

The Six Ponds Association has recently helped establish, with other pond and neighborhood organizations, an umbrella stewardship network across the town, and our clean-up day has turned into to a town wide effort.

The town of Plymouth has been very cooperative and will supply plastic bags for our use and collect the filled bags that are left on the side of the road. You must let us know which Roads so that we can pass the information on to the DPW so they'll know where to pick them up.

You bring your own gloves and any other equipment you might like to use to pick up the litter along the edge of the roads.

Though we will meet at Long Pond and Clark roads to pick up the DPW's purple bags you may then go to any road you choose just remember to let us know where to find the filled bags.

This is happening thanks to the work and cooperation of new Town Manager Mark Stankiewicz, Melissa Arrighi, Assistant Town Manager, Hector Castro, Director DPW, and our coordinator from the town, the DPW's Arthur Douylliez.

Questions: Call Charlotte or Ed Russell 508-224 2007

Thank You

Six Ponds Executive Committee 2009-2010

Leighton Price (President)	Barry Meltzer
Roger Monks (Vice President)	Walter Morrison
Betsy Hall (Secretary)	Larry Rosenblum
Doug Post (Treasurer)	Charlotte Russell
Jerry Benezra	Judy Savage
Joe DeSilva	Jessica Schultz
Sherm Geller	

Contributors to this issue:

Bill Abbott, Joe DeSilva, Mass Audubon, Doug Post, Leighton Price, Larry Rosenblum, Charlotte Russell, Judy Savage, Phyllis Troia

Join us
AT THE PINWOODS CAMP
Country Dance, Social, and Fiddle Concert
FOR THE SIX POND COMMUNITY
SATURDAY JUNE 12



NO DANCING EXPERIENCE REQUIRED!
COME TO DANCE OR TO WATCH AND VISIT WITH
FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS.
PARKING WILL BE AVAILABLE AT CAMP.
PLEASE BRING A PAIR OF CLEAN SOFT SOLED SHOES
TO WEAR IN THE DANCE PAVILION.
(SNEAKERS ARE FINE)
A FLASHLIGHT WILL BE HELPFUL TO GET YOU BACK
TO WHERE YOUR CAR IS PARKED.
SNACKS WILL BE PROVIDED. OTHER FOOD
CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME.
FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE CALL JUDY AT 508-224-4858

DIRECTIONS:
TAKE WEST LONG POND ROAD TO CORNISH FIELD
ROAD. FOLLOW TO END WHERE YOU WILL SEE A
PINWOODS CAMP SIGN. PARK IN DESIGNATED AREAS.
(SOMEONE WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DIRECT CARS.)
FOLLOW SIGNS TO DANCE PAVILION

PINWOODS CAMP
80 CORNISH FIELD ROAD
PLYMOUTH, MA 02360



SIX PONDS ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 1580
PLYMOUTH, MA 02362
