

Six Ponds News

January, 2011

(www.sixponds.org)

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

County Land Abutting Long Pond Road - Update!

Thousands pass by it every day while driving down Long Pond Rd south of Exit 3. It is the Wildlands Trust's newest land acquisition; a 65 acre parcel that runs north/south along the eastern side of Long Pond Road. The previous owner of the land, the County of Plymouth, had been strapped for cash and residents were aware the County had been discussing sale of the land.

"This land was very much on people's minds, given the number of large scale developments proposed in the area. Plymouth Rock Studios was then looming large, as was the Makepeace project. Residents were becoming very concerned about traffic in the area and rumors were flying that the 65-acre County Land was being considered for a Park and Ride," said Wildlands Trust Executive Director Karen Grey.

This piece of land was particularly valuable to conservation interests because it presented a big gap in an otherwise long stretch of existing conservation land along Long Pond Rd.

Grey quickly contacted the County and learned that it had just completed a pre sale study of the land. "In my first meeting with the County, they showed me plans for the options they were considering; a 400 unit 40B, a light industrial park and 16 separate 3-acre house lots. This got everyone's attention and we mobilized quickly," said Grey.

A successful initiative by the Trust and by local residents was immediately undertaken to see if money could be raised to acquire the land for conservation.

The property became Plymouth conservation land on August 31, 2010 after months and months of meetings, negotiations, hearings and fundraising. The acquisition had been further complicated because of the number of contributors that had to be brought to the table to raise the money. It required the collaborative efforts of the residents in the area, the Wildlands Trust, the Town of Plymouth and the Mass. Department of Fish and Game. The Trust's Six Ponds East and Emery West Preserves are now linked to form 250 contiguous acres of open space on the east side of Long Pond Road, the whole conjoined area being adjacent to thousands of other protected acres.

Long Pond Road Traffic Studies

The Old Colony Planning Council, established in 1967 by state statute as one of 13 regional advisory agencies, encompasses 15 towns from Plymouth to Stoughton. The Council's purpose is to address various shared issues impacting communities. Such issues are not limited by town geographic boundaries. These would include air and water pollution, alternative energy, infrastructure, transportation deficits, and economic challenges. The Council, in its advisory function, provides a forum for consultants and experts to review data and research, to formulate plans and recommendations for the region or specific community. Citizens may also participate in workshops offered by the Council on local and regional problems. The Council does not mandate, legislate or regulate.

The Council conducted two traffic studies on Long Pond Road, and connecting roads, in 2009 and 2010. In 2009, the traffic volume approached 9,000 vehicles per day, with 85th percentile speed being 50 MPH (with a posted speed limit 35 MPH). The 2010 study showed that volume approached 10,000 vehicles per day, with 94th percentile traveling at 50 mph or more. The compiled traffic data can be used to predict trends, identify community impact and facilitate future planning and traffic mitigation.

Fall Roadside Litter Clean-up

It all started at Six Ponds. The roadside litter clean-up that has been conducted for many years in this area by the Six Ponds Association, has recently spread to seven other areas of town. Joan Bartlett and Charlotte Russell of the Plymouth Open Space Committee brought the idea to the Network of Open Space Friends, an umbrella group of neighborhood associations and many of these groups signed on. Last year about 100 residents came out to clean up their streets. This year the number of groups participating has grown to include Six ponds, Town Brook, Jenny Pond, White Horse Beach, Stephens Fields, the waterfront, Morton Park and Myles Standish State Forest.

The DPW supplied plastic bags to all participating groups and then collected the full bags for disposal.

It was Saturday, November 6 and some might have assumed that they were seeing county prisoners on roadside pick-up duty but no, it was eighteen Six Pond residents spread out along Long Pond, West Long Pond, Clark, Mast, Oar & Line and Halfway Pond Roads loading plastic bags with roadside trash.

Several volunteers suggested that it was "curiously satisfying to perform this work."

All four of the Concannon family arrived to work setting a good example of civic responsibility for the children.

The amount of roadside litter tells us that lessons in civic responsibility are sorely needed. The trash ranged from prosaic to disgusting. Measured by the number and types of items it's rather scary to consider that drivers are operating their vehicles while drinking beer, eating fast food, smoking and scratching lottery tickets . . . maybe even at the same time!



The 40 bags of trash picked up on Long Pond Road in 3 hours.
Pictured: Jim Concannon, Charlotte Russell and Makena Concannon.

In case you missed this from our last mailing, please join or renew your membership now !

An invitation to join or renew your membership in the Six Ponds Association 2011

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Telephone _____
email _____

Dues: \$20/household per year
Mail to: Six Ponds Improvement Association
P.O.Box 1580
Plymouth, MA 02362

I/we wish to add an additional contribution of:
\$ _____

Water Quality Monitoring Update

In November of 2010, we collected water samples from each of our six ponds. The samples were analyzed at Envirotech Laboratories in Sandwich.

Top and bottom samples were drawn from each pond (from two locations in Little Long Pond and from one location in each of the other ponds). A duplicate sample was collected for quality control purposes, and the results from that sample used to validate the analysis protocol.

The Town of Plymouth paid for the analysis of all samples collected in the fall of 2009 and the spring and fall of 2010. The Town will also be paying for the analysis of samples collected next spring.

Over the years, results have varied from one time to another. Some of this variation may be due to how soon the samples were analyzed. Nevertheless, as described below, there are some trends to be noted. (note that a “eutrophic” body of water is nutrient-enriched, and is subject to blooms of algae and other plants.)

Phosphorus

This fall, eutrophic levels of phosphorus were found in all of the top and bottom samples from Little Long (a typical finding). Both samples from Round had eutrophic levels of phosphorus (much less common). Half the samples from Halfway and Long had eutrophic levels, but none of the samples from Bloody or Gallows had eutrophic levels.

In June of 2010, eutrophic level of phosphorus were found in all of the top and bottom samples from our ponds, and about one third of these samples had levels which were nearly twice the eutrophic level.

Last fall, eutrophic level of phosphorus were found in the top and bottom samples from four of our ponds (Bloody, Halfway, Long, and Little Long). Only Gallows Pond and Round Pond had low levels of Phosphorus.

By way of comparison with broader trends, it should be noted that samples drawn from specific locations since 2002 reveal the following pattern for phosphorus:

- Little Long** – 15 of 17 samples taken from the same locations since 2002 were high
- Halfway** – 15 of 18 samples were high
- Bloody** – 6 of 14 samples were high
- Round** – 6 of 13 samples were high
- Long** – 6 of 16 samples were high
- Gallows** – 4 of 13 samples were high

These trends again confirm findings from Town of Plymouth

studies done in 1980 that Little Long Pond and Halfway Pond are especially eutrophic. In general, this situation has gotten worse.

At some point, the strength of these trends and their implications for the environment must be taken seriously.

Nitrate

Over the past ten to fifteen years, samples from Little Long have consistently contained more nitrate than samples from our other ponds. This fall, the nitrate levels in all four Little Long samples were much higher than those found in any of the samples taken in past years. At times the nitrate levels in Bloody approach those typically found in Little Long, and they did again this fall.

Given the consistency of this trend for Little Long, the nitrate results should be a cause for considerable concern. The studies done by the Town in 1980 stated that observed numbers considerably lower than these were bordering on critical levels for the environment.

Salt Components (e.g., chloride, sodium, potassium)

The November samples again confirmed observations from several prior years that salt components such as chloride, sodium, and potassium were highest in Bloody, next highest in Little Long, third highest in Long, and much lower in the rest of our ponds.

The years of similar numbers clearly and consistently indicate that road runoff from Route 3, Long Pond Road, Clark Road and Oar and Line Road is negatively affecting the water quality of our ponds.

E. coli

Tests for *e. coli* (an indicator of fecal contamination) consistently yield numbers which are far below what constitute a cause for concern.

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 little in the data to suggest that anything has improved or changed to reduce the possibility of this happening again.

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, 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.

Six Ponds Executive Committee 2010-2011

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Joe DeSilva (President) | Walter Morrison |
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| Betsy Hall (Secretary) | Craig Richards |
| Doug Post (Treasurer) | Larry Rosenblum |
| Sam Chapin | Charlotte Russell |
| Sherm Geller | Judy Savage |
| Barry Meltzer | |

Contributors to this issue:

- Betsy Hall, Doug Post, Leighton Price, Larry Rosenblum, Charlotte Russell, Ed Russell, Phyllis Troia

Wind Turbines

There are a number of wind energy projects that are under consideration for installation in Plymouth.

The Town of Plymouth and the Plymouth School Department are considering wind turbines at both high schools as well as at the Municipal Solid Waste facility. A met tower is currently recording wind data at PSHS. These data are already available for PNHS so no met tower will be needed there.

A wind turbine has been ordered for the Balboni project in Camelot Park for a spring delivery.

Three wind turbines have been approved by the ZBA for the Mann project near Head of the Bay Rd.



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