

Six Ponds News

April, 2012

(www.sixponds.org)

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

Curbside Trash Pickup?

Six Ponds Improvement Association recently became aware of the Town's plan to move to curbside trash pickup as of September 1, 2012. As a result, representatives of Six Ponds recently met with the DPW to discuss the plan and here is what they learned as of the writing of this article:

- What is driving this is the Town's tipping fee (price per ton for trash incineration) which will be increasing when it's contract expires soon, so it needs to reduce the tonnage in order to avoid a substantial increase in trash fees to the residents. The only way to accomplish this is to increase the amount of recyclable items which are diverted to the recycling stream. ...Plymouth has a low recycling rate.
- The Town is waiting for bids from private contractors which are due to come in on March 27th. The goal is to have the fee per household come in at \$250 per year or less. If the fee is greater than \$250 then this program will likely not be feasible. The fee would be a direct payment by each household. Households would have the option to opt out of the Town plan and use their own private contractor.
- Each household would be given a separate bin for non-recyclable trash which would be picked up weekly and a separate bin for recyclable items which would be picked up biweekly. If you cannot fit all of your non-recyclable trash into the bin, then you must purchase special bags which are to be placed next to the bin (so-called pay-as-you-throw).
- Your bins and bags are to be brought to the end of your driveway for pickup by the contractor. For those of us with long, difficult driveways where it will be challenging to roll the bins, there will be a soon-to-be-demonstrated device which can be attached to your auto bumper upon which you would put the bins and drive them to the end of your driveway.
- DPW has assured us that the selected contractor(s) will be familiar with our rural area and its difficult roads and that they will be prepared to come down every road with whatever trucks are necessary and that the Town will not entertain requests from the contractor(s) to grade, widen, pave or in any other way change the roads in order to serve those who live on such roads.
- For citizens living in particularly difficult areas, the Town may keep one landfill open.
- We have been told there will be a senior discount.

In summary, the Town is trying to keep the trash fees at a minimum by increasing the rate of recycling... this is a good thing. DPW has promised to work closely with Six Ponds to adjust this program to the realities of our rural area. We encourage you to follow this closely.

Spring Tips for Better Pond Health

A lack of pond water clarity, algal excess, and too much vegetative growth, all accelerate pond aging, or cultural eutrophication. This natural process is being dramatically accelerated by human environmental impact. Excess nutrients in the forms of phosphates, nitrates and bicarbonates, erosion that brings silt and additional nutrient load, shifts in pH due to acid rain, and removal of vegetation from the shore and buffer zone all contribute. "But I don't live right on a pond." Truth is, every one of us lives in the watershed of some body of water. This spring, following these recommendations can help minimize chemical leaching, nutrient runoff, erosion and siltation in to our ponds and waterways.

- **Septic System.** Make sure your septic system is in good working order. If there is any question, have it pumped.
- **Soaps and Detergents.** Use absolutely no soaps or detergents in or near the pond. For in-home use, choose shampoos, dishwasher and washing machine products that have NO PHOSPHATES (it will say this on the bottle), now a requirement in many states.
- **Edge Vegetation.** Leave existing vegetation at the pond edge to help curb erosion and siltation.
- **Garden Fertilizers.** Your garden should almost never need fertilizer or weed killers. Use a top dressing of compost yearly and eliminate any "miracle blue" or "shake n' bake" type fertilizers.



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Spring Tips... (continued)

- **Lawn Treatments.** Eliminate the use of lawn chemicals. “Five step systems” are full of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers – drugs for your lawn. These chemicals are unhealthy for our ponds, and equally unhealthy for you, your family and your pets. Easier said than done? There will be information at www.sixponds.org for step-by-step procedures to going lawn-natural.
- **Water.** If your lawn is 3 years old or more, or in dappled shade, it should rarely need watering. If you must water the lawn, water less frequently but for a longer duration.
- **High and Sharp.** Re-set your mower to 3.5” or higher (or request that your lawn service do this), and make sure your mower blade is sharp. A sharp blade makes a clean cut, allowing the grass to recover faster & minimize the opportunities for disease.
- **Leave it.** Leave the grass clippings on your lawn. Grass clippings quickly break down and give your lawn a natural nitrogen burst that is quickly utilized by the turf.
- **Sweet or Sour.** Test the pH of your soil. Between acid rain and living in a pine barrens, you can bet your soil pH is naturally low or ‘sour.’ Turf grasses like a sweeter soil. Add granulated lime IN THE FALL to help the plants metabolize available nutrients.
- **Proximity.** Keep lawns away from the waters edge. Preferably keep any lawn 100’ or more from the water, but if this is not possible, eliminate all lawn fertilizers and treatments to keep nutrients and poisons out of the pond.
- **Say FESCUE.** When seeding or overseeding, always choose a shade mix, even if you have sunny conditions. Shade mixtures have a greater percentage of turf-type tall fescues, grasses that do beautifully under a wide range of conditions, require minimal nutrition, and are very resilient against drought and pests.

Our septic systems, detergent use and lawn practices don’t have to contribute to the eutrophication of our ponds. Use non-phosphate cleaning products, keep lawns and gardens away from pond edges, eliminate fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, mow and water optimally, and both your property and our waterways can thrive!

Roadside Clean up Saturday, May 19 (rain date May 20)



It can’t come any too soon because a long and warm winter has left our roadsides blossoming with TRASH! Many Six Ponds and PEA volunteers step up, year after year, to keep our neighborhood looking good. We encourage new volunteers. Just an hour or two of work on one day at a favorite place makes a big difference.

The date for the Six Ponds cleanup this year is Saturday, May 19, with a rain date of Sunday, May 20. The Town of Plymouth is a supporting participant in our efforts - roadside litter is placed in purple plastic bags supplied by the DPW, who then picks up the bags, after the cleanup has been completed, at designated locations in each neighborhood.



Please join your neighbors in participating in this community effort. We will meet at 10 am at the corner of Clark Road and Long Pond Road where bags will be supplied – bring your own gloves and any other tools you might want.

Questions call: Charlotte Russell at 508 224 2007

DO GOOD, FEEL GOOD

Why Volunteer?

- Share your talents.
- Develop new skills.
- Enhance your resume.
- Feel good about giving back to the community
- Make new friends
- Make a positive contribution

Plymouth needs you... your ideas, your energy and your concern. You will find a volunteer opportunity that matches almost any interest you have, and you’ll be helping your neighbors.

Perhaps you think you don’t really have anything to contribute or you are nervous that you need to have some very specific skill. Not so! Plymouth has hundreds of volunteers (your neighbors) who are making

a huge difference for you just by participating to the best of their ability. And they really need your assistance. You will learn as you go and many people will want to help you help our town.

To serve one of the many town committees, go to the Plymouth town website..... http://www.plymouth-ma.gov/Public_Documents/indexand then click on Committee Openings listed in the section called News & Events.

Or if service to the Town government is not your thing, volunteer at the hospital, a horse rescue farm, the library, senior center, hospice, Red Cross, schools, non-profit thrift shop, Civil Defense.....wait! - the list is almost endless and so is the need.

Do it! Volunteer. You will be glad you did and so will lots of other people.

Off-Road Vehicles

A recent issue of Plymouth's newspaper posted a picture of three boys on dirt bikes who, as the caption read, "opted for a spin on their dirt bikes to break up an otherwise dreary day." We wonder if the boys, two of whom were just eight years old, carried documents stating that they have completed a state approved recreational vehicle safety and responsibility course, were riding registered bikes, had direct adult supervision, and were preparing for a sanctioned event within 21 days of that event, and that they kept their "spin" on private property for which they carried written permission to ride. If not, then both the boys and their parents were breaking the law.

Those of us who care about our neighborhood and the damage done to the natural environment by the irresponsible use of off-road vehicles (ORVs) should be pleased with what is and is not permitted under the ORV laws passed by the Massachusetts legislature on July 31, 2010. These laws include age restrictions; supervision and training requirements; limits on use of public ways, public property, and private property; fines for violations, and large fines and possible imprisonment for endangering public safety and damage to the environment. The fines collected go to programs to support ORV education, safety, development and maintenance of legal trails, and to law enforcement.

ORVs must be registered and carry a registration tag, just like other motor vehicles. Unfortunately, only about 15% of ORVs in Massachusetts are registered. You cannot drive a car out of a dealer's lot without having it registered and insured; the same should be true for ORVs.

The Six Ponds ask everyone's help in protecting conservation lands in Plymouth, insuring the safety of children, and to reduce nuisances. It is critical to get citizens to report illegal riding. This will enable the Environmental Police to be more effective at stopping illegal ORVs, and should encourage riders to register their vehicles with the Commonwealth.



ORV trespass on public and private lands and on public roadways should be reported immediately to the Plymouth Police by calling (508) 830-4218 for non-emergency calls and 911 for emergencies. To report ORV and snowmobile violations on state lands, please call the Environmental Police at 1-800-632-8075.

The Massachusetts Division of Conservation and Recreation estimates it costs \$300,000 to construct one mile of sustainable ORV trails. If riders want trails on state lands, they need to help pay for them by registering their vehicles. They could also get together to purchase land on which to ride, as other sportsmen do. ORV enthusiasts do not have the right to ride illegally, nor to expect the rest of us to support their pastime.

(Our thanks to Charl Heller of the Friends of Myles Standish State Forest, Inc. (www.friendsmssf.com) for the information in this article.)

Long Pond Road and The Claire Saltonstall Bikeway

Many of you probably notice bicyclists and runners often using Long Pond Road and think, gee, this just doesn't seem to be the safest road for these activities (never mind driving your car!). Well, your observations are correct.

Data collected over time from the Old Colony Planning Council has shown a disturbing upward trend in traffic volume and vehicle speed in excess of posted speed limits. We know this is predominantly due to the extraordinary growth in Plymouth and surrounding communities over the past twenty years.

You may or may not also know that the Claire Saltonstall Bikeway, a state bikeway which runs from Boston to Provincetown, has as part of its route Long Pond Road beginning at exit 5 and extending down to Hedges Pond Road. The problem is that limited room for both bicyclists and autos to share the road coupled with excessive speeds is a recipe for tragedy. In short, Long Pond Road has become a more dangerous road for automobile drivers and also for recreational purposes and seems less compatible with the Saltonstall bikeway.

As a result, Six Ponds members met with Representative Vinny deMacedo on January 8th to discuss our concerns and seek his opinion on how to best approach the problem. It was a very helpful

meeting with the feeling that there may be an opportunity to create a mitigation plan that addresses both the need to suppress excessive speed and traffic while creating a safer environment for bicyclists. Vinny was then instrumental in arranging for several members of town government including law enforcement, DPW and planning along with AD Makepeace to meet with representatives of Six Ponds and Vinny himself on February 10th. This meeting was also very helpful.

All parties acknowledged the problems with Long Pond Road and the impact on the bikeway, discussed current and planned mitigation efforts and agreed to continue to meet periodically to review progress and brainstorm solutions. Since then we have heard a presentation on suggested changes to the bikeway route and plan to invite AD Makepeace leadership to a future meeting to meet with us.

Look for future articles on this topic as we will keep you updated.

Contributors to this issue:

Joe DeSilva, Betsy Hall, Charl Heller, Love Albrecht Howard, Doug Post, Charlotte Russell, Craig Richards, Ed Russell, Judy Savage

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Doug Post (Treasurer)	Craig Richards
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Oar and Line on Little Long Pond (circa 1910)



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