
Six Ponds December E-news

2 messages

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News you can use December 2022

**Beech Leaf Disease in our woods**

Two years ago, the MA state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) positively identified [Beech Leaf Disease \(BLD\)](#) symptomatic trees in several areas of Plymouth. On November 3, Six Ponds and Pinewoods Camp hosted two state foresters to share their research about how to identify the disease, the current status in the Commonwealth, the expected impact to our beech trees and the exploration into treatment options.

What we heard:

- Beech leaf disease is devastating beech trees within our Six Ponds forests.
- BLD affects our native American beech, as well as ornamental European beech trees.

- The infection rate is moving fast, although the vector of the disease is still unknown. BLD is carried by very small plant-parasitic nematodes (roundworms) that live inside the leaf buds.
- There is no effective treatment for BLD at this time, but aggressive research is underway in Massachusetts and in other states where it has been identified.
- It is best to leave the infected trees standing rather than cut them down. It is a slow death, and beech trees stand strong long after they have died. Perhaps by chance a resistant clone will be found, which could help lead the way to natural selection against the BLD.

[Click here](#) for more information from the DCR.

[Click here for a recording of the November 3rd presentation.](#)



Heavily infested beech leaf disease damage. Photo credit: Mass.gov



Give the gift of membership.

Do you know a neighbor or family member who cares about our neighborhood? Invite them to be a part of our wonderful Six Ponds Community. We need to expand our sphere! Your support is essential to our work. Thank you!

Gift Membership [click here](#)

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

UPDATE : The Plymouth Conservation Commission recently adopted a new policy with respect to the Wetlands Protection By-Law. Landowners and homeowners who have wetlands on their property or who abut a wetland may need to be aware of this new policy. [Please take a look here.](#)



Your plastic containers ARE recycled, and they're in demand

Article reprinted from [South Shore Recycling Cooperative](#), written by Claire Galkowski

Are you wondering whether the plastic bottles and containers you put in the recycling bin are getting recycled? The short answer is an emphatic YES! And manufacturers want MORE of it to substitute for petroleum-based "virgin" material.

Greenpeace recently released [a provocative report](#) asserting that plastic recycling is a "dead end street". Several news outlets amplified the

report without examining its claims.

Those of us who know the recycling system were not consulted. We understand that plastic containers actually prop up our other recycling streams, and provide feedstock to both large brand owners and small local companies that put them back into products.

I've been a waste warrior and recycling professional for thirty years, 24 as director of the 18-town South Shore Recycling Cooperative (SSRC). I wholeheartedly agree with Greenpeace that the overproduction and consumption of plastics- and other materials- are straining our little planet's ability to support us. Sowing unwarranted seeds of doubt about the integrity of our recycling programs, though, is like hiding the life jackets in a storm.

The claim that only 5% of plastic is recycled refers to ALL plastics globally (lower than [the US EPA's](#) 8.7% figure). It includes troublesome [non-recyclable disposables](#) – packing foam, cutlery, red #6 cups ...- and durable items like keyboards, carpet, mattresses, and the equipment that helped keep my husband alive in the ICU last year. All but a few of the bottles and rigid containers that land in recycling bins in our area become new products. And there IS [plenty of capacity](#) in the system for plenty more, IF consumers empty and put them in the right place.

Plastics comprise about 7% of our residential single stream, but provide nearly half of its value, subsidizing the low/negative valued paper and glass. In 2022, South Shore towns received [credits](#) averaging \$77/ton for the value of the sorted single stream recyclables. These credits offset the cost of sorting, baling, and shipping them. If those plastics had been removed, the credits would have averaged \$36/ton less, or only \$41/ton, and the recycling would have cost our towns that much more.

The most effective ways consumers can reduce our waste crisis are to reduce the amount of stuff we buy, and reuse as much as we can. As for the rest, we can recycle and redeem our [clean paper, cardboard, bottles, cans and rigid containers](#) with confidence. Putting them back into new products is a far happier ending, and beginning, than burning, burying or littering them.

For more info, go to [the SSRC website](#).



Pilgrim Power Plant proposed dumping of wastewater into Cape Cod Bay: an Update from Six Ponds member Henrietta Cosentino

Fact: Plans are underway to dump 1.1 million gallons of radioactive and chemically-contaminated water from within the Pilgrim Power Plant into Cape Cod Bay. This is illegal. [Read more HERE.](#)

The brief good news: Senator Susan Moran's excellent budget amendment, having crashed along with the whole budget at the end of July, came briefly back to life a few weeks ago when it was unexpectedly reattached to the budget bill. This amendment proposed a two-year moratorium on dumping Pilgrim nuclear wastewater, pending an economic impact review by a special commission. Given that the "blue" economy is worth, all told, something like \$2 billion a year (upwards of \$770 million around Cape Cod Bay alone), it was expected that Governor Baker would sign the whole bill and leave the amendment untouched. Democrats and Republicans alike assumed so—after all, it was guaranteed to benefit local economies and our Republican governor is nothing if not pro-business.

The bad news: Governor Baker vetoed that budget amendment without a warning. Senators O'Connor and Tarr, both Republicans, were said to be shocked and furious. What happened? Hard to know. But what we do know is that one of the two nuclear lobbyists in our state used to be on Baker's staff. Somehow, Baker was persuaded to veto the amendment that would have thwarted Holtec's plan to dump. *<ed. Holtec holds the*

license to decommission Pilgrim> There have been several articles about this veto. Here's a good [writeup by Ben Cronin](#) in the *Plymouth County Observer*:

The current reality: Governor Baker is on his way out and expects to land a job in the energy sector. Maura Healey, current Attorney General, will take office as Governor in early January. She has stated her determination to halt Holtec's plan. And she has the authority to do so, thanks to the June 2020 Settlement Agreement. In signing it, Holtec pledged to comply with relevant Commonwealth laws. Both federal and state law are clearly on our side. The *Clean Water Act*, via the EPA's federal *NPDES (water discharge) permit*, explicitly [disallows the dumping of water](#) from the spent fuel pool, the torus, the dryer/separator pit and the reactor cavity. The state has a parallel NPDES permit. And the *Massachusetts Protected Ocean Sanctuary Act* explicitly forbids the dumping of industrial waste in a protected ocean sanctuary—and Plymouth, Kingston and Cape Cod Bays are all protected ocean sanctuaries. See flyer below on why dumping is illegal.

The bottom line: We are up against a giant corporate entity with deep pockets and lawyers from here to eternity. They do not feel bound by law and are used to gaming the system. It is an uphill battle.

HOWEVER, we have some things going for us:

(1) Newly elected Governor Maura Healey, whom we are counting on to back up her words with some strong preemptive actions. It's a game of chicken, as Holtec pretends to be considering all options and Healey has to wait until there's some concrete evidence that Holtec is planning to dump. Nerve-racking, but now that the election is over we can hope that Maura Healey is refocusing on the importance of protecting our health and our blue economy.

(2) Senator Markey's office is working hard behind the scenes to slow down the process by holding Holtec to the commitments it made during the Markey hearing back in May. In particular, Markey's staff is working with radiation experts to nail down a scientifically sound means of testing the contaminated water in the reactor building. This is theoretically

irrelevant, since the water from those sources is technically forbidden. But the testing of it is a good idea, as we ought to know what is in it, whether or not it gets dumped. Proper testing will be time consuming. Meanwhile, Senator Markey, Senator Warren and Representative Keating have written Holtec requesting that they commit to obeying the EPA regulations which demand that Holtec apply for a new NPDES permit prior to any dumping, since their current permit does not allow it. The application process would take at least another year. Holtec has not yet filed such an application.

(3) Senator Susan Moran intends to resubmit her amendment as a free-standing legislation as soon as possible.

(4) The Court of Public Opinion is our very strongest ally. No local people, no genuine stakeholders, want to allow our Bay, our common waters, to be contaminated. (Unless they are working for or are under the influence of Holtec). The more we manifest our determination to save our bay, the more we can create a very uncomfortable situation for Holtec, and perhaps persuade them that the bad publicity is too costly. Perhaps they will decide that the combination of a serious delay plus public outrage means it would be better to do the legal thing and transport the water to a licensed rad-waste site.

Thank you, Henrietta, for keeping us up-to-date on this serious subject!



WINTER FUN QUIZ

Animal Tracks - Can you identify whose footprints are these in the above picture?

Help us Prevent Wildfire Spread!

Last year, the Six Ponds region became nationally recognized as a [Firewise](#) community. Help us keep this status and remain vigilant about [how we can help prevent the spread of wildfires](#). It's easy. Each time you do any yard work such as clearing up a downed-tree, brush removal, tree

Raccoon, skunk, cat, T-Rex?

Send us your guess and WIN A PRIZE!

pruning, etc, simply fill out this FORM and return to us. We will do the rest!



FIREWISE USA®
Residents reducing wildfire risks



'Sending you all best wishes this winter holiday season!

2022-2023 Six Ponds Executive Committee

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