

SPRING/
SUMMER
2023



WEQUAQUET LAKE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

People that care about Lake Wequaquet



A Word from the WLPA President Concerning Road Runoff

The WLPA has been working with the town identifying street runoff concerns and the town has addressed two of the problem areas this past fall. One on Shoot Flying Hill Road at the boat ramp and the second on Holly Point Road in front of the beach association. Controlling street runoff is crucial to the preservation of the lake.

For example:

Contamination: Street runoff contains various contaminants such as oil, grease, heavy metals, pesticides, and bacteria. These pollutants can contaminate the freshwater lake, affecting the quality of water, and causing harm to aquatic life.

Eutrophication: Street runoff also contains high levels of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus. When these nutrients enter freshwater lakes, they can cause eutrophication, a process that leads to the growth of harmful algae blooms that consume oxygen, resulting in fish kills and health problems for humans.

Increased sedimentation: Street runoff can carry sediment, and when deposited in freshwater lakes, it can increase sedimentation. Sedimentation can cause the lake's depth to reduce, leading to the formation of shallow areas that can increase the growth of weeds and algae.

Environmental damage: The pollutants in street runoff can cause serious environmental damage to the freshwater lake's ecosystem. This damage can lead to changes in the food chain, loss of biodiversity, and ecological imbalances.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the town for their continued support.

Best Regards, Alan Horvitz

WLPA ANNUAL MEETING

The Wequaquet Lake
Protective
Association
Annual Meeting will
be held on

**SUNDAY
JUNE 4 TH
9:00 - 11:00 AM.**

The Location is
Wequaquet Lake
Yacht Club.

This year's
Keynote speaker is

**Andrew Gottlieb,
Executive Director,
Association to
Preserve Cape Cod**



Completed runoff repairs at
Holly Point Beach.
Photo Alan Horvitz



Equipment set up along Shootflying Hill Road
to rectify road runoff into Wequaquet Lake.
Photo Gale Klun



Completed runoff repairs at
Wequaquet Town Beach.
Photo Alan Horvitz

WLPA Officials

President: Alan Horvitz

Vice President: Ahvi Spindell

Secretary: Mary Ann Anthony

Treasurer: Frank Ward

DIRECTORS

Paul Canniff

Mike Falkson

Gale Klun

Richard Kramer

Gail Maguire

Karin Menegay

Website Manager:

Chuck Murphy

Re-elected for one year terms
to commence 1/1/23 and end 12/31/23 were
Alan Horvitz, President; Ahvi Spindell, Vice President;
Mary Ann Anthony, Secretary; and Frank Ward, Treasurer.

Re-elected for 3 year terms,
beginning 1/1/23 and ending 12/31/25 were
Paul Canniff, Gale Klun, Gail Maguire, and Ahvi Spindell.

Water Quality on Cape Cod - Avoiding a “Toxic Stew”

On January 1, 2023, the New York Times published an article entitled, “A Toxic Stew on Cape Cod: Human Waste and Warming Water”; <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/01/climate/cape-cod-algae-septic.html>.

This article described how warming water temperatures due to climate change along with a fast-growing population have caused an alarming decrease in the water quality of the Cape’s estuaries, bays and ponds. The infrastructure to manage wastewater production has not kept pace with Cape Cod’s population growth. The majority of the Cape still relies upon old and ineffective septic systems and these systems do little to control the flow of nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus into our valuable salt and fresh water resources. Studies assessing water quality have shown over and over again that the primary source of nutrient loading comes from inadequately treated wastewater from septic systems. Storm water runoff and fertilizers also contribute and these are easier to control than septic system discharge.

Sewer treatment facilities such as the one in the Town of Barnstable remove almost 100% of nitrogen and phosphorus from wastewater and return the cleansed water back to ground water. These systems effectively treat wastewater and definitely can improve and protect the water quality across Cape Cod, but they are very expensive. In sparsely populated areas, other innovated and less expensive approaches may be utilized to remove polluting nutrients. The high cost of sewer treatment facilities and sewer expansion projects tends to justify inaction, but doing nothing will ultimately cost more in the quality of life here on Cape Cod.

TIPS FOR SAVING WATER

When in Drought or Not – Please Do Your Part!



OUTDOOR WATER USE



1 LIMIT LAWN WATERING, ESPECIALLY DURING A DROUGHT¹

Lawns naturally go dormant during dry conditions. They’ll revive when conditions improve.

- If you are in a region at Drought Level 3, **Critical Drought** (Severe Drought Conditions) or Drought Level 4, **Emergency Drought**: Do not water your lawn.
- If you are in a region at Drought Level 2, **Significant Drought** (Moderate to Severe Drought): Limit watering to hand-held only or drip irrigation. Water after 5PM or before 9AM to avoid evaporative losses.
- If you are in a region at Drought Level 1, **Mild Drought** (Abnormally Dry Conditions): Limit watering to 1 day per week at most. Water after 5PM or before 9AM.



2 MINIMIZE LANDSCAPE WATER NEEDS THROUGH WATER-SMART LANDSCAPING PRINCIPLES²

- Maintain healthy soils (a minimum of 6-inches in depth, where possible).
- Choose native plants or plants and turf that need less water.
- Use mulch to reduce evaporation and moderate soil temperature.
- Leave grass clippings on lawn to shade and return nutrients to soil.



3 MINIMIZE YOUR USE OF WATER OUTDOORS

- Sweep driveways, walks, patios, and other outdoor areas with a broom rather than hosing them off.
- Wash vehicles using a bucket and sponge, employing a hose with a shut-off nozzle for rinse only, or, if available, use a commercial car wash that recycles water (most do).
- Cover swimming pools when not in use to prevent evaporation.

¹ Certain water uses are not subject to mandatory restrictions, such as water used: for health or safety reasons; for the production of food and fiber; for the maintenance of livestock; to meet the core functions of a business (for example, irrigation by plant nurseries as necessary to maintain stock).

² Adapted from Water-Smart Landscapes Start with WaterSense (EPA WaterSense)

To check your drought region and status go to:
mass.gov/ma-drought-management



mass.gov/conservEMAwater

Motor Boat Safety Reminders...

The following types of operation are extremely unsafe and are prohibited:

- Operating any vessel under the influence of alcohol or drugs. blood alcohol concentration of .08 BAC is the current standard of intoxication in Massachusetts. Penalties have increased substantially and may include the loss of a motor vehicle driver's license.
- Operating a motorboat within 150 feet of a swimming area, whether public or private.
- Operating at an excessive speed considering weather conditions, boat traffic, and other hazards. For inland waters, operating at a speed greater than 45 mph is considered negligent operation.
Posted speed for Wequaquet Lake is 35 mph.
- Operating a motorboat without properly working lights.
- Operating a motorboat during the nighttime while towing waterskiers, tubers, etc.
- Operating at greater than headway speed (6 mph or less) within 150 feet of a swimmer, waterskier, mooring area, marina, boat launch, or when the operator's vision is obscured in any way.
- Operating in an overloaded condition (carrying total weight that exceeds capacity plate recommendations or is excessive considering water conditions)
- Operating with passengers on the bow, gunwales, or any other place where there may be a chance of falling overboard.

From the Massachusetts Boating Law Summary (Mass.gov)

Helpful Contacts for Water Status, Sewer Updates, and More...

APCC: site offers an "alert" tab for persons wishing to know the status of water bodies tested by APCC. Go to APCC. Org, and provide your email address for these messages. The Association to Preserve Cape Cod creates an interactive map that shows Cyanobacteria test results for over 22 Cape waterways. The map is found at APCC.org•

The APCC site suggests that if you notice scum or discolored water that has a strong odor, avoid contact and notify the health department. Also, a photo of the water can be sent to; cyano@apcc.org. Note location, day, and time that photo was taken.

CWMP Questions: In addition to the Town of Barnstable Water Resource comprehensive newsletter updates, Paul Ruzsala, senior project manager, has provided a phone number and website for answers to questions concerning the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plans. His number is 508-790-6400. Mr. Ruzsala's email address is: paul.ruzsala@town.Barnstable.ma.us •

Rachel Lake, Mass Outreach Manager for the Park City Wind Project writes that Ground Penetrating Radar work is being conducted from a slow moving vehicle with a cargo rack. The vehicles will move along Craigville Road and a section of Shootflying Hill Road. This work will not require digging or road closures. The GPR work provides information to both the wind project and the sewer project.

Non Emergency Police

To report unsafe boating, excessive noise or other non emergency lake issues call: **508-775-0812**. Be sure to request a docket number.

WLPA Website: wequaquetlake.com



The long rowing crafts used by the Cape Cod Rowing Club are called "shells." The club offers lessons in both sculling (rowers use two oars) and sweep (rower uses a single oar) rowing techniques.

Photo from Cape Cod Rowing website.

General Rowing Policies for Cape Cod Rowing Club

- Use the buddy system. Cape Cod Rowing strongly recommends rowing with another person. It is best to have a minimum of TWO people out at once to look out for one another.
- Stay visible. You are low to the water in a very narrow boat – lights, high visibility shirts and hats are the best way to make sure others see you.
- Follow the traffic pattern. This helps others anticipate where you will be. Remember, directly ahead of you is your biggest blind spot.
- Watch out for others. Look out for swimmers, other boats, fishermen.
- Bring a cell phone in a waterproof bag if you are in a 1x or 2x. Coxswains must have a cell phone for emergency communication in sweep boats.
- Stay with the boat. If you flip, do not swim for shore. Stay with the boat and either try to get back in or push it to shallow water or call for help
- We recommend that all singles scullers wear a personal flotation device or have one attached to their person while rowing.

Safety Policies taken from Cape Cod Rowing Website



April 22 nd ("Earth Day") members from the Cape Cod Rowing Club did clean up work on the area of Wequaquet Town Beach where they store boats and give rowing lessons. Lessons begin in May and run through October.

Photo Gale Klun



SAFEGUARDING YOUR PETS

The Indian Ponds 2023 Winter Newsletter contains advice for protecting pets from the Eastern Coyote, foxes and other predatory animals living near lakes and woodlands on Cape Cod. The piece, written by Wendy Berwirth and Marty Woods was inspired by the tragic loss of a ten pound Papillion named Bitsy. The dog was seen to be 'snatched' by a coyote. The following "Lessons" were learned from the incident.

Lessons from Bitsy

1. Be aware that changes in our environment affect wildlife as well as humans. The drought changed the Indian Ponds environment. One can now walk around the entire shoreline of both Mystic and Middle Pond. Coyotes, foxes, and fisher cats can as well expand their hunting range.
2. When you take your dog out after dark, keep them safe by taking a few minutes to prepare:
 - Be shoed and dressed to be able to run if needed
 - Have a good flashlight. Coyotes don't like flashlights with the strobe feature.
 - At night, turn on outside lights and flicker them for a few seconds to get attention of any unwanted creatures.
 - Go out alone first and make loud noises.
 - If you do see a coyote, harass or haze them by using your body language to communicate that you are the dominant individual.
3. DO NOT FEED OR LEAVE PET FOOD OUTDOORS.
4. DO NOT APPROACH OR TRY TO PET. Although coyotes don't pose an imminent threat to humans, do not provoke them by coming too close.
5. SECURE YOUR GARBAGE.
6. DO NOT FEED WILD BIRDS UNLESS YOU CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR FEEDER.
7. SECURE YOUR PETS. Coyotes and foxes view pets as potential food items.
8. CLOSE OFF CRAWL SPACES UNDER PORCHES AND SHEDS. Coyotes use these areas for resting and raising their young.
9. CUT BACK BRUSHY EDGES IN YOUR YARD. These areas provide cover for coyotes and their prey.
10. PET FENCES should be at least 5 feet tall (you can buy extensions to add to existing fencing. Check to be sure they can not dig underneath.

Wendy Bierwith and Marty Roberts

INTERVIEW WITH A MUSKRAT with Avhi Spindell (WLPA)

Last spring and summer, crepuscular lakeside sightings frequently included muskrats swimming laps to and from the shore.

Yet, according to the MassWildlife website, "Unless you take the time to look for them, you could probably go a lifetime without ever knowing that muskrats exist".

What was up with these gym rats, diving and returning to their burrows with vegetation and food?

So, WLPA decided to talk with one of our local ondatra zibethicus to get some answers directly from the 'muskrat's mouth'.

WLPA: So, how would you describe yourself? Wildlife creature, lake dweller, seasonal visitor?

MUSKRAT: Like many of you, we're here year-round. But you see more of us during warmer months. In the snow, our tracks are easy to identify because we drag our long tails.

WLPA: Speaking of tails, are you considered a large rat?

MUSKRAT: Who told you that? Well, it's true, we do have a bit of an identity problem. No, we are not rats and we are not beavers. We're rodents. More closely related to a vole.

WLPA: So, you like it here in the lake and marshes?

MUSKRAT: You saw for yourself; last season was booming. We don't just sit around. Our women produce litters of 5-10 kits two or three times a year. Our population cycles dramatically go up and down over a 10-year period. Last year, we set up residences around the entire lake. My cousin created a choice dwelling in the southern part of the cranberry bog.

WLPA: Some scientists say you are monogamous, some say not. **MUSKRAT:** Back off. Too personal. But yes, March to April we party!

WLPA: Noted. You are great swimmers and divers.

MUSKRAT: We are equipped. Our 8-10-inch scaly tails help us balance and rudder. Our back webbed feet power us in the water. Get this, we have ears and nostrils that close automatically when underwater. We have a lip structure that allows us to bite and chew while submerged without getting a mouthful of water. And because we're less sensitive to the buildup of carbon dioxide in our blood, we can stay submerged for 15 minutes or more.

WLPA: Why Wequaquet?

MUSKRAT: C'mon! Wequaquet is the best! Just look at the food; lake to den dining. Although mostly vegetarian, we do love mussels, frogs, crayfish, small turtles, and the occasional happy hour insect.

WLPA: The good life, huh?

MUSKRAT: Mostly. You pay taxes, we've got hostile neighbors. Watch out for eagles, raccoons, foxes, otters, snapping turtles and coyotes or you'll end up on the menu. Best to keep a low profile.

WLPA: I must shoot straight and say there have been reports of damage to people's boats, shoreline burrows that caused damage to the surrounding areas, and even a report of an absconded family cat.

MUSKRAT: With all due respect, check with your police department. No community is without troublemakers.

WLPA: Anything you would like to add?

MUSKRAT: The lake water was in good health last season. Seems you humans are finally getting a clue. Don't fertilize near the water, keep your septic tanks maintained, and slow down when boating.

WLPA: Good advice.

MUSKRAT: You know, it takes a village. We're all in this together.



Increased muskrat sightings were reported last year by Lakesiders. There is debate about how to address this increase. Pictured above is a swimming muskrat photo image from the Concord Monitor website.