



# Newsletter

Early Summer 2019

HPWA is a 501(c)3 Charitable Organization

Volume 10, Issue 3

## Directors

Don Williams, President  
Phil Angell, Vice President  
John Foye, Treasurer  
Peg Burke, Secretary  
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Lee Pulis, Education Committee  
Paula Kuketz, Water Safety Committee  
Martha Sheldon, Membership Committee  
Geri Williams, Newsletter Editor

Don Williams and Jack Kedian, Water Quality Committee Co-Chairs

Jerry Levine, Invasive Species Committee

Ramona Krogman, Government Liaison

Patrice O'Connor  
Board Member-at-large

## Website

[www.TheHerringPondsWatershed.org](http://www.TheHerringPondsWatershed.org)

## Upcoming Events

**June 30, 2pm HPWA General Meeting**  
Wildlands Trust Barn.  
Video/slide presentation and talk by Ivan Mikolji with photos he has taken in the watershed.

**August 3, 3-6pm HPWA Annual Picnic**  
Weston Bog 173 Herring Pond Rd.  
Bring some food to share.  
Rain date: Sunday, Aug.4

**August 19, 7pm HPWA Annual Meeting**  
Little Red School House.  
Presentation by Capt. Michael Burns of MMA on their small tanker training program. Election of officers and time to mix with refreshments.

## President's Message

**Don Williams, President**

**Q.** "I don't live right on a pond. Why should I get involved in a watershed association?"

**A.** Quite simply, it's the water. It's not just for fishing, boating or swimming. The Plymouth Carver Sole Source Aquifer replenishes our ponds' water and also provides each of us with the water we drink. This aquifer covers 140 square miles, serves 7 towns and contains over 500 billion gallons of water.

**Q.** "So, with that much water, my water supply is pretty secure, right?"

**A.** Well, that really depends on how well those of us within the 140 square miles treat our ponds and our land-based recharge area. We depend on the aquifer and the aquifer depends on us. While the quantity of the water is important, we must be aware that quality is also threatened by human impact.

**Q.** "Are we in imminent danger at present?"

**A.** Not really, but it is best not to let the situation become critical before taking action. Once the aquifer is polluted and undrinkable, it is time consuming and prohibitively expensive to clean up. "Sole source aquifer" means just that – it is our only readily available source of water. Now is the time to correct some of our harmful habits *before* it's too late.

**Q.** "Are there some things that I can do to help keep the aquifer full and clean?"

**A.** I'm glad you asked! You can:

- Conserve water whenever possible
- Prevent harmful runoff into ponds and rivers by not clear cutting slopes to the water
- Avoid adding anything to your property that you wouldn't want in your drinking water
- Pump your septic tank every 3 – 5 years

**Q.** "Anything else?"

**A.** There are several ways that individuals can help:

- Contribute to HPWA (our membership drive is underway!)
- If you can't make a contribution: get involved in HPWA, join one of our committees (education, water quality, safety, government liaison, invasive species, newsletter/programs and membership); we will welcome you!
- Attend our public programs and learn more about the unique area where we live

**Q.** "What will HPWA do with my contribution?"

**A.** HPWA is an all-volunteer organization. Each dollar is used for monitoring, protecting and educating. We are paying for much of our water testing. We would like to hire a consultant to conduct a Watershed Management Plan. We helped Plymouth acquire the Alpert Preserve to prevent overdevelopment between Little Herring Pond and Triangle Pond; we intend to continue leveraging our dollars to conserve land in our watershed recharge area. Come help out!



*Sampling of folk art crafts that will be available for purchase at the HPWA Shed Faire 2019, in addition to a rain barrel, canoe, flat screen TV, bird feeders and houses, field guides, original paintings, telescope, garden plants, milkweed seedlings, and all manner of household goods and recreational gear.*

## Education Committee News

by Lee Pulis, Education Committee

**HPWA's second ever Water-"Shed Faire"** is only a few weeks away on Saturday, July 13, 9AM – 3PM at the Cedarville Fire Station! This project is a genuine service to members as well as a project fundraiser. You can clear out your tired and worn items, reclaim your storage spaces, and pass on to others your used but still usable household and recreational items. Boating, fishing, gardening, biking, riding, hiking, bird feeding, photography, and wildlife guides, art, crafts, and gear, as well as anything else salable will be accepted. Funds raised from happy purchasers will go to support HPWA's 2019 area youth camperships initiative. This summer we are providing \$500 to each of three youth camps to support youth experiences in our globally rare Atlantic Coastal Pine Barrens ecoregion: Camps Bournedale, Clark, and Hedges Pond.

**How to participate and help?** Your Board of Directors is busy handling the many tasks involved (signage, storage and transport, publicity, displays, pricing, set-up, crafting, potting transplants, etc.) and will appreciate every member possible either donating items, bringing cash or checks on June 30 to shop for bargains you can reuse or repurpose, or just stopping by to chat. Email Phil Angell [angell\\_phil@yahoo.com](mailto:angell_phil@yahoo.com) or call (781) 775-5132 to arrange for dropping off your items for interim storage, or email Lee Pulis ([lee@theherringpondswatershed.org](mailto:lee@theherringpondswatershed.org)) with questions or to volunteer to help.



## Water Quality

by Don Williams, Water Quality Committee Co-Chair

We are all looking forward for the start of summer (and especially summer temperatures and sun!) in the Herring Ponds Watershed. Our intrepid crew of water samplers (Co-Chair Jack Kedian, Joe Solimini, Bob McDonald, Carol Morley, Jim Smith and Jerry Levine) monitors GHP swimming sites for E. coli and tracks pond clarity and dissolved oxygen levels.

You may have noticed the recent algae blooms. These are most likely the result of runoff from heavy rains in April and May. All the more reason to focus on remediating runoff sites. We further encourage homeowners not to clear cut vegetation down to ponds and to limit the use of fertilizers and pesticides. We need your help to maintain water quality. Here are some easy ways that you can keep our watershed clean:

- Clean up after your animals
- Don't pour any chemicals or waste into storm drains
- Wash your car on your lawn rather than on your impervious driveway, better yet bring it to a carwash

- Don't disturb the plants growing in the shallow water; they provide oxygen needed by fish and mussels
- Report any blue-tinged pond blooms (possibly cyanobacteria) to Don at [donald\\_r\\_williams2003@yahoo.com](mailto:donald_r_williams2003@yahoo.com)
- Be careful not to spill gas if you fill your docked boat; a small amount of gas pollutes a large amount of water
- Don't throw yard waste into the ponds
- Plant trees, shrubs, flowers along your shoreline; the roots of these plants prevent runoff containing pollutants from reaching the ponds

Be safe, have fun and enjoy the summer!



## A Videographer's Tour of the Herring Ponds

Join us on June 30<sup>th</sup> at 2pm for a unique program with Ivan Mikolji, a world-renowned river explorer, researcher, and audio/visual artist who documents the magnificent diversity and beauty of aquatic habitats. His dramatic underwater videos are seen around the world, and his photographs have graced articles in numerous publications. For the past several years Ivan, a Venezuelan citizen, has been documenting the fish and wildlife in and around the Herring Ponds during visits to family. On Sunday, Ivan will present his photographs and stunning underwater videos of Great and Little Herring Ponds. Here is a link to a two minute promo video for Ivan's program: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=GkoiC-HKxcE>. This program is presented by HPWA in partnership with Wildlands Trust at their Conservation Barn at 675 Long Pond Rd in Plymouth. The program is free, however due to limited seating please register at: <https://tinyurl.com/y66453mr>

## Review of Gardening Using Native Plants Program

By Patrice O'Connor

Michael Talbot of Environmental Landscape Consultants recently gave a presentation to HPWA and Wildlands Trust members on landscaping using native plants. An expert in his field, Mr. Talbot spoke about the importance of using native species and a system his company calls "Naturescaping". This approach works by using the natural character of the land and arranges native plants in a way similar to their arrangement in nature.

He suggested using the following techniques as a guide:

Design plantings using plants that are generally adapted to the same soils, pests and weather conditions.

Biodiversity is an essential part of most thriving ecosystems. A variety of plantings will create a more interesting landscape and attract a diversity of wildlife. To enhance diversity, create woodland, shrubland, meadow and wetland habitats wherever feasible.

Edge environments, areas where two habitats meet, are the most productive and diversified environments in nature. These areas can be created by weaving different habitats and plantings among each other. These habitats will attract a variety of beneficial animals to our landscapes.

Choose native plants, most need fewer inputs. Use low maintenance, drought, stress and pest resistant plantings. Reduce or eliminate high maintenance irrigated lawn. Unfortunately, the largest cultivated crop in the United States is turf, approximately 40 million acres.

Design your landscape to enhance its natural ability to keep pests in balance. Including beneficial insects, mites, birds and spiders provides natural pest control. Most importantly, conserve beneficial organisms by reducing or eliminating broad spectrum pesticides and fungicides.

Water is very important to attract and support beneficial organisms. If you can't create a water feature, install a birdbath.

Include edible plants as part of your design, put up a pergola and grow grapes.

Persimmons, hazelnuts and blueberries are other delicious choices.

These efforts can become part of the restoration process to help mitigate the adverse effects of excess lawn fertilizer, over development and the loss of wildlife habitat in our area.

You can read lots more in the handouts Michael provided by going to <https://tinyurl.com/y2rm8w2c> Michael can be reached at [info@TalbotEcoLandCare.com](mailto:info@TalbotEcoLandCare.com)

## Birds in our Watershed

by Brian Harrington, Bird Biologist

In late June, the birdlife in the uplands of our watershed is representative of those that nest in pitch pine/scrub oak habitats. Indeed, our [pine barrens](#) represent a globally rare ecosystem that is found only in sections of New Jersey and Massachusetts. In Massachusetts, this pitch pine/scrub oak community is in Plymouth, Cape Cod and the Islands.



*Prairie Warbler*

During the nesting season our ecosystem is notable for its healthy populations of Hermit Thrush, whose pensive, flute-like [songs](#) echo through the mature wooded areas, along with songs of the chunky [Ovenbird](#) and Pine Warbler. In less mature areas of our "barrens", we formerly had some of the highest known densities of [Eastern Whip-poor-will](#), which have become scarce during the last 20 years. Just recently Martha and I found a southern counterpart, the [Chuck-will's-widow](#), in south Plymouth. Our pine barrens used to experience fires fairly often. The re-growing pitch pine/scrub oak habitat was home to some of the highest densities of Prairie Warbler (actually scarce in true prairie!), along with lots of towhees and yellowthroats. With new fire-fighting technologies, uncontrolled fires are now

scarce and most of our pinelands are becoming quite mature. Suburban sprawl also has removed habitats once home to our specialized pineland birdlife. In their place, birds like robins and cardinals, have moved into our yards. By mid-July the nesting season will be largely over. Birds like the Prairie Warbler will begin heading for their winter grounds in the Caribbean and Central America, while the towhees, yellowthroats, and most of the pine warblers and hermit thrushes will go to the southeastern areas of the US.

## Save the Date for Our Annual Picnic - August 3<sup>rd</sup>

by Phil Angell, Vice President

Here at HPWA we have about a half dozen public events per year. However our most popular event is probably the Annual Picnic. It might be because of the food. We always have a stunning selection of food prepared by our attendees. It could be the setting too. We have visitors arriving by both land and water. With a beautiful sandy beach, a dock, tables and chairs in the sun or in the shade, its hard not to find a good perch. But I'll bet it's the camaraderie. Some of us don't see each other except once per year and always there are some new friends that we meet at the event. We hope that you will decide to join us for the Annual Picnic, always on the first Saturday in August, Sunday rain date. Stay tuned for more info or contact Phil Angell 781 775-5132 or [angell\\_phil@yahoo.com](mailto:angell_phil@yahoo.com)

## Membership Note

by Martha Sheldon, Chair

I want to thank all the members who have sent in their dues this year in response to our annual dues letter. Many of you are long-time supporters who have helped us accomplish so much. Dues of less than \$25K contributed over 10 years have provided leverage, through grants, donations and CPC purchases, for \$1.2M in watershed improvement. We are all busy, and if our letter to you got set aside, we hope you will retrieve the envelope and return it to us. Thanks, everyone!

## Water Safety Committee

by Paula Kuketz

It's summer and the boating activity on Great Herring Pond is increasing. We want every one to be safe and enjoy the fun. In Mass over the last 10 years, 85% of the victims who died in boating accidents did not use life jackets. Many of these deaths would have been prevented if a life jacket had been worn.

### Always wear your life jacket!

[Plymouth bylaw 134-3](#) states: on Great Herring Pond motorboats are restricted to headway speed between the hours of sunset or 7:30 p.m. whichever comes first, and 9:00 a.m. seven days a week. Headway speed is defined as six miles per hour.

SAFETY IT'S THE LAW!

## Monarchs and Me

by Teri Kreitzer



*Very hungry caterpillars! Monarch caterpillars have 6 pairs of eyes but have very poor vision. They are guided by their antennae.*

I grew up in central Wisconsin and the monarch butterfly was an expected presence in the summer landscape. Milkweed, the monarch host plant, grew at the end of my street, and for a couple years I had some caterpillars as "pets." School and jobs brought me to Boston, then Plymouth, for the next 20 years I didn't give the monarch much thought. I didn't know that during this time the monarch population declined by 95% and was under consideration for endangered species protection. Glyphosate (Roundup®)-resistant crops were now the norm, and milkweed that once grew between rows of crops throughout the Midwest, providing monarch habitat, was now gone. But wait, I had milkweed in my backyard.

The silver lining to Eversource cutting trees between my backyard and the power lines was the opening it created for milkweed to grow. Year after year I expected to see monarch caterpillars but was always disappointed. Last August, after seeing a Facebook post by Lee Pulis regarding his monarch-raising efforts, I went looking for eggs on my milkweed. I found eggs, lots of eggs, and so began my monarch-raising efforts.

A female monarch will lay around 500 eggs but less than 5% will become butterflies. Eggs and caterpillars are easy prey. Eggs are eaten by other insects; flies and wasps parasitize caterpillars. Birds will eat monarch caterpillars, once. The characteristic milky sap in milkweed contains compounds called cardenolides that are ingested by caterpillars and passed on to butterflies. The compounds are toxic to most vertebrates. It's important to wash your hands after handling milkweed or wear gloves. Sap can be irritating to skin and dangerous if it gets in the eye.

There are two populations of monarchs – eastern and western, with the Rocky Mountains as the divider. Last year eastern monarchs had a very good year with the best population in a decade, just above the projected threshold of migratory collapse. Eastern monarchs migrate to overwinter in Mexico and the population is estimated from overhead photographs of the occupied area. Western monarchs migrate to groves of Eucalyptus trees along the coast of California. Sadly, last year the western monarch population plunged 86%, making their future very precarious.

**Raising monarchs** provides protection from predators to increase survival rate. Here's some photos from this fascinating and addictive hobby.



*Caterpillar hanging in a "J"*



*Butterflies eclose (not hatch) from their chrysalis. The wings are initially wrinkled, and the body is full of fluid; the butterfly hangs and pumps the fluid from the body into the wings. It's critical the butterfly have an unobstructed place to hang – if not, the wings will not straighten properly, and the butterfly won't be able to fly.*

Anyone wishing to learn more or participate in raising monarchs this season, contact me at [tpekol@hotmail.com](mailto:tpekol@hotmail.com)

## Invasive Species Committee

by Jerry Levine, Chair

HPWA will be sampling with Sara Grady for invasive aquatic plants in both Herring Ponds later in the summer when the plants are growing.

Invasive species often are introduced in ponds by remaining on boat trailers, propellers, fishing gear, in bilge, or bait buckets. So stop aquatic hitchhikers by cleaning all boat and recreational equipment thoroughly.

This summer we have the opportunity to work with another Rising Tide Charter Public School student intern, Ceci Segnatelli, a rising sophomore. She will do a data search on the 11 ponds within the Herring Pond Watershed, searching various websites to collect information of value for ACEC stewardship.

If you are interested in being involved with the Invasive Species committee, please contact me: [Jersail123@gmail.com](mailto:Jersail123@gmail.com)

**Our Secretary is retiring and we are in need of a Secretary.** The position is 2 years, and the duties are not difficult. For questions, please contact our nominating committee at: [Martha.sheldon205@gmail.com](mailto:Martha.sheldon205@gmail.com)