



WEST HARBOR POND WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of the West Harbor Pond Watershed Association April 25, 2024, 7:00 pm

Board Members Present: Will Anderson, Merritt Blakeslee, Michael Breen, Valerie Breen, and Dave MacFarland.

Visitors, Sue and Alan Harris

Merritt Blakeslee, the President, opened the meeting and asked for and received approval for the minutes of the January 31, 2024 Board of Directors meeting.

A. Treasurer's Report

Valerie Breen, Treasurer, reported that our bank balance is presently \$11,673.05, with unpaid obligations of \$560 for consulting fees for Rebecca Jacobs and \$54.84 for new ball valves for the siphon.

B. Membership report, including preparation of list of abutters

Merritt reported on behalf of Judy Kildow, the Secretary, that the WHPWA's membership now stands at 43 families. There was discussion of Judy's earlier proposal to knock on the doors of those non-members with waterfront property to encourage them to become members. Merritt will compile the appropriate list.

C. New general liability insurance policy

The BoD previously approved payment of the annual premium of \$618 for our new CGL policy.

However, unlike our previous policy, this CGL policy does not insure against the loss of our \$2,000 YSI meter. To insure the YSI meter, we would need a second policy at \$350 per year with \$250 deductible.

After discussion, the BoD voted unanimously not to purchase a policy covering the meter. Merritt will investigate whether the meter can be covered under his homeowner's policy.

D. Status of siphon repair (Merritt) and saltwater intrusion (Mike).

Since the siphon stopped operating sometime around the January 13th storm, two divers who had promised to examine the siphon have let us down.

On Monday, April 22nd, Nick DeGemmis and David Pratt of the Boothbay Harbor Sewer District spent about three hours using the department's water jetter in an unsuccessful attempt to clear the siphon.

On April 27 or 28, a third diver, Tim Pinkham, will make an underwater evaluation of the siphon.

The BoD authorized payment to Mr. Pinkham of up to \$900 without further approval from the BoD.

Addition: On April 28th, Mr. Pinkham successfully cleared the blockage in the intake that was preventing the siphon from operating. He charged the WHPWA only \$150. He recommended that we purchase a pressure gauge (\$200) that will tell us whether the siphon is working or not.

Mr. Pinkham also found that the elbow at the intake and the elbow at the outfall, which were intended to point upwards, were lying on their side, and probably have been since they were installed. The WHPWA has decided to attach another elbow – oriented upwards – to each existing elbow to discourage further blockage.

E. 319 grant to remediate NPS pollution

Maggie Fairbrother has done further investigation into the requirements for applying for a federal 319 grant to remediate non-point-source erosion around the Pond and has been advised that the WHPWA will need to conduct a new watershed survey before applying for such a grant.

F. Mountain View Road erosion

On March 13, 2024, Merritt met with Rebecca Jacobs to examine the erosion on Mt. View Road that flows directly into the pond right at the point where we had the large bloom of pond grass last summer. Rebecca is a project manager with the Knox-Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District. (This is a part-time position, and Rebecca has just been hired, also part-time, to take Sue Mello's place as the natural resources manager with the Boothbay Region Water District. She will keep her position at Knox-Lincoln. In other words, we will be interacting with her regularly in the future.) She participated in the WHPWA's 2018 watershed survey.

Rebecca has prepared a report and proposal for remediation. She has now sent us the report and an invoice for \$560. The BoD approved payment of this invoice

Rebecca proposes to write a grant application to cover the remediation work. Her estimated cost to prepare an MOHF grant submission is between \$1,120 - \$1,680 and would be submitted by August 20th.

The BoD agreed that we should approach the Mt. View HOA about splitting the costs, including Rebecca's cost for preparing the report, her cost for preparing the grant application, and any costs (particularly matching costs) associated with the remediation.

Merritt agreed to find answers to the following questions:

- Would the grant cover 100% of the cost of the remediation or would there be a matching requirement?
- If there were a matching requirement, could that be met with in-kind volunteer hours or only in cash?
- What is the estimated cost of the remediation?
- Could the BBH Department of Public Works carry out the remediation work on the west side of Lakeside Drive?

Once he has these answers, he will approach the Mt. View HOA about cost-sharing.

G. Water column testing, including calibrating our DO meter

Merritt reported that the Lake Stewards of Maine calibrated our meter for DO on 4/11/24 as part of their state-wide support of local water quality monitoring. Merritt and Dave carried out the first water column testing of the season on April 14th. Because the siphon has been inoperative since mid-January, salinity was high and oxygenation abnormally low.

H. Expanding the present testing regimen

Merritt laid out a proposal to expand the present water quality testing regimen. Currently the WHPWA tests monthly (from April to November) for water temperature, oxygenation, salinity, and, through Secchi disk testing, for transparency.

Here are his recommendations for additional testing:

a) Testing for Total Phosphorus (TP)

Total Phosphorus testing shows whether erosion exists that is carrying nutrients, including phosphorus, into the pond, feeding vegetative growth and diminishing water quality. Such testing is expensive (\$45/test). The BoD adopted Merritt's proposal to reserve TP testing

for episodic spot testing of apparent trouble spots. At present, the WHPWA will not try to compile comprehensive baseline data on TO.

b) Testing for chlorophyll a

Chlorophyll a is an indicator of the amount of vegetative growth in the pond and, as such, a secondary indicator of NPS erosion and failing septic systems. Although Bigelow has offered to conduct the testing at a low cost, their conditions – particularly freezing samples and conducting the testing only at the end of the season – lessened the value of the data obtained. For this reason, the BoD adopted Merritt’s proposal to reserve chlorophyll a testing for episodic spot testing of apparent trouble spots. At present, the WHPWA will not try to compile comprehensive baseline data on chlorophyll a.

c) Testing for cyanotoxins

At present, Bigelow and the Boothbay Region Water District are systematically testing for cyanotoxins on Adams and Knickerbocker Lakes. Peter Countway of Bigelow explained to Merritt and Judy that the species of cyanobacteria (an algae) present in these two lakes does not have the genetic capability to produce cyanotoxins, such as those present in China Lake and in certain bodies of water in Portland and South Portland. He also emphasized that cyanotoxin-producing cyanobacteria could appear on the Boothbay Peninsula, carried from another lake.

The BoD adopted Merritt’s recommendation that the WHPWA not attempt to test for cyanotoxins at present since the WHPWA will be promptly informed if cyanotoxins are detected in the two neighboring lakes.

d) Fecal coliform testing

Merritt proposed to resume the WHPWA’s moribund fecal coliform testing and circulated a spreadsheet showing the results of the WHPWA’s monitoring for FC between 2010 to 2014 and again in 2017. This monitoring showed occasional levels of FC that were concerning including five months with an extraordinarily high FC average, and three months (September 2013, July 2014, and September 2017) where the FC count was elevated at every testing station, as though the entire pond was a cesspool.

He proposed to use 7 or 8 sampling stations and to sample three to four times during the season. In addition, any time we have an inkling that a property may have a faulty septic system, we should take a sample in front of that property.

If we collect data that raises questions (for example, is this high reading an indication of a failing septic system?), we can pay Bigelow to do eDNA testing on particular samples to determine whether the FC is of human or animal origin.

The Boothbay Harbor Sewer District has agreed to conduct the testing for us at no charge if we buy the test kits. The cost would depend on how much testing we do.

Testing only for fecal coliform	Colilert test kit	\$12.20
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Testing for fecal coliform and e coli	Collecting vessels	\$1.07
	Quanti Tray	\$3.29
Total per test		\$16.56
Times 8 stations		\$132.48
Times, say, 4 collections per season		\$529.92
Plus, say, 6 additional samples		\$99.36
Total for the season		\$629.28

The BoD approved the purchase of equipment for the first season in the amount of \$787 and the initiation of this testing program. The rationale for FC testing is that it can identify a problem – a faulty septic field – that is within the WHPWA’s ability to correct.

In addition, the BoD agreed to make the dock of Sue and Al Harris an additional FC testing station after the Harrises offered a generous donation to cover the additional cost.

I. Participation by board and association members in LSM workshops

Merritt strongly urged the membership of the WHPWA to educate themselves on water quality issues by using the resources available through the Lake Stewards of Maine at <https://www.lakestewardsofmaine.org/resources>.

J. Planning for the Annual Meeting

The BoD adopted Sue Harris’ proposal that we have an outside speaker address our annual meeting. Possible speakers include Rachel Sipler or Pete Countway of Bigelow and Rebecca Jacobson (see above).

K. Repairing water gauge at box culvert

David and Merritt will reattach the water gauge at the box culvert that was partially detached during one of the December or January storms.

L. Middle Road subdivision

Merritt reported that the subdivision on the west side of Middle Road, which has been dormant for two years, may be getting ready to resume development.

M. Development of the Beach Cove Hotel property

Merritt reported that the Planning Board has been asked to approved the subdividing of the property of the former Beach Cove Hotel into four lots.

N. Fishing Derby

The WHPWA will firm up plans with Michael Bujnowski for a fishing derby this year.