



Foundry Pond Dam: Remove or Repair

CHARLES WILLSE

Our Annual Meeting in April was well attended, as a presentation on the future of the Foundry Pond dam drew an attentive crowd to the Hingham Public Library.

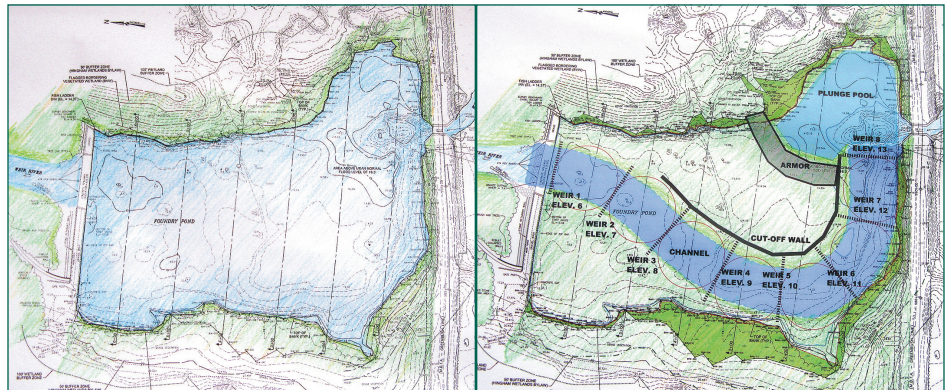
The meeting began with the election of new HLCT Board officers and trustees. We honored our former president, Kathy Reardon, for her many years of dedicated service and tireless leadership with a commemorative gift. Fortunately, she will remain a member of the HLCT Board of Trustees.

Three terrific speakers summarized the process and beneficial aspects of removing the Foundry Pond dam, which was originally built in the early 1700s to provide water power to an iron foundry. Never used for flood control, the dam has no real function today; it has survived because of its scenic interest, although it negatively impacts the ecology of the Weir River.

Abby Piersall, Conservation Officer for the town of Hingham, reviewed recent Hingham Conservation Commission discussions of the Foundry Pond dam issues and possible solutions, including a preliminary technical evaluation of removing the dam and recreating a naturalized riverbank. This document is available on the Commission's website.



Above: The Weir River below the dam. Below: Drawings show Foundry Pond existing conditions (left) and with the dam removed and the Weir River restored (right).



Nick Wildman of the Commonwealth's Department of Ecological Restoration has successfully completed six dam removals in Massachusetts. The demolition of the Foundry Pond dam would restore the flow of the Weir

River intertidal area, improve water quality, and increase spawning areas for rainbow smelt, river herring, and the American eel. He provided an overview of the dam removal process
continued on page 2

The 2010 edition of the "Parklands for the Public" map is available at the library, the Conservation Commission and Town Clerk's offices, and by mail to members who request it on their HLCT donation envelope. Copies are on display in the Hingham Public Schools libraries and classrooms.



I was fortunate to attend the National Land Trust Alliance Conference in Providence, Rhode Island. In a day filled with seminars and discussions, I learned a great deal and received encouragement and camaraderie from hundreds of fellow Land Trust members who preserve land all across the country.

Two themes resonated with me from this experience. We need to improve the Trust's membership diversity by increasing the participation of Hingham's Generation X (ages 34-49) and Generation Y (ages 18-33) citizens. Effective outreach is needed for each generation to provide relevant volunteer opportunities. We currently provide our open space maps to all Hingham fifth graders and grant our \$500 Philip Swanson environmental studies scholarship to a Hingham High School senior, this year to Brendan Whitney. However, efforts for even broader age diversity will help to ensure the continued success of the HLCT, and to promote land conservation in general.



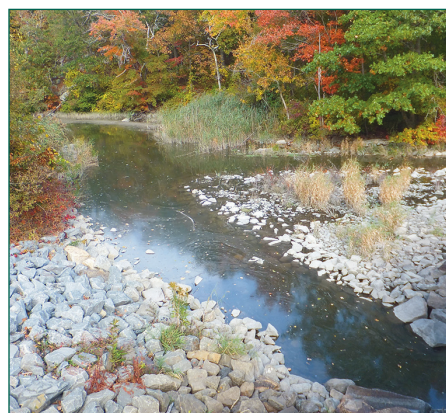
HLCT Board of Trustees: (l. to r.) Bob Courchesne, Monique Lehner, Martha Falvey, Charles Willse, Kathy Reardon, Skip Hull, Joe Bierwirth, Barbara Wollan, Don Kidston, Tony Kiernan

In addition, we should improve our base of volunteers to assist in stewardship of our properties and help in other ways with the operation of the Land Trust. This requires an active outreach program to find interested people. If you would like to assist us in any manner or have ideas to facilitate this, please email me at corkat350@gmail.com.

Speaking of volunteers, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of our retiring trustee and tireless Whortleberry Hollow steward, Bob Courchesne. We all miss his enthusiasm. Bob moved to New Hampshire to be close to his extended family. Fortunately, we have a new volunteer steward for Whortleberry, Nick Sowles, who has already participated in several trail cleanups. 🍀

Foundry Pond Dam, *cont'd. from page 1* including technical design and permitting issues, and potential state funding.

The main presentation, "Removal of Wapping Road Dam Brings Life Back to the Jones River", was delivered by Alex Mansfield, Ecology Program Director for the non-profit Jones River Watershed Association in Kingston. This case study of a nearby comparable project highlighted methods of obtaining neighborhood and community support. In 2011, site contractors completed the demolition and reconstruction in six weeks; an entertaining video depicted excavating equipment removing the dam in fast forward motion. Finally, we saw an underwater video taken the following spring that documented herring and eels



The Weir River below Foundry Pond dam after a drought.

returning upstream for the first time in 100 years, proving the project was an immediate environmental restoration success. The speakers received enthusiastic applause from the audience for their excellent presentation.

Weir River Environmental Forums

The HLCT is participating in the Weir River Environmental Forums, bringing together local environmental groups, Aquarion Water Company, and the interested public to learn about our common water resource and threats to its sustainability. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has declared the Weir River watershed a "highly stressed basin", as an average of 4.12 million gallons of water per day is consumed by Hingham, Hull, and parts of Norwell. The ongoing forums provide multiple viewpoints, and discuss methods to improve our watershed health. Please check our website for future forums. 🍀



Originally called Snappet Pond, meaning “rocky water” in the Assinippi language, Jacobs Pond was formed in 1730 by damming Norwell’s Third Herring Brook. It has 60 acres of water plus a large natural swamp around the stream headwaters. Our leader, Steve Ivas, pointed out that, like many shallow artificial ponds that are ideal for skating and ice fishing, Jacobs Pond is eutrofyng as the nutrients entering it foster the growth and decay of algae and plants that reduce oxygen in the water.

Our walk provided a rare opportunity to see a variety of habitats and plant communities. The pond is home to many fish and invertebrates: bass, pickerel, sunfish, turtles, snakes and eels which in turn attract hawks and eagles. Swans are a less welcome addition as they reduce the diversity of pond species. In wetter areas we saw sweet pepper bush, greenbriar (good habitat), red maple, and maleberry (*lyonia ligustrina*).

The upland areas included sassafras, pine, hay scented fern, striped wintergreen and American beech. American beeches emit a root chemical that discourages undergrowth, resulting in large single species groves thriving on well-drained banks (referred to by the incomparable Phil Swanson in his Hingham walks as “sons of beeches”). Several towering pines reminded us of “Kings’ Pines” which grew for 100-200 years and were reserved in colonial times for masts for the Royal Navy.

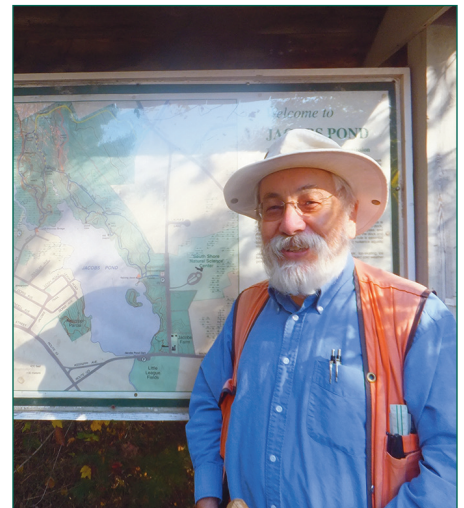
A rougher path crossed a boulder field, created by large glacial deposits from which the silt had washed away. Beyond, we reached an esker (a glacial ice channel that has filled with gravel) characterized by its steep banks and serpentine shape. Steve described other glacial features often seen in this area: tombolos (sandbars



Above: Jacobs Pond in autumn. Below right: Steve Ivas gives an overview of Jacobs Pond.

connecting a series of drumlins), and kettle holes (gravelly depressions left by melting glacial ice blocks often containing water in the bottom).

Our walk ended at a bridge over the Third Herring Brook where we could see the swamp surrounding the headwaters. Access to the pond for all has been enhanced by the creation of handicapped access and parking funded by Norwell’s CPA. Many thanks to Steve Ivas who has so graciously led many informative walks for us.



HLCT will be an active participant in the Town of Hingham’s development of a plan to evaluate the town’s existing trails, identify and prioritize potential trail connections, followed up by a plan for implementation. A better connected town-wide trail network offers the opportunity to improve community access to Hingham’s abundant scenic open space, including the harbor, rivers, ponds, woodlands and open fields.

The plan will be developed within the context of Hingham’s Master Plan and Hingham’s Open Space Plan. Abby Piersall, the Town’s Conservation Officer, will lead the project with the assistance of a project working group, outreach to broad community input and consulting services financed by \$49,000 of Community Preservation Act Funds. Study efforts are scheduled to start at the end of this year and be completed in the fall of 2015.

Why Join the Hingham Land Conservation Trust?

All contributions to HLCT are tax-deductible, including land and conservation easements. Your gifts contribute to the quality of life in Hingham now and for generations to come.

The HLCT conserves land to protect our water supply, wildlife habitats and freshwater ponds and streams, while preserving passive recreational uses. Your gifts fund mowing to preserve open meadows, surveys to define property boundaries and other essential organizational needs. Presently we own 65 acres and hold conservation restrictions on 40 acres in the town of Hingham.

The Trustees of the Hingham Land Conservation Trust invite your membership, participation and comments. Mail in the enclosed envelope or write to:

Hingham Land Conservation Trust
PO Box 10
Hingham, MA 02043

For information, call (781)749-0632
or go to www.hinghamlandtrust.org

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2013 Financial Summary

Income.....	\$ 14,294
Expenses	11,965
Net Income.....	2,329
Cash Assets.....	\$209,831



Wompatuck State Park: Pre-war History Tour

KATHY REARDON & DON KIDSTON

Wompatuck State Park, 3,526 acres of fields, forests, meadows and ponds in Hingham, Cohasset and Norwell, was the site of our Spring walk.

The Indian chief Josiah Wompatuck deeded the land to the colonists in 1655. During the 1800s, the local residents maintained woodlots to heat their homes and the farmers used the fields to graze livestock. Guided by Stephen Gammon, a park employee since 1974, we explored areas of historic settlement during the 19th and early 20th centuries, including the site of the Whitcomb Shop (a blacksmith) and remnants of the quarrying of "perfect granite" which was used in St. John's and St. Stephen's churches, and the site of the Marshall Grigsby Estate which lasted until 1940.

A planned subdivision gave way to WWII needs in 1941 when the U.S. Navy acquired the land to expand the existing Hingham Naval Ammunitions Depot. The last houses were gone by 1942. Long Bridge Lane was renamed Burma Road and the Old Shingle Mill was moved to the corner of Free and Lazell Street. An airstrip, railway and immense concrete bunkers were constructed. In 1963, the depot land was declared surplus and was given in stages to form Wompatuck State Park.

The final 125 acres are planned to open later this fall. The Department of Conservation and Recreation has already substantially completed demolition of 13 hazardous abandoned military industrial buildings in the north section of the park, allowing most of the new section to be opened to the general public. Now visitors can travel between the park and the Cohasset Rail Station on Rt. 3A by way of the 1.15 mile long Whitney



The old "perfect granite" quarry site.



Well on the old Grigsby Estate.

Spur Rail Trail which also provides bicycle commuter access to the rail station from Scituate, Norwell, Cohasset and Hingham. Visitors can also now enter Wompatuck from the south end of Leavitt Street.

Because this land, along with the Ammunition Depot on the Back River (now Bare Cove Park), was held out of development during the building boom of the 1940s and 50s, over 4,000 acres of forest and woods have been preserved for resource protection and recreation. Our thanks to Stephen Gammon for his long devotion to the park and to the Friends of Wompatuck who have donated their services over many years! 