

Indian Ponds Association Annual Report July 2023

We started this year with 5 new members, a nearly new slate of officers, a pending need for an alum treatment on Mystic Lake, and a threat of permanent helical piles being installed in Middle Pond. Our new members offered fresh new ideas with great energy and enthusiasm. We established a monthly meeting schedule for the third Monday of every month at 6:30 PM. All are welcome to join our meetings.

To address the needed alum treatment for Mystic Lake, we set up a committee to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to apply for funding under Barnstable County's ARPA \$5 million small and medium-sized project funding round. This proved to be a very challenging and eye-opening process. After successfully completing the Letter of Intent application process, we did not make it to the next round. We followed up with a meeting in October with the Town Manager, Mark Elles, Town Council President Matt Levesque, Counciller Paula Schnepf, and Public Works Director Dan Santos and Lake/Pond Project Manager Amber Unrue. Rather than making our case for the alum treatment, we asked what we needed to do as an organization to make it happen. We explained our ARPA Letter of Intent that we had submitted. This set the stage for our later success at the April 27th Town Council meeting.

To address the Helical Pile issue in Middle Pond, we launched a petition drive. Our goal was to have the Conservation Commission make their Guidelines for Fresh Water Docks into a regulation applicable to the Indian Ponds and any other Ponds in Barnstable for which such a regulation made sense. The second goal was to show wide spread objection to the application that was before the Mass Department of Environmental Protection Water Protection Program for approval. This petition drive highlighted the value in working directly with the several homeowner's associations within the IPA footprint. It also demonstrated the importance of having board members from each of the various neighborhoods around the ponds. We obtained 119 signatures and support from another 74 that did not want to sign due to privacy considerations. While the Conservation Commission rejected our request to codify their guidelines, the show of support did not fall on deaf ears. We need to continue to be a presence at the Conservation Commission's meetings. The petition had its desired effect with the MassDEP Water Protection Program, though they have not yet issued a ruling on the application, they did instruct the applicant to address our concerns by July 8th otherwise they would act without the benefit of a rebuttal to our concerns. The July 8th deadline has passed with no word from the applicant. This effort demonstrated the importance of numbers and that we need to have a presence within each of the neighborhoods various organizations within the IPA footprint.

The board decided to embark on an internship program with another like minded organization to assist a young person to get physically involved in caring for the ponds and at the same time the ponds

benefit from the intern's efforts. Knowing that we did not have the infrastructure to manage such a program, we looked to several of the local organizations that have established internship programs. Barnstable Clean Water Coalition has such a program and with our additional support, they were able to extend their program to include monthly water sampling, testing for nutrients in the water column and to survey for invasive species.

We have started to process to create a strategic plan. This is a work in progress but has been very helpful in looking forward to the new year. Watch for more to come on this topic.

In conclusion, we have had a very successful year, but we have a lot more to accomplish if we are to insure that the three Indian Ponds remain as a valuable resource for our future generations. Mystic Lake and Hamblin ponds both have a high nutrient load sitting in the sediment which will need ongoing monitoring and treatment. There is a hydrilla population in both Mystic Lake and Middle Pond that needs to be monitored and the ongoing treatment process needs to be continued. We have many Title 5 septic systems upstream of the ground water flowing into all three ponds. If left as they currently exist, we will eventually see the effects of the resulting nutrients in our three ponds. With the warming of the Cape because of climate change, nutrient loading quickly converts to algae and to the eutrophication of the ponds. To counter these forces, the Indian Ponds Association needs to be a strong, grass-roots organization with an infrastructure to insure its longevity.