

# Watson Pond Lake Management Committee Minutes, July 7, 2013

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## Co Chairs:

**Craig Drenga – Project Manager.**

**email: craigdrenga@yahoo.com**

**Suzanne Winnell Hughes- Education.**

**email: suzannewinnell@aol.com**

**Next Meeting**  
**Sunday July 21, 2013**  
**10 a.m. on West Beach**  
**Or at Hardy camp if rain.**

**WPA Pig Roast Fundraiser**

**Sunday Sept. 1 (Raindate Sept.2)**

**Watson Pond Website**

**[www.watsonpondassociation.org](http://www.watsonpondassociation.org)**

**Meeting Attendees** Attendees: Jennifer Hardy, Bev Schnoll, Mel Schnoll, Bob Lucky Luckhardt, Suzanne Winnell Hughes, Peter Hughes, John Harwood, Beverly Bridges, Joyce LaBonte, Jay LaBonte, Craig Tighe, Christine Tighe, Arnie DePascale, Craig Drenga, Brad Johnson, Mike Nikituck.

Meeting brought to order: 12:43 PM.

**Treasurer's Report:** To date, there is no more money in the weed fund. It was agreed that no fund raising for weed control is necessary yet, as all weed related bills have been paid and there are presently no outstanding payments to be met.

**Status of Ken Wagner's work** Ken has completed his last water assessment and WP is in full compliance of all requirements posed by the Conservation Committee. We do not have any immediate plans to continue hiring Mr. Wagner. There was consensus on the benefits of working with Mr. Wagner and gratitude for the improvement of the pond..

**Education:** Suzanne handed out leaflets and booklets about identifying invasive species in our pond. Homeowners were again advised to refer to their previously received literature. Also discussed was the need for WP homeowners to continue to monitor the health of the pond, and to be vigilant about awareness of plant growth. Craig Drenga and Mike Nikituck made presentations about identifying plant growth in our pond, and control methods. As stated in Ken Wagner's last report

***"Most management at this point consists of educating residents about their individual or family roles in keeping the lake in desirable condition by appropriate property management."***

**Craig Drenga** discussed hand picking nuisance weeds and showed the group actual examples of several species found in Watson Pond and explained how best to control each species. Curly leaved pond weed has a seed head at the tip that can be snapped off and thrown in the trash. Lily pad flowers can also be removed and discarded.

**Weed Cutter purchase:** Motion made, 2<sup>nd</sup> and carried that the association purchase the weed cutter from Craig Drenga for \$3,000. The cutter is available to all association members to borrow and cut weeds in front of their property. Craig Drenga will maintain, house and coordinate the use of the weed cutter. The Johnson household offered the use of his 2 12 foot boats to anyone for the purpose of using the weed cutter.

**Mike Nikituck** reviewed A Guide to Invasive Non-native Aquatic Species in Massachusetts booklet. He reviewed the following species in particular:

- Variable milfoil - should be pulled up by the root and discarded
- Common Reed - growing along some beach fronts and should be removed by hand
- Purple Loosestrife - on some properties and should be removed by hand

Mr. Nikituck also discussed the following main control techniques we should continue to use in the upcoming years:

- Weed Watcher Program: Residents continuously monitor existence of weeds and hand pull as they see invasive species.
- Drawdown: We continue to lower the water level each winter.

- Flushing: Before and during large rainfalls, more water is released from the pond and boats stir up the water in an effort to flush out sediment.

Mr. Nikituck also pointed out that lawn fertilizer is the #1 source of phosphorous in waterways. We are fortunate that Watson Pond consists of very few manicured lawns. It is also important that each homeowner clean their septic tank annually.

It was recommended that we purchase a secchi disk and bathescope to help determine the turbidity of the water and plant growth on the pond floor.

**Dam:** The topic of dam repair was raised and it was determined another meeting would be in order to discuss different options.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30PM

**Future Minutes:**

In order to save costs, we would like to e-mail future newsletters. If you are currently receiving a paper copy via US Mail; and have an e-mail address, please contact Alicia at [aliciadunaj@gmail.com](mailto:aliciadunaj@gmail.com) to be added to our e-mail list. **If we have your e-mail address, you will only receive an e-mail, not a paper copy.** Please contact Alicia if this is not the case

**Website:**

Reminder: Please check our website, [www.watsonpondassociation.org](http://www.watsonpondassociation.org) for reports, minutes, updates, etc.

**Septic Tanks**

**As part of our effort to ensure the long-term health and maintenance of our pond, all residents are urged to have their septic systems pumped.** Following is a list of local services that have been previously used by residents. Please take the time to read the previously sent and distributed educational material on the topic of the importance of septic system pumping.

**Please pump your septic systems every one or two years.  
It is very important to the health of our pond!**

Bruce Cooper, Blandford	413-568-3164
Mount Everett Landscaping and Excavation	413-429-4236
C and S Septic Services Westfield	413-568-6651
Ketchen Pumping and Excavation	413-243-3023
Chuck Lafond, Chester	413-667-3386
Horkan Septic Tank Services, Southwick	413-569-3778
Bruce Cooper, Blandford	413-568-3164

**Next Steps** (from Ken Wagner's Update Report on the management of Watson Pond)

Three monitoring tasks are ongoing, based on the Order of Conditions: 1) water quality is to be assessed twice per year, in June and late August or early September, 2) aquatic vegetation is to be mapped once per year, in summer, and 3) an annual wildlife survey is to be conducted. Each of these can be scheduled with the WPA to maintain compliance. The wildlife habitat features other than vegetation are unlikely to change significantly, and since vegetation is surveyed separately, this may not be a critical monitoring task; some discussion with the Otis Conservation Commission may be warranted. Vegetation surveys can be conducted in July or August, and it is advisable to have a June check to determine locations for any mechanical controls going in to the summer and a full August survey of the 70 established points to provide quantitative data for annual comparison. Water quality is always useful in assessing pond condition, and the twice per year survey is the minimum recommended. There is one year remaining on the Order of Conditions as originally formulated, but the change in permit duration by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts calls into question the current endpoint of that permit and its related conditions. The Conservation Commission should be consulted regarding compliance endpoints.

**Actual vegetation control will be a function of need, and is expected to be a localized activity through manual cutting and removal. Based on 2012 conditions, there is likely to be an ongoing need for cutting bigleaf pondweed before it can produce seeds. This is easily accomplished by removing the top of the plant, as the water surface, as the seeds are produced on stalks that rise out of the water. Manual control of other plants may not be needed based on current conditions, but a June check will help guide further actions.**

Watershed management is ongoing, but there is relatively little to do in terms of physical adjustments. **Most management at this point consists of educating residents about their individual or family roles in keeping the lake in desirable condition by appropriate property management.**