

Conservation Commission Meeting
Sharon Community Center
October 17, 2013 - DRAFT

Peg Arguimbau, Chairman, Hank Langstroth, Keevin Gellar, Elizabeth McGrath were the members present. Not present: Linda Orel, Christine Turnbull and Stephen Cremer. Conservation Administrator, Greg Meister was absent from the meeting.

7.30 p.m.:Lake Massapoag

Meeting started at 7.40pm

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the invasive species, specifically, the Asian Clams, found near the boat launch in the northeastern part of the lake by Lycott in early June. John Rockwood of EcoTec, Inc. was in attendance to present his findings on Asian Clams found in the Lake.

Last week, Arguimbau, McGrath, Meister and Towner met with Rockwood at the Lake to determine the extent of Asian Clam population. It was observed that approximately 700 linear feet of waterfront was covered with the Asian Clams, extending along the coast towards the beach area as well as the eastern shore. Rockwood was asked to put together a report on the Asian Clam population in Lake Massapoag and to review the Lake George findings on Asian Clams.

- A small clam which was introduced to North America in the early 1930's
- Are typically less than 1.5 inches in size.
- Fairly dominant within an environment it inhabits.
- Tend to clog water intake pipes;
- As they die off, can pollute shorelines and decrease water quality
- Can cause toxic algae blooms and turn waters from blue to green
- Single clam can release up to 2,000 to 4,000 offspring in one season; 350 offspring in one day
- Life span is 2 to 4 years, and possibly up to 7 years
- Prefer area with drift and flow

There is contradicting information about Asian Clams: known economic impacts include damage to pipes and waterways. It is expensive and time consuming to remove, with no guarantee that all clams would be eradicated. Ecological impact is less well known and has not really been documented.

In 2004 DCR produced a fact sheet which listed 3 lakes in Massachusetts with Asian Clam infestations. In 2013 there are more than 3 lakes with Asian Clams.

Lake George and Asian Clams:

- They have been treating since 2010 with varied success.
- Treatment began within 5 months of finding clams.
- They currently have 13 outbreak areas within the lake
- Method used to eliminate clam population was matting: a plastic covering put down in areas where clams are and used to “smother” the clams. (about 98% effective)

Lake Massapoag:

- Predators of clams include various fish species, raccoon, birds, etc.....
Unfortunately although present, not in enough numbers to be helpful to eliminate clam population
- Native and rare mussels inhabit the lake.
- Juvenile fish
- Any type of work to be performed at Lake must go through permitting process by any number of groups which may include: (can be very extensive)
 - National Heritage (possible 3 month process)
 - MESA
 - DCR
 - WPA
 - Local Conservation Commission

It is Rockwood’s recommendation that before proceeding and due to the complexities of the Lake itself, and the permitting which may be required, that a well thought out plan be developed. Need to work with other members of the town including the Recreation Department, Police, Lake Committee, and Town Management.

Rockwood reported that there are only a handful of “experts” prequalified in Massachusetts to deal with mussels/clams. It might be a good idea to have a survey performed of the possible number and where the clams are located. Two experts on list are educators at UMass Boston and perhaps one of them may be interested in performing a study at the Lake. Perhaps utilize the educators for studies, and as move forward, use consultants to help with possible permitting process.

Residents, especially those living along the shore of the Lake, as well as boaters coming into Town to use the Lake should be educated about invasive species and what they can do to help prevent more from entering the lake. Also, since the Lake is now a “source” of Asian Clams, it is important for boat owners to understand what they can/should do to prevent the clams from spreading to other lakes and ponds the boaters may use.

*Excellent facts sheets on Asian Clams put out by Lake George Group as well as Cornell.

*Wash Stations – Maine has put out a document on how to install and how it works

Regarding treatment of clam population:

Should speak with State agencies to ask for their thoughts on possible treatments.

Should contact experts at Lake George for their thoughts

Arguimbau would like to possibly get something put in place for next spring with respect to better monitoring of boats and trailers entering at the boat launch. She has spoken with the DPW about installing a water wash. Further review and discussion is needed.

Permitting would be required before installation. Question was raised as to whether the State is still performing boat ramp monitoring. Need to look into.

Pressing Issue: put together a fact sheet (or utilize an existing one as there are some good ones available.)

Discussion regarding invasive species in the Lake should be put on every agenda moving forward.

Next Conservation Commission meeting scheduled for October 24th at 7:45pm.

Motion to adjoin: Langstroth, Geller 4-0-0.