

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

June 5, 2013 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

Present: Dan Berg (Chair), Donna Merrill, Patrice Gillespie, Frank Simone

Also Present: Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst, Liz Larkin, Recording Secretary,
Anne Deware

Absent: Susan DiLoreto, Kristen Begor

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Berg called the meeting to order at 7:29 p.m.
- II. Horseshoe Pond Discussion

Mr. Berg confirmed that since the last discussion, the State's recommended set of herbicides has been received and shared with independent experts for their opinion and recommendation. The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station will complete an aquatic plant survey to capture current conditions as well as determining what could potentially grow in the lily's place if they are eradicated.

Mr. Conklin confirmed that all commissioners have recently walked the site. He read the email correspondence between him and the State DEEP, including questions and answers from the commissioners (see attached).

Alternative options were discussed such as a summer draw-down or dredging. Due to the depth and muckiness of the pond, the draw down would not be feasible and due to the cost, dredging is not feasible either. Ms. Gillespie asked if the pesticide was approved, is there a way to pull the dead plant matter out of the pond to avoid oxygen depletion. She noted that she spoke to MaryAnn Haverstock with DEEP and this was her recommendation for consideration.

Ms. Deware confirmed the neighbors are holding another pulling event in July. Ms. Merrill suggested that the neighbors consider the pond improvement a Capital Project where money is raised and the long-term goal of the pond is a bigger vision. She suggested that a sidewalk be extended to connect the parks such as Horseshoe and Schencks. Mr. Conklin confirmed that resident Dave Cody recently requested an extension of a sidewalk from Oak Ledge Lane to Horseshoe Road and questions were raised with the Public Works

Department as to who would be responsible for maintaining the sidewalks.

The commission agreed that once the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station aquatic plant survey is complete, the proposal will be discussed in more detail and a vote will take place. Ms. Deware asked that she be apprised of any documentation that is received.

III. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS

A. WET#2186(S) SILVER HILL HOSPITAL – 208 Valley Road, New Canaan – bridge repair

Mr. Simone, Ms. Merrill, and Ms. Gillespie indicated they visited the site. Mr. Conklin described the plan in detail. The commissioners agreed that this is a well planned project and no questions or comments were made.

B. WET#2185(S) SILVER HILL HOSPITAL – 208 Valley Road, New Canaan – dredge pond

Mr. Simone, Ms. Merrill, and Ms. Gillespie indicated they visited the site. Mr. Conklin described the plan in detail. As most of the work is being done in New Canaan, no questions or comments were made.

IV. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS - None

V. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Parks

Mr. Berg confirmed there was a scheduled walk in the Town Forest with the Wilton Garden Club this past Saturday which he and Ms. Merrill attended. He confirmed the walk was publicized in the paper but few people attended. Ms. Gillespie confirmed Cherry Lane Park will be walked in July, Schencks Island will be walked in August and Bradley Park will be in September.

Mr. Conklin confirmed Tom Reiner, of The Care of Trees, has offered to volunteer his arborist services to remove some dangerous trees in Schencks Island and Sackett Preserves. To thank Mr. Reiner publicly, Mr. Berg offered to submit a letter to the editor. Mr. Conklin added that Jeff Lapnow, with Bolton Landscaping, is also completing volunteer work at Sackett Preserve. Mr. Berg noted that he will also submit a letter to the editor thanking him for his volunteer services.

Mr. Conklin stated that he and the high school intern planted 5 apple trees in Sackett Preserve earlier in the day.

A discussion ensued about trail maps fading in the kiosks due to sun exposure. Mr. Conklin noted that he can replace these maps and will look into purchasing a U/V protective film to place on the kiosk plastic to avoid this issue in the future. Ms. Merrill reported that the Quarry Head sign is missing. Mr. Conklin stated he would follow up again with the State and Terry Goodwin on the status of the sign.

A discussion ensued relating to parking availability at town parks. Mr. Conklin confirmed there is a gravel lot being added for 5 cars at the end of Boulder Brook Road at the Town Forest. Ms. Merrill suggested adding three parking spaces on the western side of the Town Forest lot. Mr. Conklin confirmed he would measure the area to see what can be done.

Ms. Gillespie noted that Wild Duck was previously difficult to hike as the trails were not clearly marked. On her recent visit, she noticed mountain bikers have been through and the trails are subsequently more defined. She stated there were some blow downs, and that she could use assistance in removing invasives if anyone is interested.

B. Work with other Commissions/Committees

Tree/Bench Committee – Ms. Diloreto was not in attendance to provide a report.

Deer Committee – Ms. Merrill confirmed that Howard Kilpatrick from the CT DEEP came to speak to the Deer Committee about changes to hunting laws. He is assisting the committee in finding other options to increase the harvest, as previous means are not enough to get the population to a desirable level.

Energy/Go Green Committee – Ms. Gillespie reported that the Energy and Go Green Committees are working together to propose a new electric vehicle charging station at Comstock Community Center to the Board of Selectmen on June 17, 2013. The funding is from the neighbor to neighbor contest winnings for the town. The electric company has confirmed that the town cannot charge for the electricity, but may be able to charge for time they are hooked in.

Ms. Gillespie also reported that the yellow barn at Ambler Farm is completing a public demonstration for ongoing efficiency of the structure. She stated this case history is important so that residents with antique structures can see that their homes can be more efficient.

Mr. Berg commented that the Go Green Festival was a success and the Tree Festival was under attended due to poor weather.

Land Trust – Nothing to report.

Norwalk River Valley Trail – Nothing to report.

VI. NEW BUSINESS - None

VII. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Merrill reported that she attended a public hearing for 232 Silver Spring Road for a house reconstruction due to fire damage. She stated that she was impressed to hear comments from the Conservation Commission were read into the record of the hearing. She confirmed that the applicant was asked to provide details on lawn size, work to save trees on the property, and reconfigure the driveway for the next hearing.

Mr. Simone is the liaison for June.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 5/1/13 –

Mr. Simone MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes as drafted, SECONDED by Ms. Merrill, and CARRIED 3-0-1 with Ms. Gillespie abstaining.

IX. ADJOURN – Mr. Berg MOVED to adjourn at 9:02pm, SECONDED by Ms. Merrill, and CARRIED 4-0-0.

Next meeting will be July 3, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Larkin
Secretary, Environmental Affairs

Horseshoe Pond Lily Pad Control Questions

1. Jeff Stahl told the Conservation Commission that the CT DEEP does not allow complete eradication of the lily pads on the pond with chemical means. He also stated that the CT DEEP would only allow 65% of the lily pads to be eradicated and that we would have to leave 35% of the pond covered with them. Is this true?
2. Apparently the surfactant used in conjunction with glyphosate is the more toxic and potentially dangerous part of the chemistry. Rodeo does not contain a surfactant, unlike Roundup, which Mr. Stahl noted this in his presentation to us. But I read that when Rodeo is applied in aquatic situations it must be pre-mixed with a surfactant to be effective. Is this true?
3. The water depth of Horseshoe pond is only 1' to 2' deep on average. If we are intent on looking at Horseshoe Pond in a 10-year time frame, does ridding the lily pads set up the pond for other invasives, especially given how shallow it is and that it will be filled with rotting plant material?
4. I heard very clearly that this is a multi-applications-per year, multi-year project. And I think I also heard that since they're not planning to do a full eradication, it's really a "forever" sort of project since the plants will eventually grow back via their root system. So my main question is about the long-term continued application of the chemicals in question. What's the potential effect of these chemicals being put in the pond multiple times per year, over a period of years? It's one thing to talk about a single application and another to talk about what could be tens of applications over time. And given that the pond drains right into the Norwalk River, which is a stone's throw away, what's the implication of continued "leakage" of these chemicals into the river ecosystem, both nearby and downstream? And if we're told that the chemicals could possibly travel into Norwalk and into the sound, then I don't see how this is solely the WCC's decision. Perhaps a homeowner with a private pond that drains similarly would feel no obligation to think about where the chemicals flow, but as a conservation commissioner, I do...
5. Is there is any long term data that exists for multiple applications in a pond scenario that is linked to a large river? And I would like to specifically ask the experts about the possible adverse effects on the large number of critters that live within and around the pond such as birds, fish, reptiles, insects, etc.
6. We can't be the only nearby town to run up against the challenge of a "weed"-choked pond on town land. How does/did New Canaan, Ridgefield, Westport handle it?
7. Do you have any previous experience with Jeff Stahl (Stahl Holdings LLC, DbA: The Pond Connection)? We are wondering about his track record for this type of project?

Conklin, Mike

From: Robinson, Bradford [Bradford.Robinson@ct.gov]
Sent: Thursday, May 30, 2013 11:13 AM
To: Conklin, Mike
Cc: Singer, Judith; Bodner, Valerie
Subject: RE: Wilton Conservation Commission - Horseshoe Pond Lily Pad Control Questions

Mike

I'll comment first on the list of possible herbicides, then on your questions. Water lilies are best controlled with either 2,4-D or glyphosate (Rodeo, Aquapro or others). Cutrine is an algaecide, and presumably was listed as a contingent treatment in the event an algae bloom occurred after treatment. Clipper is not banned or anything bad, but is simply not labeled for nor appropriate for lilies – it is not a systemic and thus will not kill the tubers from which the plants arise. If there is duckweed or watermeal along with the lilies then Clipper makes more sense. I'm not sure that three applications per year for the lilies will really be necessary. The applicator may be planning for secondary treatments to control possible algae blooms or other weed problems.

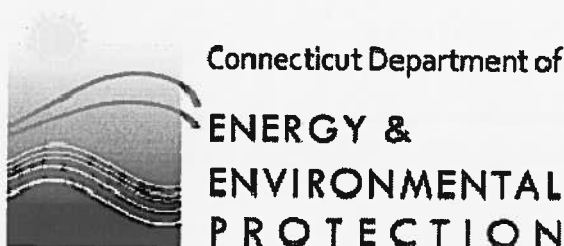
To address your questions:

1. Leaving 35% coverage of plants is a recommendation, not a requirement. This comes from concerns from our inland fisheries program about maintaining habitat for fish. In any event, a pond devoid of all vegetation is not particularly healthy. In the end, the amount of vegetation left uncontrolled is a function of your use of the pond.
2. The use of glyphosate does require a surfactant. This product is sprayed directly on the floating or emergent leaves and will bead up and not be effective if no surfactant is used. One can use a surfactant that is less toxic than the one used in Roundup. I should note however that while it is true that the surfactant in Roundup is more toxic than the active ingredient, this is mainly because the glyphosate itself is not very toxic, so it doesn't take much for a compound to be more toxic than it.
3. Nature in fact abhors a vacuum, so it is likely something will grow in Horseshoe Pond if the lilies are killed. One cannot predict what that might be. You need to keep in mind that water lily vegetation dies back to the roots in the fall without chemical control, so the biomass of the leaves ends up in the pond no matter what. A late fall die back is perhaps less likely to cause a secondary algae bloom due to the cooler weather being less conducive to growth, but the biomass still remains in the pond.
4. It is true that none of your options are permanent. You will need to decide how much maintenance you wish to devote to this pond. Annual treatments may not be necessary depending on the level of desired plant presence. The long term effects of the chemical itself are minimal. Glyphosate degrades in a matter of days to a few weeks, while 2,4-D takes somewhat longer – 6 or so weeks. Neither chemical is considered persistent or bioaccumulative. If a copper product is used, it will remain in the sediments since copper is an element and does not degrade. It will not have an effect on the river or other ecosystems, but continued use could affect bottom dwelling organisms in the pond itself. I should note however that it takes a long time and a lot of copper to cause this effect. A more significant effect of the chemical is on the habitat, and this could be beneficial. A mixture of open water and vegetative cover is more conducive to biodiversity than either complete cover or complete open water.
5. Pesticides in the U.S. are evaluated before coming to market with respect to their ecological toxicity. They are not allowed to be registered for use if such use will cause unreasonable adverse effects on the environment. Herbicides usually target plant specific enzymes and have little effect on animals, especially at the concentrations encountered with normal use. This is especially true of glyphosate. Non-target animals such as those you mention are unlikely to be affected by a herbicide application. Copper products can be toxic to aquatic invertebrates if used in too high concentration. This effect is less with the chelated forms than with straight copper sulfate.
6. Nearby towns and citizens therein are completely varied in their treatment of ponds. Some are controlled and manicured to the nth degree and others are left alone. It all depends on the goals, budget and the attitude of the pond owners.

7. With respect to the enforcement history of The Pond Connection, we issued them two notices of violation, one in 2006 and one in 2013. The 2006 notice was for applying a blue pond dye without a permit, and the 2013 notice was for a minor deviation from an issued permit.

I hope this helps.

Bradford Robinson
Pesticide Program Supervisor
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm St.
Hartford CT 06106
Tel. 860/424-3324
Fax 860/424-4060



www.ct.gov/deep

From: Conklin, Mike [mailto:Mike.Conklin@WILTONCT.ORG]
Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2013 1:34 PM
To: Robinson, Bradford
Subject: FW: Wilton Conservation Commission - Horseshoe Pond Lily Pad Control Questions

Brad – Please see the email below along with the list of questions attached as a word document. I am hoping to have a response from you guys before the Wilton Conservation Commission's next meeting on Wednesday, June 5th. I appreciate your time in this matter.

Sincerely,
Mike Conklin

Michael Conklin, Environmental Analyst
Department of Environmental Affairs
Town of Wilton
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897
Phone: 203-563-0182

From: Conklin, Mike
Sent: Saturday, May 25, 2013 4:52 PM
To: Judith.singer@ct.gov
Subject: Wilton Conservation Commission - Horseshoe Pond Lily Pad Control Questions

Dear Judy - As we discussed in a previous phone conversation, the Town of Wilton owns a 6 acre pond (Horseshoe Pond) with an average depth of 1' to 2' deep. The pond is almost completely covered with lily pads and previous attempts to control the lily pads with mechanical means have been unsuccessful. The pond is an old flooded swamp and there are many stumps that remain in the

water. The stumps hindered the hydroraking project 20 years ago. A citizen group has formed to try and eradicate some of the lily pads in the pond. They have tried winter draw downs and hand pulling of the plants with little success. The group has partnered with a pond contractor named Jeff Stahl owner of "The Pond Connection". Jeff is proposing to try a chemical control using the following chemicals:

- Rodeo
- 2,4-D
- Clipper (Judy Singer of the DEEP said they will not approve Clipper)
- Cutrine Plus (Chelated CuSO₄ as an algicide)

Jeff's plan is to apply three (3) treatments during the plants growing season over a three year period. This will be 9 treatments total and he is hoping to be able eradicate approximately 65% of the lily pad with this program. He explained that they should be controlled for three years and then spraying would likely have to begin again to maintain the open water condition.

The Wilton Conservation Commission listened to Jeff Stahl's presentation and is unsure if they want to proceed with the application of pesticides to the pond. I have compiled a list of their questions and I am hoping you will be able to review them and shed some light on the subject. I have attached the questions as a Word document. The Commission is meeting again on June 5th and I was hoping to have your response to these questions for this meeting. Thank you very much for your help with this matter.

Sincerely,
Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst
Town of Wilton

Conklin, Mike

From: Bugbee, Gregory [Gregory.Bugbee@ct.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2013 9:38 AM
To: Conklin, Mike
Subject: RE: Wilton Conservation Commission - Horseshoe Pond Lily Pad Control Questions

Hi Mike:

Treatment of lily pads is usually a yearly process as missed plants, uncontrolled root systems and new seedlings cause regrowth. I have tested both Rodeo and 2,4-D. Both are effective in the short term. Rodeo is sprayed on fully formed lily pad leaves (usually in July and August). 2,4-D is a granular product that is applied with a spreader to new growth (usually in May or June). Both products are systemic and thus are capable of killing plant roots. I have found 2,4-D gives more complete control but tends to be more controversial from a public perception standpoint.

A major concern of treating lily pads is what will grow in the areas where the lily pads have been removed. As long as light reaches fertile bottom something will grow. If the new plants are invasive or nuisance species you could end up worse. I suggest you request an aquatic plant survey <http://www.ct.gov/caes/cwp/view.asp?a=2841&q=444344>. This will tell you what plants are available to repopulate when the lily pads are gone and add Horseshoe Pond to the State database.

Feel free to contact me for further information.

Greg Bugbee

Gregory J. Bugbee
Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
Department of Environmental Sciences
Invasive Aquatic Plant Program
Soil Testing
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New Haven, CT 06504

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"Putting Science to Work for Society"

From: Conklin, Mike [<mailto:Mike.Conklin@WILTONCT.ORG>]
Sent: Monday, May 20, 2013 11:43 AM
To: Bugbee, Gregory
Cc: Larkin, Elizabeth; Sesto, Pat
Subject: Wilton Conservation Commission - Horseshoe Pond Lily Pad Control Questions

Dear Greg – As discussed on the phone earlier today, the Town of Wilton owns a 6 acre pond (Horseshoe Pond) with an average depth of 1' to 2' deep. The pond is almost completely covered with lily pads and previous attempts to control the lily pads with mechanical means have been unsuccessful. The pond is an old flooded swamp and there are many stumps that remain in the water. The stumps hindered the hydroraking project 20 years ago. A citizen group has formed to try and eradicate some of the lily pads in the pond. They have tried winter draw downs and hand pulling of the plants with little success. The group has partnered with a pond contractor named Jeff Stahl owner of "The Pond Connection". Jeff is proposing to try a chemical control using the following chemicals:

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Sincerely,
Mike Conklin

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