



Long Pond Boat Launch Monitoring Program

02.14.2024

Betsy Graham, Secretary

Lantern Hill Valley Association

% 72A Long Pond Rd S

Ledyard, CT 06339

TheLHVA@gmail.com

860-608-5620 cell

Overview

Good evening. My name is Betsy Graham and I live at 72A Long Pond Rd S, Ledyard. Thank you for letting me make a presentation this evening.


I am here representing the Lantern Hill Valley Association (LHVA) to make a request for Five Thousand dollars to be included in the 2025 budget to fund a pilot program to develop a sustainable Boat Launch Monitoring Program at the Long Pond State Boat Launch. This request is being made as well to the Town of North Stonington.

Long and Bush Ponds are valuable public resources shared by both the towns of Ledyard and North Stonington. CT DEEP has maintained the Public boat launch on Long Pond for over 70 years. In the 1600-1700s the stream which flowed through the three Lantern Hill Valley glacial kettle ponds was dammed, making our lakes. The stream that joined these ponds, now known as Whitford Brook, became the border of four towns as it flows south to the Mystic River. The LHVA has owned the primary dams at Long Pond and Bush Pond for over fifty years; the McKee Farm Trust owns a dike on the east side of Bush Pond.

Concerns

In 2016 the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) identified an aggressive aquatic invasive plant in the CT River, now referred to as CT River Hydrilla. Using DNA typing they have identified this is a new Hydrilla clade, or subtype.

The CAES is working with the Army Corp of Engineers to see if there is an herbicide that will be effective in slowing/ stopping its rapid growth. The plant is an aggressive grower, outcompeting all aquatic plant life. It grows in shallow to deep waters, deoxygenating the water it is growing



within, impacting fish and all aquatic life. It is tolerant of salty waters, found as far south as Essex and north up to Agawam, MA. There is a real worry that Hydrilla might spread the entire length of the CT River.

Initially, it was thought to be a concern only in the CT River but the past few years have highlighted that it is a serious concern for all CT lakes and rivers.

There are now at least six lakes that have learned they have Hydrilla. One is in our backyard, Amos Lake only 5 miles from Long Pond. This past fall it was discovered near the State Boat Launch during an Aquatic Plant Survey. CT DEEP Fisheries believes there is a strong correlation with boaters involved in tournaments on the CT River who also attend ones in local lakes, transporting Hydrilla fragments between these water bodies.

Plan

The LHVA and residents of Long Pond and Bush Pond are very concerned about the environmental and financial impacts the introduction of Hydrilla would have on our lakes.

This February I had the opportunity to submit a grant request, with the support of the Alliance for the Mystic River Watershed, for the CT Aquatic Invasive Species grant to support a Boat Launch Outreach Program. The program will offer educational materials and volunteer examinations for invasive plants or animals on boating and fishing equipment to each boat launch user: whether motor boat or paddle craft, entering or leaving the water or fishing from the shore.

The program requires volunteers to attend a two-hour Invasive Investigator program conducted through the CT DEEP Boat Launch program to learn how to approach boaters, engage them, and help them learn about best boating practices. They will also learn about identification of aquatic invasive plants in a one-hour Invasive Plant



workshop offered through the Invasive Aquatic Plant department of CAES.

We developed our program to provide coverage for weekend and holidays from mid-June to mid-September. The days will be two five hour shifts with two staff working together. The program will be made up of both volunteers and a core of paid staff, with a coordinator, and two paid staff to work alongside volunteers. We will reach out to the numerous volunteers of the Alliance for the Mystic River Watershed who expressed interest in water quality, to our community organizations, youth groups, and fishing groups to explain what and why we are going to be present and how they can support and benefit from this project.

Goal

Our goal is to present information about best boating practices. Our boating behaviors can have either a positive or negative impact on the ecology of all our water bodies. It is up to us to protect them as best we can.

Yes, this is a startup program, and we won't hear about the grant application until later in the spring, but our plan is to develop this into a sustainable program, whether this year or next year. There may be hiccups along the way, but I believe that having boat launch monitors on site sends a message to the public that we care, and generates caring in return. It is essential for the welfare of our lakes to develop this community-wide endeavor. We appreciate your consideration of our request.



