



Friends of HRA, Inc.
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Winter Newsletter March 5, 2016

Until last week the weather has been warmer than the past and, because of January and February rains and a second drawdown of Little Mashapaug in Union, CT the lake level has gone up and the ice is very iffy. With the snow on top, the ice is deceptive. Please be careful and do not assume the lake is frozen.

Lake Oversight Committee

The Lake Oversight Committee (LOC) resumed meeting in August of 2015. Comprised of representatives from the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Friends of the Hamilton Reservoir and ad hoc members. The LOC is an advisory committee, limited to making recommendations to other boards or town departments .

The mission of the Lake Oversight Committee is to oversee lake and watershed maintenance and preservation projects by:

- Working with the town boards and town departments to ensure that the lake gets the attention it needs.
- Coordinating lake efforts with the FHRA, public, and private sectors both from within and outside the town of Holland.
- Exploring sources of funding and grant writing.
- Initiating funding requests.
- Ensuring that we maintain town wide commitments.

Since August, the LOC has been working to identify and find solutions for existing problems and future needs to ensure Hamilton Reservoir is an asset to be enjoyed for future generations. Over the last six months, these recommendations have included, but are not limited to, budgetary recommendations to the Board of Selectman and Board of Health for FY 2017 activities; contact with the Highway Department about cleaning catch basins and retention ponds, abiding by EPA regulated drawdown conditions, and clearing around the dam and spillway; and meetings with the Board of Health to discuss approaches to "hot spots" identified in lake water testing. Also, on behalf of the Board of Selectman and the Conservation Commission, the LOC wrote the Request for Proposal (RFP) for aquatic management of the lake.

The LOC has been networking outside of the Town of Holland to find out what other towns are doing to keep their lakes healthy. We met with a representative from Lake Wickabaug to discuss funding a dredging project similar to one they had success with. We have built relationships with representatives of the State of Connecticut, The US Army Corps of Engineers, Union, DEP, and the EPA to discuss and better coordinate drawdowns of lakes that affect the water level of Hamilton Reservoir. We are now in queue with the state for a comprehensive inspection of the causeway.

We continue to look for grant opportunities to help fund future repair and capital improvement projects.

The LOC presented the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee a budget for lake related items that contains new line items. The Finance Board is having its Public Hearing on the town budget **May 3, 2016 at the Town Hall** after the Select Board meeting around 7:30 pm. This meeting gives residents an opportunity to voice their opinions about the proposed line items proposed and possibly influence changes to the budget before it is voted on at the annual town meeting on May 31, 2016. **Both of these meetings are very important for those of us on the lake to attend** and to

rally for monies to maintain and preserve our biggest resource. They are public meetings which means anyone can attend. Per Mass General Law, only registered voters of Holland can vote at the annual town meeting but you can be heard. We need everyone's support to make things happen.

The LOC meets the first and third Mondays of every month at 7 pm at the Town Hall and everyone is welcome.

COLAP

The MASS Congress of Lakes and Ponds (COLAP) is having a joint meeting with the New England chapter of North American Lake Management Society at the Holiday Inn in Marlborough MA on May 20 and 21. If anyone is interested in attending this Annual Workshop please contact Erin, our VP of Environment, her email is vpenvironmentfhra@gmail.com

WEED TREATMENT

We have received the annual fall survey from our Aquatic Management company please go to the Town of Holland website for a complete report - www.Town.Holland.MA.US under Lake Information. It is entitled Hamilton Res 15 rpt final PDF.

SWANS

For several weeks this past fall, Hamilton Reservoir was visited by a number of mute swans. The swans were an impressive sight and a first on the lake for many people, which raised certain questions regarding their presence. Mute swans are not native to New England, but since their introduction from Western Europe in the late 19th century, they have spread throughout the Northeast and Midwest United States. In the short term, the swan's presence may be beneficial to the lake since they consume significant amounts of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and act as a deterrent to Canadian geese. A continued presence may lead to concerns that they will negatively impact native bird species through competition over habitat and food. Additionally, the mute swans are extremely territorial and aggressive; they have been known to attack humans who get too close to nesting areas. If you are sharing the lake with swans, please try to keep your distance.

The Holland Trails Committee

The Holland Trails Committee continued to make great progress in developing and improving trails in Holland. The link to Brimfield is now completely surfaced and a new trail is nearly completed on Old East Brimfield Rd. This year the Committee will be working with the Community/Senior Center to create a .2 mile walking path.

Spring Activities include a workday on May 7th (8:30-10:30), a scenic paddle on the Quinebaug River scheduled for May 22nd (10:00-2:00), and a trail ride on June 4th (10-12). Two other local events which are fun to support are: a 5K run or walk on the Grand Trunk Trail in Brimfield on April 30th: and is the Holland 5 K on May 21st which benefits the outdoor education program at the school. If you would like to receive information about these and future events, please email Richard Haller (hallerr@cox.net).

We need volunteers to get involved –The Lake Association has been a strong force with the Town and has managed to fight for the rights of our beautiful Lake but the same people volunteer year after year. We need new members, new ideas, and new people to make the commitment and bring those ideas to fruition ... PLEASE consider volunteering either as a member of the Executive Board, the membership committee , or even just to help one time with something small like our pancake breakfast! Call us!

FHRA LAKE PHOTO Calendar

Dori Ference is starting to put together our annual LAKE PHOTO calendar in order to have it ready for sale at our August FHRA meeting. Please send her your digital files by July 10, 2016 to: dference2002@yahoo.com. Take your photos in high resolution (at least 300 dpi) and in landscape (8.5 x11) if possible. We have received some great pictures that we were unable to use because they were too small or resolution was not good enough. Our newer phones take better pictures just remember to turn them sideways for landscape. We are always looking for new and different winter pictures. The winning photo is printed on the front cover and the photographer gets a free FHRA membership for next year.

Your FHRA Executive Board

The FHRA Executive Board has been working hard on a number of things for our members and will share them with you at our spring meeting which is MAY 14th at the Community Center in Holland with refreshments at 8:30 am and the Business portion of the meeting from 9:00-10:30 am.

Chad Brigham has resigned as President and the Executive Board has voted Chris McCooe in as interim President until our May meeting. We would like to thank Chad and his wife Janice for all of their hard work and time they have put in.

*******IMPORTANT *******

We are supporting the Holland Elementary School 5K race by moving our Spring Meeting from Saturday May 21 to Sunday May 15th. PLEASE NOTE this on your calendar.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Town Finance Board Public Hearing for the Annual Budget	May 3, 2018
FHRA Spring Meeting Community Center	May 15, 2016
Annual Town Meeting	May 31, 2016
FHRA Pancake Breakfast	June 12, 2016
FHRA Fall Meeting Community Center	August 27, 2016

If you are looking for information, rules and regulations, past meeting minutes, contacts, etc, please visit to our website www.hamiltonreservoir.com. We are also on Facebook. If you would like to leave a message for the Executive Board the FHRA phone number is 413 668 6851. We also have an FHRA email – HamiltonReservoir@gmail.com

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Membership Form