

Hammond Acres Club, Inc.  
January 2023

Greetings to members of the Hammond Acres Club,

This letter hopes to find you well, and collects some news items from the past year. Please read the minutes from the annual meeting and the 2023 calendar.

***Lake access improvements:*** Access points on Lake Drive and Adams Road, which are open to all members, got new docks. The one on Lake Drive got a new raft as well. Joe Silverman led the effort to secure \$10,000 in funds from the board, find the best dealer, and put them in place.

***Treatment of trees:*** Hemlocks were treated for wooly adelgid in May. Scale has also infested the hemlocks, with a severity that prompted the board to approve a second spraying for scale along HAC roads in early September. Hopefully we can determine its effect in considering whether to repeat scale control efforts after this year.

***Plans for the marsh across from the barn:*** Nancy Parmentier has been considering ways to permanently protect her property that fronts on Lake Drive next to the parking area across from the barn. The property consists of 60 acres in Goshen (Lot 804) and 23 adjacent acres in Chesterfield. It surrounds the beautiful marsh through which Webster Brook flows downstream from the dam and on the west side of the golf course. Nancy decided this past summer to transfer it to the Orenda Wildlife Land Trust, which owns and manages fifty sanctuaries totaling 650 acres on Cape Cod and throughout Massachusetts. Nancy sees a match between her wishes for the land and Orenda's mission, which is to preserve and protect open space for wildlife habitat, fresh air, and water quality. Nancy will ensure that the agreement with Orenda prohibits certain activities, such as hunting. Orenda will place a small sign and barrier posts at the trailhead, but will not create space for public visitor parking.

***New water line for the golf course:*** The old line from the gatehouse to the golf course irrigation system was losing water into the woods between Lake Drive and Georgia McCarthy's driveway. Russ Gibson alerted the board in May. Finding the leak, digging it up and fixing it happened in the next two weeks, thanks to John Rooney, Rob Maloni and Jeff Murphy. It was time for a new pipe, not through the woods. A volunteer crew and the hiring of Bob Christenson's excavator set the new line in a trench along the road.

***Survey of aquatic plants in Hammond Pond – including two invasive species:*** Dave Christensen, Chair of the Biology Department at Westfield State University, collected and identified macrophytes (aquatic plants) throughout the pond in June 2022, at the invitation of the Hammond Acres Watershed Committee (HAWC) and with help from his students. His report noted two non-native invasive species in "low abundance" along the northwest shoreline: Phragmites (common reed) and Yellow Floating Heart. He suggested that they "could potentially be controlled by regular monitoring and hand-pulling."

In August volunteers organized by HAWC pulled the standing Phragmites. Removal efforts will continue, as new stems emerge from the rhizomes remaining in the bed of the pond. The work crew did not find the Yellow Floating Heart that Dave Christensen discovered near to (and westerly of) the Pond Road culvert. Let's see if we can spot and control it, before it forms a dense mat.

***Keeping invasive species out – a message worthy of repetition:*** The appearance of these non-native, aggressive and damaging plants underscores the importance of our rules about allowing only member-owned boats in the pond, and properly cleaning our own boats after any exposure to other waters to remove seeds and plant fragments.

***Management of vegetation and invasive species on HAC land:*** The HAWC Committee obtained a proposal from Matt Verson, a specialist in plant management, to remove and control invasive species bordering the golf course and the tennis courts. The board declined the proposal in October. It placed a higher priority on the spread of Japanese knotweed on HAC properties and roads, and invited him to make a new proposal for control of invasives.

On a July afternoon outside the barn members enjoyed a presentation by a local naturalist entitled “Planting for Pollinators and Birds.” Later in the season HAWC conducted an inventory of native and invasive plants on HAC properties and roads, applied mechanical cut-and-smother tactics against bittersweet at the beach, published a newsletter via the Google Groups “HACpeople” group, and netted over \$2000 in a calendar fundraiser to support environmental and educational projects.

***Thanks to all who have stepped up to support the club:*** The minutes of the annual meeting list many of them. After the annual meeting, and in good time for holiday gift-giving, Jeff Murphy revived the HAC-emblazoned clothing fundraiser conducted by Lyne Laliberte in 2020.

***Save the date (8/11/2023) for a dance party with The O-Tones on Corn Boil weekend:*** The board responded to a request by Jane Hillman to hire The O-Tones, a swing and Motown-sounds band headed by our member/neighbor Mary Witt, for a bash at the barn on Friday, August 11, the night before the Corn Boil. Watch for the promotions. Your purchase of tickets will recover costs and support a rockin’ evening.

***Some closing notes about water quality:*** As in past years, the beach will be officially open from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend under a permit from the Foothills Health District, meaning the water is tested weekly for E. coli between those dates. Watch for signage if the beach is closed. Last summer the readings were generally very low, and the beach never closed. The pond did not absorb heavy rain events in 2022, like the storms in July 2021 that caused a bacterial spike and a brief closing of the beach. Knowledgeable people say that runoff carries naturally occurring bacteria into waterways. High counts do not necessarily indicate sources such as failing septic systems, lawn fertilizer, or animal manure. After a high bacterial reading that closes a beach, mandated retesting has shown the ability of our pond to recover quickly. Test data show that after a big rain our pond regains cleanliness with remarkable speed.

We look forward to the coming season, hopefully one that can include safe socializing and lots of fun water activities.

Charlie Lotspeich  
President, Hammond Acres Club