

Selectmen's aim: weed out pollution

By JIM DALY

The Patriot Ledger

1934

Pembroke selectmen last night made it clear that they will help save local ponds.

Getting caught feeding ducks on Pembroke ponds will cost violators at least \$50.

Waste from the ducks raises the nitrate levels in water, which increases pollution.

Preventing people from feeding the ducks will encourage the ducks to search elsewhere for food and help prevent the nitrates from leaching into the ponds, according to environmental consultants.

Pembroke selectmen heard last night from two scientists at CEI, a Dedham environmental firm that is managing the \$195,000 cleanup of Furnace and Oldham ponds.

CEI scientists Eileen Pannetier and Stephanie Hanson studied pollution on Furnace and Oldham ponds over the past year.

The ponds contain too much phosphorous, which promotes weed growth. The unnatural growth threatens to choke the ponds, Pannetier said.

Hanson said the phosphorous usually comes from lawn fertilizers and soil erosion.

The ponds also contain excess nitrates, caused by human and animal wastes, she said.

PEMBROKE

Oil and gas find their way into the ponds, too, she said.

Hanson said the ponds' water quality can be improved by reducing the amount of unnatural chemicals that flow into them.

Stormwater carries the chemicals into ponds, she said.

Hanson said slowing the runoff and keeping substances like lawn fertilizers away from the ponds will help improve water quality in the ponds.

CEI plans to install 29 catch basins around the ponds -- 20 at Oldham Pond and nine at Furnace Pond. Hanson said the basins will act as filters, absorbing stormwater and preventing much of it from getting into the ponds.

Selectmen said the work will be coordinated with the public works commission.

Hanson offered other preventative measures. She said Pembroke should consider amending its bylaws to prevent developers from unwittingly depositing chemicals into the ponds through soil erosion.

She also said people who live on ponds can create strips of vegetation along the shoreline to act as buffers that would ease stormwater runoff.

Hanson said animal waste, especially from waterfowl, should be kept away from ponds.

Selectmen Chairman Vincent

Pembroke selectmen last night:

- Heard a report from CEI, a Dedham environmental firm cleaning Furnace and Oldham ponds.
- Approved 23 articles for a special town meeting to be held Oct. 16.
- Voted to accept an \$18,436 police grant and gave Police Chief Gregory Wright permission to administer the grant.
- Accepted the resignation of recreation commission member Peggy Fetterman.
- Granted a trailer permit for 56 Prince Way.
- Granted a sign permit for Above the Clouds Limousine at 271 Water St.

Cogliano said the town will "aggressively go after bylaw changes" to help prevent pollution. He said an easy step would be a fine to discourage feeding ducks at the ponds.

"Ducks are the No. 1 pet waste contributor," agreed board of health member Lisa Spellmeyer.

In a related matter, an aquatic weed harvester began clearing Furnace Pond yesterday, Town Administrator Edwin Thorne said.

The \$100,000 contraption is a small barge with shears that extend underwater to remove weeds from lake bottoms. A paddle-wheel system brings the weeds to the surface and deposits them on the barge, which carts them away.

It is owned jointly by Pembroke, Hanson and Duxbury.

Scientists like Pannetier say the machine works well as a short-term solution to unnatural eutrophication, the process in which bodies of water turn into land at rapid rates.

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