

The Watershed

Vol. 1, No. 2

The Oyster Pond Environmental Trust Newsletter

Spring, 1996

Committee reports

Pond Management

Work by this Committee that was nothing short of brilliant has led to the first substantive step toward improving Oyster Pond. The town has included in its FY 1997 budget \$20,000 to be spent "for engineering to pick a location for and design of an adjustable weir to be built at the outlet to Oyster Pond". Barry Norris describes this coup in an article on page two of this newsletter.

Land Acquisition and Management

With OPET's new status as a 501c(3) charitable organization it is now possible for OPET to put into action the agreement made with Salt Pond Sanctuaries whereby OPET will assume the responsibility of the remaining mortgage on the Oyster Pond Trust property on Ransom Road. At the same time, Salt Pond Sanctuaries will transfer to OPET title of all the parcel (known as the Fisher property).

When the transfer has been completed OPET plans to immediately launch a fundraising campaign to retire the mortgage on this property.

For more details of the property, its mortgage and the planned fund raising effort see page 3 of this newsletter.

Fund-Raising

This committee is getting geared up for the Fisher property effort. If you are willing to help please contact William Kerfoot 548-5825, Cecily Selby (Coles) 548-1182, Duncan Aspinwall, 540-3816, or John Dowling 548-2926.

Second Annual Meeting- July 13th

Celebrating successes...

Please come to OPET's second Annual Membership Meeting on July 13th. The meeting will be at the Sea Education Association (across Woods Hole Road from Tree Tops), starting at 5:00 pm and running until about 7:00. We will be celebrating the spectacular successes of the Pond Management Committee, and (we trust) the turn-over of the 'Fisher Property' to OPET.

... and building to new ones

We will also be working on a number of new initiatives for the improvement of the pond and the surrounding area including:

- Evaluation of pond bacterial contamination
- Identification of additional watershed properties for conservation
- Fund raising to retire the Fisher Property Mortgage
- Increasing membership and active participation of members in OPET's operation.

and Electing Officers

OPET's direction is determined by its officers. Make sure that you have a say in what's coming up by voting at the meeting. We need your active participation.

Guest Speaker

Selectman Virginia Valiela will be our keynote speaker, we expect her to be as entertaining and informative as Eric Turkington was last year!

A quick look at OPET

In less than two months OPET will have completed its first year of operation. Oyster Pond Environmental Trust, Inc. is now officially a 501c(3) organization, meaning that contributions to OPET are tax deductible.

Officers and committee assignments:

President: John Dowling
Vice President: Cecily Selby (Coles)
Secretary: Wendy Gabriel
Treasurer / Newsletter Editor: Lon Hocker III
Counsel: Dana Rodin, esq.
Committee heads:
Pond Management: Barry Norris
Land Preservation & Acquisition: Werner Loewenstein
FundRaising: William Kerfoot, Cecily Selby (Coles)
Other directors: Duncan Aspinwall, William Brewer, Stanley Hart, Birgit Rose, Donald Zinn

But...

We could sure use new faces on the committees. With your help we will make this next year even more successful!

Fiscal Year 1995 Treasurer's Report

Inflows		
Interest Earned		17.11
memberships		<u>3,860.00</u>
Total Inflows		3,877.11
Outflows		
Bank Charges		74.23
Book (ISBN numbers)		165.00
printing (stationary)		65.00
Taxes		<u>465.00</u>
Total Outflows		769.23
Balance		3,107.88

Treasurer's notes:

OPET's additional costs (newsletter printing, postage, refreshments at the Annual meeting and legal costs have been borne by certain individual members. Special thanks to Dana Rodin, William Kerfoot, Birgit Rose, Wendy Gabriel and Cecily Selby.

As of 12-31-95 OPET had 72 members: 46 regular and 26 contributing.

Lon Hocker

Town budgets \$20,000 for OP weir design, thanks to OPET

\$20,000 allocated in budget

The Town of Falmouth has included in the budget for fiscal 1997 \$20,000 to be spent "for engineering to pick a location for and design of an adjustable weir to be built at the outlet to Oyster Pond,..."

A stunning success

The members of your Pond Management Committee (Barry Norris, Don Zinn, Stan Hart and Carl Breivogel) are very proud of our being able to obtain this commitment from the Town. Needless to say, there was a lot of effort and good will from many others which got us to this successful result. In all truth, we are somewhat stunned at our success at obtaining this money on our first try.

The Questionnaire and Brian Howes

The explanation for our success apparently stems from your cooperation and the work of Brian Howes' lab at WHOI. Your cooperation because you completed and returned the questionnaire which we sent out early last year asking for your concerns regarding Oyster Pond and how it should be managed. The results of the survey showed, for one thing, that there were no conflicting agendas regarding Pond management. Brian Howes and the Pond Watchers for studying the Pond since 1987 (with the financial aid of Falmouth) and proposing a science based management plan.

Approval by Conservation Commission

When the Conservation Commission was presented with copies of the responses to the questionnaire and an explanation from Brian Howes' of the management plan, they approved it unanimously and sent a letter to the Town Commissioners informing them of their action and recommending that the plan be implemented. The Town Engineer attended the Commission meeting.

And the Planning Commission

Next we went to the Planning Commission because they are the ones who have been getting the money for the WHOI testing. They also approved our proposal.

Warrant before the Town Meeting

We had submitted a petition article for the warrant which must by law go before Town Meeting so the Commissioners approved the Article as a matter of form without discussion. The article did go before the DPW subcommittee of the Finance Committee. It was proposed to the full committee for approval by the subcommittee which approval was obtained after discussion. The only questioning comments were that a couple of members would have preferred to see our article come from a Town organization rather than as a petition article. The committee, in its wisdom, recognized this as an improper objection because of state law. The Town Engineer and engineering office provided good backup support.

Passed without objection

Town Meeting subsequently included our article in those which were passed without objection!!

Request for Quotes

Now a Request for Proposal has to go out to Consulting Engineers to quote for the design. Here again OPET is taking the lead and preparing the RFQ so that bids can be in when the new fiscal year starts July 1st. When an engineer is engaged, the design will be completed, and then contractor quotations obtained. If all goes well, we hope to have another article at the spring Town Meeting next year so we can get the weir built.

Barry Norris, Pond Management Committee Chair

OPET reprinting "A Coastal Pond..." by K.O. Emery; reserve your copy!

This book, written in the late 60's, describes studies Emery made of Oyster Pond. An Epilogue by Bryan Howes and Stan Hart brings it up to date in a new printing OPET will be introducing at its annual meeting. Members will be able to purchase this classic at a discount price of \$15 before and during the meeting.

A Classic Revisited

K.O. Emery's classic study of Oyster Pond "A COASTAL POND studied by oceanographic methods", originally published in 1969, is a fascinating little volume that sets forth a study which Dr. Emery labelled a "low-cost backyard operation". It is of more than historic interest, however, as it broadly defines many of the issues which still demand our attention with respect to Oyster Pond, and indeed coastal ponds more generally.

From 2000 BC to 1969

Dr. Emery "reads" the sediments of the pond to trace the waning of the great ice sheet, the rise of sea level and the eventual change from fresh water to infilling by the ocean about 2200 years ago. Slow reversion to brackish water occurred as a baymouth bar began sealing this coastal bay some 900 years ago. The local settlement called Suckanesset in 1668 became Falmouth by 1693, and by 1773 the oysters were in irreparable decline, victim to the continuing "freshening" of the pond. Sand layers in the pond document the sporadic history of hurricanes reaching back to 960 A.D., with the most recent in 1991 adding its quota of heavy salt water to the stagnant bottom waters of the south basin. This noxious pool, first described by Dr. Emery, is only part of the pulse of the pond; summer layering and anoxia, wind currents, mixing and fall overturn with its memorable aromas, life and anti-life.

From 1969 to the Present

Dr. Emery leaves us circa 1969 with a reasonably healthy pond. The impact of future settlement around the pond is left an open issue. Since then, and especially with the efforts of the Falmouth Pond Watchers, this impact is being chronicled systematically and vividly. To weave the present to the past, Drs. Brian Howes and Stan Hart have supplied an "Epilogue" to Dr. Emery's book. These two scientists from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution review the latest findings with respect to water resources, nutrient loading, anoxic events, and the flora and fauna. Watershed management and themes for future pond stewardship are here as well, and all provide a fitting tribute to the "low-cost backyard operation" with which Dr. Emery started it all in 1969.

Stan Hart

OPET Launchs Drive to Preserve Land in Oyster Pond Watershed

Land Preservation- The Second Front

Preserving it from development

As mentioned in the Committee reports, OPET plans to take over the effort to purchase an undeveloped piece of property at the head of the pond. This property is currently owned by Salt Pond Bird Sanctuaries, Inc., and has a remaining mortgage of about \$95,000. It is strategically located, and OPET hopes that it can be the first step in a program to cap the nutrient loading on the pond by limiting development in its watershed.

A critical parcel

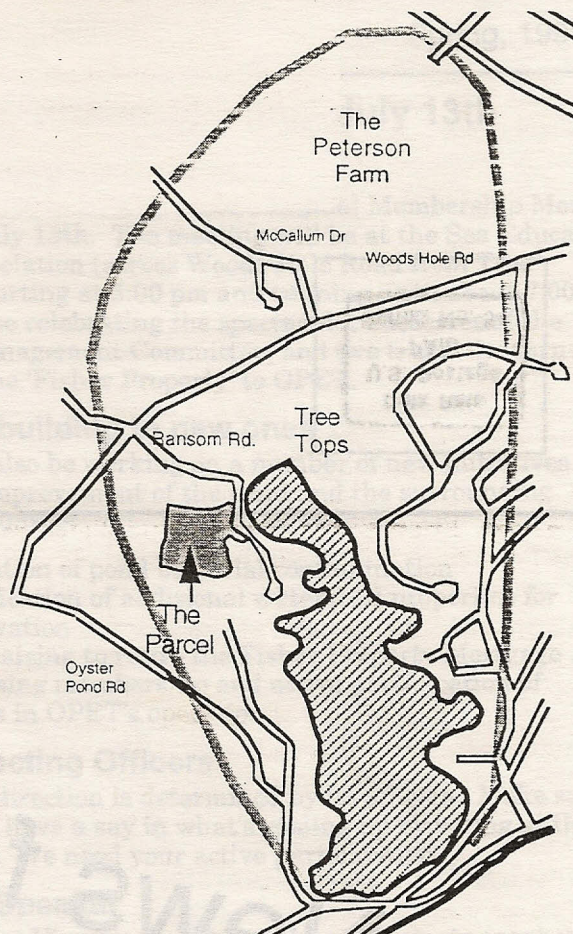
The parcel, shown in gray in the drawing at the right, is 7.5 acres of undeveloped land. OPET considers this parcel to be of critical importance in its drive to preserve what remains of open space around the pond. It and a larger adjacent piece are two of the few unbuilt parcels near the pond.

We need your help

We are launching a major fund raising effort to retire this mortgage. This will demonstrate to the town the willingness of the people in this neighborhood to make financial commitments to preserving this beautiful area, perhaps encouraging the town to join forces with us in further preservation efforts. We need your contributions, but also your help in fund raising. If you can help in any way, please contact one of the members of our fund raising committee:

Bill Kerfoot, 49 Ransom Rd, Fal 02540, 548-5825
Jecily Coles, 100 Ransom Rd, Fal 02540, 548-1182
John Dowling, 106 Ransom Rd, Fal 02540, 548-2926
Duncan Aspinwall, 408 Elm Rd. Fal 02540, 540-3816

The Oyster Pond Watershed



The outline in the drawing above shows the Oyster Pond watershed. The information comes from the "Town of Falmouth Zoning Map overlay districts". If you live within it the nutrients from your septic system and lawn fertilizer add to the pond's nutrient loading.

It's time to renew your Membership! (or become a member)

OPET New Membership / Renewal Form: Make sure our information is up to date, check your address on the other side for correctness. OPET offers two levels of membership: Regular (\$25/year) and Sustaining (\$100/year), from June 1 to May 31 each year. Check if you are willing to help: ☐ Pond Management, ☐ Fund raising, ☐ Land Acquisition, ☐ Membership drive, ☐ Publicity. Please note any special skills: _____

Name _____

Sustaining____ or Regular____

Summer

Winter

Address _____

Telephone _____

Please make your check payable to OPET and mail with this form to Lon Hocker, Treasurer, OPET, 74 Ransom Rd., Falmouth MA 02540. Membership fees are tax-deductable. Annual membership expires May 31 each year.

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Invitation to our annual meeting, July 13th

Committee reports and the like

20,000 design contract for Oyster Pond Weir

OPET's reprinting of K.O. Emery's Oyster Pond book

OPET's Treasurer report

Map of the Oyster Pond Watershed

OPET's effort to preserve land in the watershed

Membership Renewal / Application

Required reading... There will be a test!

News from OPET!

Oyster Pond Environmental Trust

74 Ransom Road

Falmouth, MA 02540

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