

# Stockbridge Bowl Association



March 2019

## Report to Stockbridge Bowl Association Members and Donors:

At our Annual Meeting last summer, we set out our revised plans for restoring Stockbridge Bowl for the 150 members attending. We depicted our program, designated as Plan B, as being like a three legged stool, explaining that we intended to proceed simultaneously with three objectives: (1) using a widely tested and approved herbicide to control invasive Milfoil as recommended by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), (2) dredging a channel behind Kwunikwat Island and down the Outlet to reduce the sedimentation there using methodology approved by NHESP, and (3) hydro-raking water lilies in those same two areas behind the Island and down the Outlet. Save Stockbridge Bowl funds received from our generous donors under Plan A will be applied to all three components of Plan B.

## MILFOIL/WEEDS - HERBICIDE

In September, we were confronted with an algae bloom--an extremely rare occurrence on our Bowl--bringing a type of cyanobacteria to the surface and inducing the State to “close” the lake for three weeks, forcing the relocation of the Josh Billings Triathlon among other disruptions. Neither the State nor the Town tested the cyanobacteria to determine whether it was of the rare poisonous variety. The Stockbridge Health Department is taking the lead in analyzing the cause of the cyanobacteria outbreak and proposing a remedy. The Health Department is still looking to hire a consultant to assist it with this effort. We are told by the head of the Health Department that it is disinclined to hire SOLitude Lake Management, which is helping us with the herbicide treatment for Milfoil and which has proposed a program for dealing with cyanobacteria which they have used successfully on other New England lakes. The Health Department intends to ask the Town to fund its efforts to manage cyanobacteria but so far has not submitted that request to the Town.

Meanwhile, the SBA has been proceeding persistently to advance our plans to control Milfoil based on the strategy we outlined last summer. You will recall that our initial objective (Plan A) was to drawdown the lake by 5.5 feet in early winter

to freeze the roots of the Milfoil growing near shore, a plan encouraged by our Conservation Commission and by the State's Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. But then, last spring, the NHESP embargoed any deep drawdown because the agency now ruled that method would "take" habitat from a rare and endangered snail, *Marstonia lustrica*.

We, in consultation with the NHESP, therefore turned to Plan B, using "fluridone," an herbicide widely and safely used nationwide for over three decades to control Milfoil. This will eradicate not just the Milfoil around the shoreline of the lake but out to its maximum depth of 16 feet.

Notwithstanding a report by its own expert confirming the wisdom of using "fluridone" to control Milfoil, the Stockbridge Conservation Commission voted in January to try to block our use of this herbicide. The SBA is now asking the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to overrule the Stockbridge Commission and we are appealing in Superior Court. We have just learned that the DEP is planning to convene a meeting to be attended by the SBA, the Stockbridge Conservation Commission, the NHESP, and the DEP.

We are hoping to begin using the herbicide this spring and to follow up with a study of the weeds in the lake, which will be compared to the findings of the study commissioned by the SBA last summer, to evaluate the impact of the herbicide application.

## DREDGING

To proceed with plans for dredging behind Kwunikwat Island and down the outlet, the Town had retained GZA Environmental to assist with civil engineering. After settling an overbilling dispute, GZA has done little to advance our program. To break this logjam, the Select Board has appointed Gregg Wellenkamp, a respected area general contractor, to be the Town's Project Manager with authority to supervise GZA or any other engineering firm. The Town will still retain control over any contract amendments. Gregg is also a member of the board of the Stockbridge Bowl Association.

## WATER LILIES

We will continue to assess the water lily problem, particularly after the lake has been treated with the herbicide. It is our understanding that hydroraking is far more effective in the fall.

Richard Seltzer, President

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