

Health Department News (Continued)

Healthy Lakes and Ponds Collaborative Receives Approval for CPC Grant

Westford's Healthy Lakes & Ponds Collaborative (HLPC) is very happy to announce that our recent application for funding to assist in ensuring the health and quality of many of Westford's recreational water bodies was unanimously approved by the Community Preservation Committee! This is incredibly good news as Westford has a number lakes and ponds that provide many valuable resources for residents and are a key component of its character. Our next step to obtain the funding is to have it approved at this spring's upcoming Town Meeting. The development of the town and population growth have added demands and stresses on these water bodies, and recent studies in several water bodies have identified a number of management challenges for their preservation and the valuable resources they provide.

The HLPC includes representatives from Westford's Town Departments (Conservation, Engineering, GIS, Health, Town Manager, Recreation, and Water) and various organizations that have a mission or charter to preserve water bodies for the benefit of their members and local residents. Joining together in a collaborative effort was the first step toward preserving the Town's water resources and reducing nutrient flow into the water bodies.

HLPC began meeting in August 2013 to look at Westford's Lakes and Ponds after experiencing reoccurring cyanobacteria or blue green algae blooms on Nabnasset Lake and its associated health concerns. Due to the bloom's severity in 2012, swimming and most other recreational activities were prohibited by the Health Department for a two month period. This bloom is part of a range of issues that have compromised not only Nabnasset Lake and Forge Pond, but other ponds in town.

The Healthy Lakes & Ponds Collaborative members have committed to working together for the long term, to determine the best course of action now and are continually making positive steps towards preserving Westford's water resources for the future!

