

Pattagansett Lake Association Update, 5/2024

Dear Members and Friends,

Since our last update in February, the following has transpired:

Aquatic Invasive Plant Grant Application and 2024 Treatment Plans

Weed control in our lake is the top priority of the PLA at this time and will probably continue to be for the foreseeable future.

The PLA was one of 41 applicants seeking a share of the \$550,000 DEEP funded for their Aquatic Invasive Species control program. The 41 applications requested a combined \$1.6 million. There were 13 successful applicants, we were not one of them. Our request was for \$20,000 based on our cost for last year's ProcellaCOR treatment. We have a lot of concerns about how DEEP processed these applications and we are following up with our state representatives in the Legislature but there will be no state assistance coming for this year's planned treatment. Maybe we were over optimistic but this was a huge disappointment.

Don Danila and I met on May 8 with First Selectman Dan Cunningham to follow up on our January letter to the town Board of Selectmen requesting \$1800 assistance for our invasive plant control efforts. This number was based on our treatment of the state boat launch area and East Lyme Rowing Association, (ELRA), dock as part of the \$18,000 we spent on last year's treatment and 10% seems a fair and reasonable request. We asked the town for support last year and received none. The results in removing the milfoil in this area were excellent. Our meeting with Mr. Cunningham went very well, he was generous with his time and although generally supportive, he could not promise funding would be forthcoming. We discussed several avenues within the town budget from where funding could come. We stressed the importance of the lake to the town as a recreational asset and the frequent use of it by the high school crew program and the rowing association and the need to fund for lake maintenance. Per the EL Rowing Association website, high school participants in the crew program each pay a \$285 fee. We suggested a small stipend could be added to this charge to support the maintenance of the lake. We told Mr. Cunningham this would not necessarily be an annual request as we are under the understanding another ProcellaCOR treatment will not be necessary next year and possibly the year after that. We hope to have some follow up from the town as the budget process is finalized over the next few weeks.

We also sent a letter to the rowing association president seeking his financial support, at least in some minimal way, towards our treatment program. We have received no response to the letter or to email follow up.

We are working with DEEP to add signage to the boat launch area stressing the need that boats and trailers entering the lake to be free of any plant debris that may have attached leaving other water bodies and the need to inspect and clean them before they enter the water. There is existing signage at the launch now but it is inadequate given the size of the problem invasive plants create. The boat launch is the primary, if not sole source, of invasive plants entering the lake. We are concerned for the potential of the hydrilla plant to be spread this way and should we be infested with hydrilla, it would dwarf our milfoil issue. DEEP has asked us to propose a design for the sign and that will be provided asap.

Regarding the 2024 weed treatment plan, an email to members will go out soon seeking participation in funding the application of the herbicide ProcellaCOR, the same product we used last year. The plan is to have it done in mid-July and the costs will be similar, if not identical to last year. In 2023, 19 participating property owners combined to raise the \$18,000 the treatment cost. We hope to have a similar, if not better, response this year given the very positive results we saw last year. A grant award would have relieved us of this burden, and any funding from the town will help lighten the load, but other than that, the costs fall on our membership to provide at least this minimal level of maintenance our lake requires.

The PLA board of directors had also been pursuing a second herbicide permit, one specifically designed to treat the water lilies. DEEP notified us that an endangered plant survey was required as part of the process for this permit. We talked to three qualified parties who could conduct the survey and each expressed interest in quoting us for the project. We prepared and sent out an RFP, (request for proposal), but only got one quote back for \$9,000. We had hoped to be able to pursue this if we received the grant so failing that, we have put this on hold for the foreseeable future. The ProcellaCOR treatment applied last year eradicated the lilies where applied but we are told that is only a short term fix. We will have to see how they come back this year and how a second application will affect them after that.

Dam Update

DEEP has informed us that an RFP has gone out to engineering firms requesting costs for a number of repairs they believe are necessary to the dam. We are not familiar with the specific repairs but it appears they go well beyond our request to replace the leaking flash boards. I spoke with an engineer familiar with the request and the DEEP process and was told something like this usually has a 2-3 year timeline but it is good to know our dam maintenance is on the DEEP radar.

Website and Facebook

The PLA website, pattagansettlake.com, has been revitalized and we hope you take a look at it. It is also linked to our Facebook page. This update, a previous one, and BOD meeting minutes are loaded as well as contact info for the board members. Please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns.

Annual Meeting

The PLA annual meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, July 10 at 6pm at the Campground beach. 2024 dues, (\$25/member), are due at that time. We expect to have a Paypal link up and working on the website by then.

Mick Byrne

President, Pattagansett Lake Association