



# Friends of Winter Pond Newsletter– Fall 2006



## The Pansy Patch

Duffy Realty LLC acquired the ten acre site at 223-225 Cambridge Street (aka the Pansy Patch) during the spring of 2006. Since acquiring it they have met with, spoken to, and appeared before many municipal boards and commissions as well as neighborhood groups, including the Friends of Winter Pond. During this time they have worked to develop a plan for the re-use of the Pansy Patch site that the neighborhood, concerned boards and Town meeting will agree works best for the community, the neighborhood and the owner. The plan to be presented to Town Meeting, includes fifty, 2 -bedroom, cluster housing units with five being targeted at low to moderate income home owners. The zoning and development articles are part of this fall's Town Meeting Warrant.



Swan in mid-flight

## GOOD NEWS!

Thanks to the diligence of State Representative Paul Casey and State Senator Pat Jehlen, the Mass. Legislature included in its budget, for fiscal year 2007, funding of \$15,000 for the Town of Winchester for aquatic weed control.

The notice of this earmark grant, voted in June 2006 and with the advice of Conservation Commission Administrator, Elaine Vreeland, a narrative history of Pond treatments contributed by FWP members, the appropriate request was filed on time by Liz Silva, Town Grants Coordinator and Bob Conway, Town Engineer. Award of funds will be made by November 20,2006.

Members of FWP will work with the Town to complete required documentation (plans, specifications and necessary permits). All project work must be completed by June 30, 2007. Rep. Paul Casey noted: "Winchester needs these monies to make some critical improvements to our town's infrastructure and conservation areas".

## THANK YOU WINCHESTER! Submitted

by Ann McGovern

The first-ever town-wide fund raising campaign for The Friends of Winter Pond,launched in June 2005, has been very successful. Donations have proved that Winter Pond is appreciated town-wide, well beyond the abutters and residents of the Winter Pond Watershed. Almost every precinct in town is represented on our donor lists.

Contributors were all invited to a thank you celebration, the "Ice-Breaker" party held at the home of Marianne and Willey Peckham last March, appreciated and enjoyed by all..

Since that time, FWP has received many more donations. Our organization was the first beneficiary of the Woburn Whole Foods Market "5 per cent day". Newly opened this April, the Woburn site joins its nationally recognized organic food market organization in annually contributing to both global and local charitable endeavors.

With the guidance of their marketing specialist, Anne Wilson, The Friends of Winter Pond received 5% of the day's income on Tuesday, April 25- \$3,641.00. The Friends of Winter Pond organization is very grateful, and extends best wishes for success to this new business member of the community.

Also, of special note is the generous donation of longtime Winchester benefactor, Paul Mahoney. 5% of the Mahoney Garden Center Sales on Wednesday, June 7, 2006 would be given to the Friends of Winter Pond and an additional 5 % of sales to the Upper Mystic Lakes Association. Unfortunately, it was a day of torrential rain but even so, Mahoney's kept their promise. The FWP received \$315 and a promise to try it again next year.

The FWP organization is very indebted to its generous donors and will continue to work to preserve and maintain Winter Pond. We welcome both volunteers and financial help and remain very grateful for both.

# Protecting Winter Pond: The Watershed & Policy Context

On Tuesday, October 17, The Friends of Winter Pond hosted Nancy Hammett as guest lecturer for the first John Clarke Memorial Lecture, in memory of John who was a founding member and longtime treasurer.

Hammett is recent past executive director of the Mystic River Watershed Association, and continues to serve on the Association's Policy Committee. She was the principal author of the *Mystic River Watershed Assessment and Action Plan*. Hammett has also been an environmental policy consultant for almost 30 years, and is presently participating in the Massachusetts DEP Storm Water Advisory Committee's work on the State's revised Storm Water Policy. She holds a B.A. in Economics from Wellesley College and a Master's Degree in Management from the MIT Sloan School.

Nancy Hammett addressed a full room at Winchester Library with her presentation on public policy concerns for local and regional watersheds. Hammett opened her remarks by asking her audience to see themselves as advocates-residents-voters, and to think about all three roles during her talk. She used slides to illustrate the highly developed, dense, and urban progression of the Mystic River Watershed (to include Winter Pond), and noted that watershed problems in the residential areas have the residents as the source - as different from industrial sites or open space land use. Hammett cited the following as the major problems:

- Low flow – ground water is not being maintained sufficiently to keep up with river flow
- Sewage pollution – lack of inspection and fixes to pipes
- Nutrient enrichment – mainly from dog and geese waste, and from run off of fertilizers
- Overgrowth of aquatic weeds – choking other needed vegetation
- Sediment – too much collecting that then changes the ecological integrity of ponds



Additionally, Hammett described the need for storm water management and the need for flood control. She said short-term solutions to flooding haven't been effective, and said that towns need to look at where water could be held (to include dredging projects). Hammett said that the State is presently reconsidering its storm water policy, and is seeking stronger adherence to standards.



## An unwelcome new visitor

GeoSyntec Consultants conducted an annual assessment of aquatic plants in Winter Pond and Little Winter Pond in August 2006. The aquatic survey was conducted at 25 sampling locations located in both water bodies. This professional assessment confirmed our previous studies, and in addition, documented a first sighting of a new invasive plant, previously undocumented in Massachusetts. The most commonly found plants were:

**Waterweed** (*Elodea nuttallii*). present at 84% of the sampling stations was the most dominant plant at 68% of the sampling stations.

**White water lily** (*Nymphaea odorata*) was the most common floating-leaved plant, seen at 92% of sampling stations, dominant at 32% of stations. White water lily was found growing most densely in the southeast corner of Winter Pond and at numerous shallow areas along the pond perimeter.

**Watershield** (*Brasenia schreberi*) was another common floating-leaved plant. This plant can be distinguished from water lilies by its ovalshaped leaf, which is coated on its underside by a clear jelly-like substance. Watershield was observed at 68% of the sampling stations, typically mixed in with water lilies. Watershield was a dominant plant at two stations (8% of stations).

**Coontail** (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) was present at 60% of the sampling stations and was the dominant plant at one sampling station near the center of Winter Pond. Coontail was most commonly found growing near the pond bottom. This plant, named for its appearance (similar to a raccoon's tail), has leaves with conspicuous teeth on one side.

**Purple Bladderwort** (*Utricularia purpurea*) was found at 48% of the sampling stations and was a dominant plant at one station along the eastern shoreline of Winter Pond. This carnivorous plant captures and digests zooplankton (microscopic animals) in clusters of "bladders" for which it is named. When in bloom, this plant has small purple flowers.

In addition, five species of **invasive, non-native plants** were documented during the field assessment. These are:

- **Water Chestnut** (*Trapa natans*), an invasive species that has the potential to rapidly spread and mat the surface of lakes and slow moving rivers, was found growing at two locations in Winter Pond and one location Little Winter Pond. Winter Pond and Little Winter Pond should be monitored at least annually for the presence of this plant and all plant should be removed by the roots to prevent future spread.

**Eurasian milfoil** (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) was found growing in low densities at three sampling locations along the eastern shoreline of Winter Pond. This aggressive plant tends to grow in long, ropey strands and can form dense monoculture beds that outcompete native species. Mechanical harvesting can exacerbate the infestation of this plant by creating plant fragments that float to new areas and readily re-grow into new plants.

- **Purple Loosestrife** (*Lythrum salicaria*) is an emergent wetland plant that was found growing along the pond edge at five Winter Pond sampling stations and two stations at Little Winter Pond. Although this plant has attractive purple flower, it can aggressively replace other native wetland plants that provide much higher food and habitat value to wildlife. FWP is employing small beetles to control this invader.

- **Common Reed** (*Phragmites australis*) is tall emergent wetland plant that was found growing at one sampling station on the western shore of Winter Pond. Like purple loosestrife, this plant tends to reduce biodiversity in wetlands and out-compete native species.

- **Flowering Rush** (*Butomus umbellatus*) was observed at one location along the western shore of Little Winter Pond. This sighting is the first (and currently only) sighting of this invasive plant in Massachusetts. Flowering Rush is well established in Vermont in the Lake Champlain drainage and along the Connecticut River in Connecticut. In water, this plant has ribbon-like leaves that emerge from a fleshy rhizome. The emergent form produces a cluster of pink and white flowers. FWP is re-evaluating our weed control strategy in response to this newest invader.



## Winter Pond Visitors

How lucky we are to be a way station for migrating birds! The summer passed with our usual "residents" including the myriad song birds, the Mallard ducks who raised a family of seven, a nesting pair of swans who did not nest a second time after the tragic destruction of their first nest by, perhaps, the coyote seen in our area, the Canada geese visiting somewhat fitfully, the Great Blue Herons coming to fish and sea gulls moving inland when storms urge them to quieter waters.

When migration season arrives, we welcome a far greater variety of bird life. Every spring and fall the Osprey (fish hawk) pair stay a while. It's easy to distinguish them with their very white underpants and dark uppers. The Red Tails court madly in the spring and then nest, as usual (recently) over at Horn Pond and the cormorants come to fish very often.

Our smallest friends arrive, some staying and some moving on: the Ruby-throated hummingbirds, White-Throated sparrows on their way north, the King fisher whose raucous call can be heard all summer, the nesting pair of Black Crowned Night Herons which nest behind Margie Lamar's house (see pic above), gaggles of Gold Finches, Robins, Blue Jays, Mocking birds, the sap sucker, Titmice, Juncos, Cardinals, Sparrows, Swallows, Nuthatches, Titmice, Grosbeaks – so many and such a charming variety.

Migrating visitors to the pond often include American and Hooded Mergansers, the charming little Bufflehead duck and I believe I've identified Lesser Scaups. Always interesting and I bet readers have identified many more!



Winter Pond Ice-Breaker party



Fox (L) - Great Blue Heron (R)

## **Friends of Winter Pond Officers**

**Bob Joy, President - [jeannejoy2003@yahoo.com](mailto:jeannejoy2003@yahoo.com)**

**Leslie Diller, V. Pres. - [geoleslie@comcast.net](mailto:geoleslie@comcast.net)**

**Al Muggia, Secretary - [almug@comcast.net](mailto:almug@comcast.net)**

**Judie Muggia - Treasurer - [jpm14@comcast.net](mailto:jpm14@comcast.net)**

### ***Kudos to:***

-The newly elected officers of FWP for accepting responsibilities for the organization.

-George Diller for ongoing efforts to chronicle a longterm management plan for Winter Pond.

-Matt Shaw, the 14 year old fisherman from Woburn who caught the 20.5 lb, 33.5 inch long giant koi in Winter Pond last April, hence removing a major threat to the habitat of pond fish and other wildlife.

-Winchester Star, Daily Times Chronicle and WINCAM for publishing our news.

-Special thanks to Bill Ryerson, photo journalist.

-Matt Stone, for preparing 501(c) 3 tax returns

**Note Cards** featuring photographs of Winter Pond are again available. Great for small gifts, stocking stuffers, thank you notes etc. \$5.00 for 5 cards and envelopes. Call Kate (729-9618) or Ann (729-2661) to order.

## **Non-profit and charitable organizations meet in Winchester**

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Friends were invited to participate in WinCam's "An Evening of Civic conversation" - a program planned to advertise and highlight to the public, the non-profit and charitable organizations serving Winchester. Members Jane Boland, Barbara Copas, Ann McGovern and Judie Muggia manned the FWP booth which featured our new photo display board and FWP information leaflets. Members of the public attended, including Philippe Koenig who visited with Barbara Copas during the evening. Judie represented the Friends on camera with interviewer Sydelle Pittas.



(L) Philippe Koenig of Winchester - (R) Barbara Copas



**Sunrise on winter pond**

**Friends of Winter Pond  
14 Dartmouth Street  
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