

Eastham officials to address stormwater runoff pollution

Public meeting on Wednesday will detail plans to help clean up affected ponds

EASTHAM — The system that channels stormwater runoff from Route 6 near Ministers and Schoolhouse ponds was designed and built in 1938. The simple system drained a length of the state highway and discharged runoff into a tank before being discharged directly into the ponds.

“The only consideration at the time was with public safety,” Eastham Health Director Jane Crowley said.

The town is now working with Horsley Witten Group, an environmental and engineering consultant, and consultants with SOLitude Lake Management to come up with designs to remedy pollution from stormwater runoff.

The town and representatives from Horsley Witten will hold a public meeting on Zoom from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Wednesday to discuss options and opportunities to get the job done. Questions and comments from the public are encouraged.

“We want to have a community discussion about what we’re thinking about and hopefully get support,” Crowley said.

The town has already removed invasive phragmites from sections of the 22-acre pond system. The rooted aquatic plants are considered a nuisance and were removed using hydroraking methods.

An aeration system for both ponds will continue to push more oxygen into

the water through diffusers.

The next step is to address the years of damage caused by the road runoff.

"We want to remove the pollutants before they get discharged into the ponds," Crowley said.

The plans will focus on Fisherman's Landing, a piece of town-owned property, and the stormwater runoff from the pond side of Route 6.

Town officials and staff with the Public Works and Health departments have worked with consultants on draft designs. The meeting will cover design plans and changes that will result to the site.

"We're looking at this as an opportunity for education and outreach," Crowley said.

The work at Fisherman's Landing will be paid for from the town's wastewater planning fund. Crowley hopes that state funding will help pay for part of the project. "This is runoff from a state road," she said.

Easements will be needed on one side of Route 6, but Crowley hopes the benefits will draw support for the project.

"This is a positive project we can all get behind," she said.

For more information, visit eastham-ma.gov.

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