

## WNRTA Meeting, July 9, 2015

The meeting opened at 7:30 with a welcome from WNRTA president Susan Reverby.

Susan began by introducing Wellfleet selectman Paul Pilcher, who described a major issue affecting all residents: how to fund the \$12 million dredging project for Wellfleet Harbor. Paul earnestly requested that as many people as possible attend an open meeting of the Board of Selectmen scheduled for July 28<sup>th</sup> at the Council On Aging. The meeting will include local business people and politicians as well as congressmen, senators, and the media. A 'full court press' from residents and nonresidents is essential because federal and state funding depend in large part on our community's commitment to the project.

Next on the agenda was Don Palladino, president of The Friends of Herring River, with an overview of the Herring River Restoration Project. With a scope of over 1,000 acres, this project is one of the largest salt marsh restorations in the Northeast, at a cost of \$40+ million. Because of its complexity, the project will unfold over time, in incremental steps, with a final review of plans expected by the end of 2015. In 2016-2017, the focus will be on securing funding, and construction is slated to take place during 2018-2020.

Don encouraged the audience to attend the Friends of Herring River Annual Meeting at the COA on August 18 at 4pm.

Next came a presentation by aquatic ecologist Derrick Alcott, a PhD student at UMass Amherst. He described his work researching and tracking river herring in Wellfleet and Truro and explained why these fish are an essential link in the food web for fresh and saltwater ecosystems. This kind of research brings a clearer understanding of the obstacles herring face in navigating around man-made barriers and reinforces the urgency of restoring Wellfleet's salt marshes to their original condition.

These three related projects raised questions and stimulated discussions, among them: how the restoration of Herring River will affect shell-fishing and fishing; how water quality might be altered; how herring are physically tagged; the historical significance of Wellfleet's herring; how property owners in the affected areas have reacted to the project; how solutions are being developed for low-lying roads; and how project costs are being allocated among federal and state sources.

The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Van Dorn

