

Dear Lake Quinsigamond Watershed Association,

My name is Curtis Colonero and I am a Lake Quinsigamond resident. I recently read the call for ideas in the current newsletter and wanted to share my thoughts on the water quality issues within Heron Cove on the south end of the lake.

You may or may not be aware of the large, man-made rock structure that branches over 200 feet from the island. As seen in Figure 1, the darkened water areas show these rocks, which lie hidden under less than 12 inches of water at normal lake levels. This unnatural rock formation was placed there by ice harvesters at the beginning of the 20th century to facilitate their industry during the winter months.



Figure 1: Aerial View of Heron Cove

The rock barrier has long outlived its intended purpose and has become detrimental to the Cove's water because it constricts circulation. Above the lakebed sits a 12+ inch thick dense mat of filamentous algae (Figure 2), which is more commonly known as "moss" or "pond scum". As it grows, the algae gives off oxygen that becomes entrapped in the mat of strands. This gives it buoyancy causing it to rise to the surface where it covers large areas of the cove during the warmer months filling the air with the unpleasant odor of decomposing organisms. Filamentous algae have no known direct food value to wildlife and is consuming an increasing volume of water each New Year.

During the recent lake draw downs I was able lift out some of the filamentous algae which was exposed at the waterfront. The following season I witnessed an amazing utilization of the cleaned area for fish nesting. It is obvious that this mat of algae has greatly reduced the available local nesting areas.



In the 2008 boating season, I personally witnessed the grounding of several watercrafts into the hidden shallow rocks. Fortunately none of the events witnessed resulted in bodily injury but severe hull and propeller damage was inevitable. One boat had catastrophic engine failure and had to be towed to the ramp. Figure 3 below shows one of these events right after occurrence and before the damaged craft was forcefully towed off the rocks by a second craft. On April 25, 2009 I witnessed SIX such collisions.



Figure 3: Boat Grounding (Heron Cove)

The Worcester County Search and Rescue Team placed a marker buoy near Heron Island last season in attempt to prevent further accidents. Although I commend the team for their efforts, the single buoy did not prevent further boat collisions to the right and left of the buoy.

I would like to propose the harvesting of filamentous algae and removal of the man-made underwater rock structure to restore Heron Cove to its native state. In addition to an increase in safety for boaters, the promotion of natural water flow will alleviate the

currently still, stagnant, non-swimmable waters that harvest filamentous algae. Removing the manmade dam will allow nature to include Heron Cove in the natural filtering and cleansing process of the lake.

The Lake Quinsigamond Committee and Conservation Commission referred to a contact within the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. They are currently researching the applicable permits needed for such cleanup efforts. Please feel free to contact me by any means if interested in supporting the effort to clean up and restore Heron Cove to its original beauty.

Regards,

Curtis Colonero

Article Dated: 11 May 2009 – Permission to Distribute on News Site, WCSART

Note to the above: Worcester County SAR Team, WRSP Patrols, plans to install the remaining Buoy before the 2009 Memorial day weekend. Any response to this Article can be Email via:

wcsarteam@cs.com