

WNRTA Spring 2018 e-Letter!

Wellfleet Non-resident Taxpayers' Association
Promoting community involvement and communication

Spring 2018 eLetter

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Winter came late this year and then slammed into the Outer Cape with a vengeance. Once the Nor'easters abated, spring arrived slowly. On the ocean side, the pines were battered by such fierce winds that they are still brown in mid-May. Leafless trees gave the town and woods a wintry look as the days lengthened and restaurants and shops began to open. Refurbishing of the Sagamore Bridge snarled traffic and made the trip off-Cape a nightmare during the month of April. In their off-season homes, the WNRTA board kept track of what was going on in Wellfleet and made plans for the 2018 summer season.

Looking ahead: WNRTA 2018 summer programs

Thursday, July 12 7:30 - 9:00 PM Council on Aging
Impact of Climate Change on Wellfleet and What Can We Do?

Greg Berman, from the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension, will address "The Problems of Climate Change" and David Mead Fox, from the Massachusetts Climate Action Network and Climate Mobilization Outer Cape, will share ideas about "What is to be Done?"

Thursday, July 19 7:30 - 9:00 PM Preservation Hall

Taxation without Representation: Should Property Ownership Define Voting Rights?

Susan M. Reverby, Professor Emerita, Wellesley College, will give an overview of the relationship between property ownership and voting, historically and today, and explore how it affects the status of non-resident taxpayers in Wellfleet. Steve Fossella, Provincetown Part-Time Resident Taxpayers Association, and Cathy Haynes, Truro Part-Time Resident Taxpayers' Association, will explain the options under consideration in their towns.

Thursday, August 2 7:30 - 9:00 PM Preservation Hall

State of the Town

Members of the Board of Selectmen will join us for our annual meeting and explain their goals for 2018-2019. Bring your questions and ideas about what is happening in Wellfleet, how your taxes are being spent, and what the BOS sees as the most important issues facing the town.

Thursday, August 16 7:30 - 9:00 PM Council on Aging

The new Superintendent of CCNS, Brian Carlstrom, a 30-year veteran of the NPS whose last posting was at the Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Directorate in Washington, D.C., and Kathy Tevyaw, the Seashore's Deputy Superintendent since 2009, will outline their short- and long-term plans for the Park in its sixth decade. **This program is co-sponsored by the Wellfleet Forum.**

All programs are free and open to the public. Both venues are handicapped accessible.

Annual Town Meeting

Wellfleet's annual Town Meeting began on Monday, April 23rd. With over 60 articles on the warrant, it took three nights for the voters to:

- Pass an \$18.2 million budget
- Approve a Planning Board proposal for new rules on food trucks, which will now be allowed on private property by special permit in the commercial and downtown districts, but not in the district with residential abutters (where they were in 2016).



- Approve the imposition of a 3% tax on recreational marijuana sales, while postponing indefinitely an article that proposed adding recreational marijuana sales and use to the town's existing medical marijuana overlay zoning district.
- Renew a home rule petition that imposes the same room tax on vacation rentals as is paid by hotels and motels; like similar petitions voted in at the 2015 and 2017 ATMs, this one would go into effect only if approved by the state legislature.
- Amend the redesign planned for the Town Hall lawn to save the two large spruce trees. While Kai Potter, a member of the Arbor Committee, argued that "the spruces have really outgrown their space, occupying about 40% of the lawn," the petition to save the trees passed.

UPDATES:

White Crest parking lot expansion

There was no vote on the expansion of the parking lot at White Crest since in late March the Selectmen withdrew the article from the Town Meeting warrant. Former Chair of the Board of Selectman Dennis Murphy told the *Banner*, "We don't have enough information to answer relevant questions. That will take a couple of months at a minimum. Then we will have plans for people to inspect. After that gets done it puts us way beyond getting any work done this season." Selectwoman Kathleen Bacon agreed, "We need to do more due diligence, ... I would like us to consider looking at all our available town land and see what would bring a greater benefit to the majority of Wellfleet for parking."

Paine's Campground and Rail Trail extension

This summer, the Commonwealth is acquiring the campground in South Wellfleet run by the Paine family for the past 60 years. Over time, the state will increase the size and reduce the number of campsites in order to use the 28-acre parcel less intensively. The state has also begun design work on a two-mile extension of the Cape Cod Rail Trail, which will run north from LeCount Hollow Road along the old railroad bed and intersect with Route 6 near Cove Road. The Department of Conservation and Recreation anticipates that the extension will be completed by early 2019.



Herring River restoration project

After more than a decade of work, the towns of Wellfleet and Truro and the Cape Cod National Seashore are nearing completion of the environmental permit applications necessary to implement Phase 1 of the Herring River Restoration Project, one of the largest ecological restoration projects in the Northeast. To begin restoring approximately 570 acres of native tidal wetlands, Phase 1 includes:

- Replacing the existing Chequessett Neck Road dike with a new bridge and tide gates;
- Installing a dike and tide gates at Mill Creek;
- Elevating low-lying sections of Pole Dike Road and installing a tide gate;
- Elevating low-lying sections of Old County and Bound Brook Roads and installing upgraded culverts;
- Removing the portion of High Toss Road that crosses the estuary and blocks tidal flow, and elevating an upland portion of that same road to maintain access to all private properties; and
- Completing flood protection measures at Chequessett Yacht and Country Club and specified private properties.

Permitting is expected to last approximately two years, placing a construction start in 2021.

A \$700,000 state grant, recently awarded to advance the restoration of the estuary, leverages a total of \$985,034 in funding for the project in fiscal years 2017 and 2018 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Restoration Center.

A five-minute [video](#) describing the project can be viewed on the Friends of Herring River website.



Photo courtesy Friends Herring River

Tick report

According to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reported illnesses from mosquito, tick, and flea bites more than tripled from 2004 to 2016. In Massachusetts in 2017, almost 8,700 people tested positive for Lyme disease, up from 5,829 four years earlier. Most cases go unreported leaving Dr. Catherine M. Brown, deputy state epidemiologist, to estimate that about 87,000 people a year are getting Lyme disease in Massachusetts. Reported cases of anaplasmosis/ehrlichiosis, the second most common tick-borne disease, increased by 260% from 2013 to 2017. "So many people in Massachusetts are being impacted by at least one of these diseases," Brown told *The Boston Globe*. "It's increasing dramatically."

In addition to [Tick Report](#), which has been analyzing ticks sent to UMass since 2006, there is now another site using crowdsourcing to study ticks--[Tick Spotters](#) at the University of Rhode Island. The URI group identifies the species of tick and describes the risk of illness for anyone who e-mails photos of bugs they think are ticks and provides basic information such as how long each was attached--and the service is free.

Dues and donations, please

WNRTA dues are modest--\$25 for an individual, \$35 for a family-but they are what keep us afloat. To pay online, please go to <http://wnrta.org/join/>. If you prefer, you may send a check to:

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All photographs by Ellen K. Rothman

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