

## **White Pond People Management Plan (changes accepted by WPAC – 5/30/06)**

### **1. Introduction**

There is a long history of activities at White Pond that have a negative impact on the pond and surrounding lands. Implementation of regulations that safeguard the ecological integrity of the White Pond area has been minimal at best. Like Walden Pond, White Pond is a steep-sided kettle pond without inlets or outlets. Activities that increase erosion into the pond (such as trampling the vegetated slopes), decrease water quality (such as the introduction of human and animal waste), or compromise the quality of the environs (such as by littering) will inevitably lead to an irreversible degradation of White Pond. Please refer to the Task Force Report to the Board of Selectmen: “Advisory Report and Recommendations for the Long-term Stewardship of White Pond Reservation, August 1, 2005”.

If the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) is constructed, and if it results in much greater access for many more people, that will in all likelihood lead to an increase in illegal activities that are detrimental to the pond and surrounding open space. Because of this concern, the White Pond Advisory Committee agreed at its 2/28/06 meeting to draft a recommendation for a people management plan.

### **2. Status of the White Pond Reservation**

The 40.5-acres White Pond Reservation is currently town land. Before the BFRT is constructed, the Reservation must be changed to conservation land in order to better protect the entire area for the benefit of all Concord residents.

### **3. Role of Rangers and Enforcement**

Two ranger positions are now included in the town budget. The rangers will enforce regulations at all Town conservation lands, including White Pond. For them to be effective at White Pond, the following must hold:

- Rangers must have the authority and will to enforce regulations and issue fines, which include “no swimming” The “no swimming” regulation should be expanded to include “no wading except for fishermen in fishing waders.” This will make enforcement easier. Fines should be first a warning, first offense \$50, and second offense \$100. Rangers should carry digital cameras to record the illegal activities and to take pictures of offenders.
- Rangers must patrol White Pond on all summer weekends as well as hot weekdays. To deter illegal swimming and other activities, Ranger oversight would be needed from 10 AM to 5 PM on weekends and on hot weekdays and some hot evenings.
- Sanctions imposed by rangers must be supported by Concord Police

It is crucial that rules be clearly posted and consistently applied. Given the current frequency of illegal swimming and other unauthorized activities, for enforcement to be credible it must be vigorously applied from the outset. Rangers need to be comfortable

with enforcing the rules even if it means expelling nice families from a beautiful beach on a hot summer day. Fines must be issued and illegally parked cars ticketed and/or towed.

Also, a volunteer stewardship group should be formed to maintain vigilance over activities at the pond and report noncompliance and other issues to the Rangers and/or Concord Police. Volunteers should be given a special telephone number to report rule violations.

#### **4. Trail Maintenance, Use and Signage**

The Natural Resources Commission should continue to close off the ad hoc trails that are increasing erosion. Official trails should be clearly marked so as to direct travel onto these trails. Nonfunctional cement stairs should be removed and replaced where needed.

Signs listing the regulations must be posted at the entrances to the reservation and conservation lands. “No Swimming” must be very clearly displayed. Also, bicycles should be prohibited from all trails (except the rail trail) in both the reservation and conservation lands.

Signage, or fencing if necessary, must be installed and maintained where trail users leave the trail to take a short cut to White Pond.

#### **5. Parking**

Cars illegally parked in “no parking” areas near White Pond need to be ticketed or towed. In other nearby streets, when the residents agree, more “no parking” signs should be posted. Ticketing and towing of illegally parked cars is one of the most important measures for deterring illegal swimming. Towing in the area needs to be a profit center to ensure enforcement.

The Town of Sudbury must also post regulations, including prohibition on swimming, in the Frost Farm Conservation Area.

#### **6. Trash**

Trash receptacles for those using the rail trail should be available at a moderate distance from White Pond to encourage proper disposal of trash without making White Pond appear to be a picnic destination. Signage at White Pond should indicate this area has a “carry-in, carry-out” policy and that those who litter will be fined.

#### **7. Bathroom Facilities**

There must be adequate toilet facilities elsewhere on the bike path with the appropriate signage to direct people there. It is crucial that the wooded areas around White Pond do not become more extensively fouled by human waste. The native sandy soils allow fast transport of materials into the pond. We suggest placing a composting toilet along the trail behind Sanborn School.

#### **8. Dogs and Horses**

Animal waste is likewise a source of water degradation. For this reason, and others, the dog leash law must be enforced. On conservation and reservation land, and especially at Sachem's Cove, feces must be picked up and properly disposed of. Horses and dogs should not be in the beach area or in the water at any time.

### **9. Stone Root Lane Land**

The rail trail as proposed would go across the land used by Stone Root Lane residents to get to their private beach on White Pond. The Rail Trail Advisory Committee needs to closely work with the Stone Root Lane neighborhood to assure that Stone Root Lane users can use their beach. Stone Root Lane residents need to clearly delineate their private property and request the reinstallation of "no parking" signs in their neighborhood.

### **10. Other Human Impacts**

All human activities in the area have potential to impact this special open space and fragile kettle pond. If the rail trail is constructed, measures that reduce the extent of damage need to be considered and incorporated in every way possible. The narrower the trail bed, the more natural the surface, the least disturbance to surrounding areas, the better for the ecological health of the area and its wildlife. Of special concern is inevitable invasion of exotic plants that will result from the construction of the rail trail.

It is crucial that the rail trail does not make White Pond the final destination. Therefore, the Concord section cannot open before the Sudbury section.

### **11. Assessment**

The numbers of cars ticketed or towed and fines issues should be tabulated. Volunteers from White Pond will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the White Pond People Management Plan by documenting cars parked illegally on "beach" days and the number of people swimming illegally. Data from volunteers, police and rangers will help determine if the people management plan as proposed is sufficient to protect White Pond for future generations.