



CAPE COD TIMES

Opinion

Herring River project will revive long-afflicted estuary ecosystem

Posted Feb 18, 2020 at 3:01 AM

My Wellfleet neighborhood abuts the Herring River, which was degraded in 1909 after a dike restricted tidal flow to the once-healthy estuary. Because tidal flow was blocked, water quality deteriorated, resulting in the death of fish and other sea life.

Currently, a dedicated group of people has spent over a decade working to restore this precious natural resource. Benefits include protecting and enhancing shellfishing and restoring once-abundant river herring and eels. Diamondback terrapins, winter flounder and striped bass should return to spawn, as well. Birds and other wildlife also will benefit from a healthy coastal environment.

A healthy tidal marsh will buffer storm surges resulting from climate change. Carbon stored by coastal wetlands reduces global warming. Free-flowing tides will help distribute sediment, allowing the marsh to gain elevation to help mitigate the effects of rising seas. There also will be a reduction in biting mosquitoes, which breed in stagnant waters.

I ask all to join me in supporting this project. Once restored, a healthy Herring River Estuary will provide recreational opportunities and seafood to be enjoyed by residents and visitors for generations.

Mary Ellen Manning, Wellfleet

..