

Herring River Restoration Project asks that you vote “No” on Articles 47 & 48

Articles 47 and 48 ask the Town to stop permit applications on a key environmental and public works project to improve the Herring River. You should vote “no” for 7 reasons:

1. The Restoration Project is being conservatively designed and will be managed to maximize benefits and avoid unintended changes.

- Tidal flow will be restored through the Chequessett Neck Road (CNR) dike carefully while the system responses are monitored. This will ensure that the expected benefits of restoration are achieved while any unintended outcomes are avoided.
- Secondary tide gates will be installed across Mill Creek and at Pole Dike Road to ensure protection of private properties by providing an additional layer of water control.

2. Doing nothing poses risks to the community and environment.

- Without the project, the Town of Wellfleet can expect to bear the full cost of repair or eventual replacement of the 40-year old CNR dike and tide gates. The tide gates are at the end of their useful life.
- Without the project, the Town will face:
 - Continued closure of shellfish beds downstream of the CNR dike due to poor water quality;
 - Continued loss of estuarine salt marsh which provides critical habitat, protects properties from storm surges and sea level rise, and combats climate change by absorbing greenhouse gas emissions;
 - Nuisance mosquito production;
 - Continued impediments to river herring migration.

3. All private structures will be protected from flood impacts.

- Approximately two-dozen properties have structures (driveways, wells, sheds, etc.) that, without mitigation, may potentially be affected by restored tidal flow. Only six properties require on-site mitigation measures during Phase 1 of the project. The project team is working with all six property owners to develop mitigation measures acceptable to the owners. Tidal flow will not be restored in Upper Pole Dike Creek in Phase 1, and would only be proposed in the future if necessary structural flood prevention issues are resolved with landowners.
- All privately-owned structures will be protected from increases in tide levels because either protection measures approved by property owners will be completed in advance of tidal restoration, or water levels will be controlled to prevent impacts to unprotected structures. In addition to protections provided by multiple levels of tide control and continuous monitoring of project effects, project budgets will include contingency funds to cover any additional mitigation needs identified during implementation.
- Restoration will not affect any property owner’s existing flood insurance nor would it require anyone else to purchase a new flood insurance policy.

4. Increased tidal flow will improve water quality and benefit shellfish habitat.

- Restoration will improve shellfish habitat upstream and downstream of the CNR dike. Restoration is expected to lessen threats to shellfish from fecal coliform bacteria. Shellfish beds at the River mouth that have been closed for decades due to fecal coliform contamination could reopen.

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- The project does not pose a risk to shellfish beds or grants in Wellfleet Harbor. The net direction of sediment movement following the restoration will be upstream into Herring River, therefore sedimentation of shellfish beds and grants is highly unlikely to occur.

5. Road Improvements will be coordinated with Police, Fire and DPWs.

- A temporary traffic bypass will allow traffic/pedestrian/bicycle flow across the CNR dike throughout construction. The Project will improve low-lying portions of Chequessett Neck, Pole Dike, High Toss, Old County and Bound Brook Island Roads at no direct construction cost to the Town.
- Construction truck routes will be designed to avoid the downtown business district. Traffic management plans will seek input from local residents, businesses and town departments to ensure the least disruption possible during construction. The Project will repair any construction-related wear and tear on local roads.

6. The project has already voluntarily determined that herbicide use will NOT be included in its permit applications.

7. Local project oversight will protect local interests.

- Decisions about how the project is implemented will be made locally by the Herring River Executive Council. The Council includes two members from the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator/Manager in each town, and the Superintendent of the Cape Cod National Seashore. Local control means that local concerns can be addressed immediately. The Council is proposing to create a community stakeholders group to provide advisory input during project implementation.
- Project funding, including funds for any necessary property mitigation, will come from federal, state and private grants.

