

**TOWN OF WINDHAM
WATERSHED PROTECTION FUND
2020 Final Report
Collins Pond Improvement Association**

Applicant Contact Information:

Applicant Name: Collins Pond Improvement Association (CPIA)

Contact Person: Rodger Patterson

Address 92 Emerson Drive

City: Windham State: Maine Zip Code: 04062

Phone 207-892-7308 Fax none

E-mail rodgerpatt@aol.com

Project Detail:

Since 2007 the Collins Pond Improvement Association has been working to reduce the infestation of invasive milfoil in Collins Pond. Eradication of this non-native invasive plant is the eventual goal but just getting it under control is the current goal. The use of small benthic mats continues in limited areas by a few lake front owners who have chosen to reduce the amount of plants in swimming areas. The most productive method to mitigate this invasive plant continues to be the Diver Assisted Suction Harvester (DASH) boats. A diver weeds the plants from the bottom of the lake, trying to get the entire root ball removed, and feeds this into a large suction hose. The hose pulls the plants up onto the boat where they are deposited into onion bags. We employ only volunteer crews and divers on the Collins Pond Improvement Association (CPIA) DASH boat.

Starting in 2014 we additionally hired a local company which has greatly increased the volume of plants we are able to remove. The private contractor continues to be New England Milfoil from Brownfield Maine due to our previous experience with this company. Their prices also continue to be very competitive. The New England Milfoil DASH boat uses a slightly different collection technique to loosely collect the plants which are then transferred to a dump trailer. One of the New England Milfoil crew composts the plants on his farm property. In addition to following OSHA dive rules, this year New England Milfoil instituted a Covid-19 testing program for their crews at the end of each work week before proceeding to their next job.

The Maine DEP Plant Control grant program provides most of the funding to support our efforts. Collins Pond Improvement Association's 501(c)3 status continues to help us to attract tax deductible contributions. In addition to the Windham Watershed Protection grant, for the third year in a row we received a donation from the Evergreen Federal Credit Union. This was a result of a fundraising raffle to support several local lake associations, Portland Trails and local food pantries.

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The Covid-19 pandemic did not impact our efforts working on the lake to any great extent. Our volunteer crews followed Maine CDC advice and wore masks while working on the DASH boat. The crews from New England Milfoil had weekly Covid-19 testing performed before proceeding on to their next locations, some of which were out of this state. No one reported any infections during this period. This probably added to their costs of doing business but it was not passed along to us.

We originally budgeted for 5 weeks of contracted work from New England Milfoil but adjusted this down to 4 weeks based upon the total of our fundraising.

Collins Pond Budgeted and Actual Expenses 2020

Expenses	Budgeted	Actual
New England Milfoil-budgeted 5 weeks/actual work 4 weeks	\$28,840	\$23,072
NE Milfoil travel-\$75/day	\$1,500	\$1,200
Milfoil disposal-\$200/week	\$800	\$700
Liability Insurance	\$2,600	\$2,387
Boat/Trailer registration	\$110	\$118
Gas/DASH boat supplies/parts	\$700	\$392
Onion bags-600@\$.35/bag	\$210	\$210
Winterize boat motor	\$85	\$95
Permit-By-Rule	\$250	\$250
Wages-Volunteer Equivalent- Budget 192 hrs/Actual 167.5 hrs \$22/hr	\$4,224	\$3,685
TOTAL CASH EXPENSE	\$39,319	\$32,109

Source of Financing

Source of Financing	Projected	Actual
Windham Watershed Protection Grant	\$4,000	\$4,000
Evergreen Credit Union donation	\$0	\$1,000
DEP Plant Control Grant	\$27,236	\$22,437
CPIA Cash match	\$2,809	\$987
Volunteer Wage Equivalent	\$4,224	\$3,685
TOTALS	\$38,269	\$32,109

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Accomplishments for the 2020 season:

The New England Milfoil crews continued working in the north end of the lake again this year. They concentrated on cleaning up remaining locations in this area, rechecking areas worked in the past and then continuing south. As they approach the small island there is a dense mix of invasive plants and natural grasses and plants. This mix makes their job harder as they must pick and choose the non-natives while leaving the rest. Also the root balls of the native grasses are very dense, making it harder to separate out the invasive milfoil. This end of the lake has much more open water now and fewer areas with milfoil growing to the surface.

The total number of gallons of milfoil plants removed this year was **26,662** which is a 23% increase over the previous year. Since 2007 we have removed **134,614** gallons of milfoil from Collins Pond.

As previously stated, if this infestation of invasive milfoil is allowed to continue to get out of control it will eventually affect the property values and tax revenue for this area. Additionally the plants will likely continue to wash downstream to the Pleasant and Presumpscot rivers becoming an environmental and financial problem for the Town.

The Maine Milfoil Summit, normally held annually at the University of Maine Lewiston/Auburn campus, was cancelled this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Also the annual discussion organized by Lakes Environmental Association in Bridgton around invasive plant control was likewise cancelled. These organizations continue to send out newsletters with helpful hints, though. The Little Sebago Lake Association continues to assist us in obtaining our onion bags at a group buying price and with DASH boat problem solving.

Collins Pond Improvement Association owns and maintains a DASH boat. This is a 1990 24' pontoon boat with a 50 hp outboard motor. The original boat seats were removed and a trough installed along with a 23 hp pump/compressor. This year we had the original wooden transom replaced. The pump generates surface supplied air to the diver and also creates the suction to draw water through a 100' long, 4" hose. The diver pulls up the milfoil plants by their root ball and feeds them into the hose where they are drawn up onto the boat. The plants and water land in the trough and drain out through four outlets into mesh onion bags. The water returns to the lake through drain holes and the plants are bagged and eventually sent for composting. So far this is the only effective method of controlling invasive plants besides the use of herbicides, which are rarely approved for use in Maine.

Since 2007 our lake association, CPIA, has continuously managed this project each summer. As the finances have allowed, we have expanded our efforts each year. We anticipate continuing running this project annually for the foreseeable future. At the same time we continue to look for even more efficient ways to control this invasive, non-native plant.

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CPIA DASH Boat-1990 Sea Nymph 50hp outboard 23hp pump/compressor



New England Milfoil boat and crew prepares for a diver to enter the water in November



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Bagged Milfoil Plants awaiting transport for Composting

