

## BIRCH MILL POND

### EXISTING PROBLEM:

- Birch Mill Pond is being severely stressed by invasive vegetation growth and floating bogs.
- The major factors that contribute to these conditions are the lack of water depth and accumulation of runoff from the roads.
- Dredging will deepen the pond, thereby preventing the growth of invasive plants and the formation of floating bogs from dead vegetation.

### OVERVIEW OF PLAN TO DREDGE:

- Since early this year the Pond Dredging Committee of the SSWHOA has been studying the dredging of our pond to:
- Determine whether dredging is a viable long-term solution to the problem as previously stated, and if so:
- Learn the details of the dredging process
- Time frame to accomplish it
- Economics of the process
- Environmental impact

The committee members are: Adrienne Brochu, Peter Bonanno, Jack Kearns, Jerri MacMillian, and Stu Fisher.

Based on studies and discussions with people familiar with these types of pond problems, the committee recommends dredging as a permanent solution to the problems as stated.

The committee has had meetings with the potential contractor, Venuti Enterprises, Inc. of Killingworth. The meetings included a field trip to see two of their projects: one near completion in Old Saybrook, and another in its beginning phase in Groton.

- Venuti Enterprises has considerable experience with pond dredging projects. The four Venuti brothers, who now operate the enterprise, grew up with the business that was started by their father.
- Venuti has done testing on BMP and determined that there is sufficient sand and gravel to justify a profitable and successful operation.
- Once the project is underway the Association will receive a royalty for every yard of material sold.

### **THE DREDGING BENEFITS ARE:**

1. A permanent solution to unwanted invasive vegetation growth and floating bogs.
2. Eliminates the need and expense to periodically treat the pond with herbicides.
3. Offers the potential for a beach/swimming area if the Association so desires.
4. Without the invasive vegetation growth, boating and fishing becomes a more enjoyable recreational opportunity that is available to all HOA members.
5. Dredging will add significant \$ to the Association's treasury, which will enable a reduction or possible elimination of the annual fee. There can be no guarantee as to the eventual compensation to the Association in advance of dredging, but conservatively @ \$1.50 per cubic yard, the royalty should exceed \$200,000 based on estimates from testing already done by Venuti.
6. A solution to the unfunded Association liability should the dam need repair or replacement, which could easily exceed \$100,000. The Association has no insurance to cover repair or replacement, since the cost of this insurance is prohibitive.

### **THE DREDGING PROCESS:**

- Access to the pond will be by an agreement being negotiated between Venuti and the owner of the farm field on Rt 153 or through the Clinic's property.
- Venuti will handle all engineering and permitting requirements at their expense. (Projected by Venuti to take 1 to 2 years)
- Dredging would not begin before 2008 and would be limited by contract to 24 months, from start of draining to the refilling of the pond.
- The Connecticut EPA will require protection of any endangered animals and plants during the dredging process.
- The pond will be sectioned off and dredging will be done in stages up to a 24-month period.
- During the dredging process Venuti will post a security bond and carry sufficient insurance naming SWHOA as an additional insured.
- Prior to signing, the contract with Venuti will be reviewed by our attorney.

The end result of dredging will be a much healthier pond with a balanced ecological environment for plants fish, birds, and animals, and with the increased depth a permanent solution to eliminating undesirable invasive plant growth.