



TOWN OF WEST TISBURY
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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October 24, 2017

Ms. Sheri Caseau, Water Resources Planner
Mr. Adam Turner, Executive Director
Martha's Vineyard Commission
P.O. Box 1447
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

OCT 26 2017

Re: Water Quality Testing
Tisbury Great Pond

Dear Sheri and Adam,

As you both know, there is a long history of annual water quality testing in Tisbury Great Pond, the results of which have been submitted to this office with a summary report. The last written report we have received from your office is dated February 2009. After several requests for current data we finally received data for 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2015, but still no written reports. We do not have any data for 2009, 2010 or 2012.

The Conservation Commission commented on this lack of consistent data collection reporting in their September 6, 2017 comment letter to DEP on the draft TMDL report. In their October 13 response letter, DEP agreed we need "clarification from your office on sampling protocols, Quality Assurance Project plans and data transmittals" with respect to water quality testing in Tisbury Great Pond.

To that end we would like to see the following:

1. Consistent summer (May-Sept) testing of the four sentinel sites identified in the DEP draft TMDL report- TGP 4=Pear Tree Cove, TGP 5=Tiah's Cove, TGP 6 = Deep Bottom Cove and TGP 7 in the southwest area of the main body of TGP. This includes both getting water samples for lab analysis as well as field data with the multimeter and Secchi disc for dissolved oxygen, salinity, water temperature, water clarity etc.
2. Any time there is a need, algae samples should be collected and fixed for storing/testing at the same time and analyzed in a timely fashion.
3. Consistent and comparable lab results from the same lab year to year. This would facilitate the comparison of the conditions for each of the four sites from year to year.
4. Annual reports on water quality sampling with an executive summary and explanation of that year's results and what they mean for TGP.

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At the September 26 meeting Conservation Commission meeting, Sheri and Emily Reddington of the Edgartown Great Pond Foundation recommended that winter sampling be done as a baseline. To our knowledge this is not a requirement of the MEP or DEP and may not be the best use of staff time and financial resources. If winter sampling is going to be conducted, please assure us that all of the above is being done for the four sentinel sites before any time or money is spent on winter sampling.

From the DEP response letter, we learned that the schedule for compliance monitoring will depend on the implementation schedule of nitrogen removal once the implementation strategy has been developed through a Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan. Monitoring of the sentinel sites will likely be required for several years after the start of nitrogen removal. In the meantime, it is critical that this information be gathered correctly and consistently, and disseminated in a timely fashion.

Tisbury Great Pond is a valuable resource for West Tisbury, Chilmark and the island. It is important that we all work together toward the goal of improving the water quality and overall health of the pond by reducing the nitrogen load.

Very truly yours,

Tara J. Whiting, Chair

Copies furnished to:
West Tisbury Board of Selectmen
Chilmark Board of Selectmen
West Tisbury Shellfish Committee
Chilmark Shellfish Committee
Patti Kellogg, DEP Bureau of Water Resources