

The West Falmouth Village Association has voted to support Article 40 which appears before town meeting in November. We urge that citizens carefully scrutinize Falmouth's plan to expand sewerage and increase wastewater discharge into West Falmouth's groundwater. Site 7 is a mere 400 yards from Crocker's Pond where Bourne's Farm is in West Falmouth. Crocker's Pond was overlooked in the Town's cursory study of this area yet the town plans to ask citizens for millions of dollars to begin design and other work on the sewer system during Spring Town Meeting in 2013. The 2 discharge sites at Thomas Landers Rd. are the planned destination for up to, and possibly more than, 1.6 million gallons per day. This will impact all the fresh water bodies from Crocker's Pond north to Wing's Pond including Herring Creek and possibly south to West Falmouth Harbor. Crocker's Pond currently is one of Falmouth's cleaner ponds with a relatively healthy ecosystem. Wing's Pond is connected to Buzzards Bay by the Herring Creek herring run. Herring may soon go on the endangered species list and need to be protected. Both the Cape Cod Commission and The Buzzards Bay Coalition have commented on Falmouth's plan and suggested that Falmouth find other places to discharge the effluent.

Article 40 simply asks that a thorough environmental impact report be completed prior to any development of the proposed discharge sites. The only controversy in this article is the possibility that, on a technicality, it could hold up design of the sewer system. We recognize the importance of proceeding with design work for the proposed sewer system around the salt ponds on the southern shores of Falmouth. However we take great issue with Falmouth's proposal to use sites 7 and 10 without any attempt to understand the impact this will have. The state will no doubt eventually require the town to conduct an environmental impact assessment. We believe the town should not wait to be told by the state what to do but rather begin studies, not only of Crocker's Pond but also Wing's Pond and Herring Creek. The Buzzards Bay Coalition stated in their most recent set of comments that, "Trading the health of the South Coast Ponds for that of water bodies in the western portion of town, including West Falmouth Harbor, is not acceptable." We agree and the people of Falmouth deserve to know how the town's wastewater management plan will impact all areas of town. This article should not hold up design of the sewer system however one might wonder whether we need to better understand where this waste will go before we begin designing a means to collect it. Furthermore, sites 7 and 10 should be off limits for any design or construction work until thorough studies are completed and discussed. We highly recommend passage of article 40 at Town Meeting in November.