

JANIE PIERCE PARK

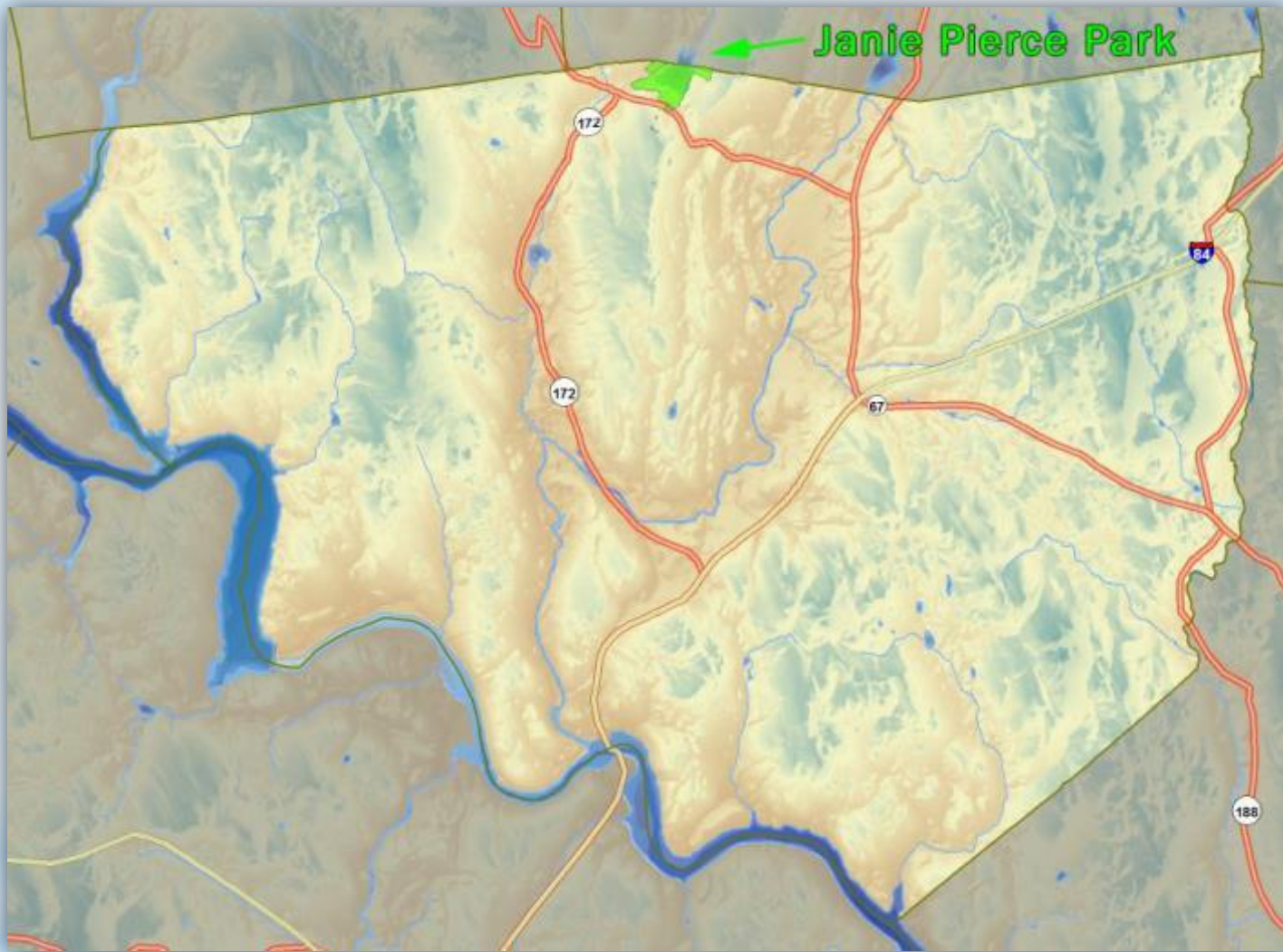
CONSERVATION AREA

SOUTHBURY RESIDENTS ONLY

NO

- * Introduction by Ed Nagy, the Southbury Conservation Commission Chair
- * Presentation about Janie Pierce Park by Ed Nagy and Gary Gollenberg
- * Q&A
- * Comments from the public

* **AGENDA**



Transylvania Pond is in Janie Pierce Park, located at the junction of route 67 and route 172 on the Southbury-Woodbury town boundary.

The park consists of a 60 acre parcel in Southbury and 45 acre parcel in Woodbury. Adjacent to Shortt's Field Connector.



Property purchase 'strings' get thicker

SOUTHURY — The "strings" surrounding the proposed purchase of the Jamie Pierce property are beginning to look more like ropes.

Although the possibility of some major "encumbrances" on the land is being investigated by the title search firm of Carmody and Torrence,

provisions are being made for safeguards.

Speaking before the Board of Selectmen last night, Carmody and Torrence attorney Meylert Armstrong III said, "due to certain ambiguities in the languages of deeds," he is forced to press his title search further.

He said that questions concerning Miss Pierce's fee ownership of the land had been raised by Miss Avis Hicoek, who claims to hold the rights to the land beneath the 50-acre Transylvania pond, located in the middle of the 102-acre tract being considered by the town for purchase as open space.

Armstrong, acting as attorney for the town, said that J. Warren Upson, Miss Pierce's attorney "is convinced that these claims are worthless, or at best, pondage rights without fee ownership in the bottom of the pond." Armstrong didn't think "any unqualified action" should be taken by the town, but the

purchase could be considered, "conditionally."

Selectman Elliot Smith moved to accept Miss Pierce's offer to sell the land to the town for \$40,000, "contingent on the report of the title search. A negative report will mean an automatic reconsideration." The selectmen, headed by First Selectman Robert E. Harroff, unanimously approved the motion.

Armstrong said that he had traced the title back to 1886 and all seems to be in order and that the most Miss Hicoek appears to have are pondage rights, which include the right to swim or fish on the pond and other activities which would not detract from the intended open space use of the land.

However, he added, Miss Hicoek has made some pretty strong claims and "has raised too much of a question which has to be cleared up."

He said that any questions in the land

transfer should be cleared up in a few days.

Another safeguard in the transfer has been added in Miss Pierce's offer to sell. In the offer, Miss Pierce takes responsibility for defending the land against claims brought by any heirs of Bennett Stiles (Miss Hicoek). Miss Pierce said that she will take financial responsibility for any law suit, and if such law suit is found in favor of the heirs of Bennett Stiles, she will accept reconveyance and return the town's money.

The offer to sell provides that a payment of \$8,000 be made at the closing of title and another \$8,000 be paid annually for four years, with interest accumulating at six per cent. Title for the entire tract will be conveyed via warranty deed in fee simple except for a two-acre corner which will be conveyed in a quit claim deed, as its ownership is contested.



Robert E. Harroff reads Pierce offer

Janie Pierce Park reflects vision of its namesake

By Chris Gardner
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Every spring, after the ground thaws and ice breaks on the pond, Becky Parsons walks through Janie Pierce Park off Transylvania Road to see the migrating birds.

The former member of the town's Conservation Commission has seen loons and osprey relaxing on the shores of the 35-acre pond at the park, located in the north-central part of town. She's also watched male swans fight over a lone female swan as it bobbed in the ripples, seemingly enjoying the attention.

"It's just a wonderful place to go," Parsons said. "You can be out there and never know that you're close to town at all."

That was Jane "Janie" Grey Pierce's hope roughly 30 years ago, when the open space that comprises Janie Pierce Park was bought by the town. A former school teacher who lived in the Transyl-

SOUTHBURY

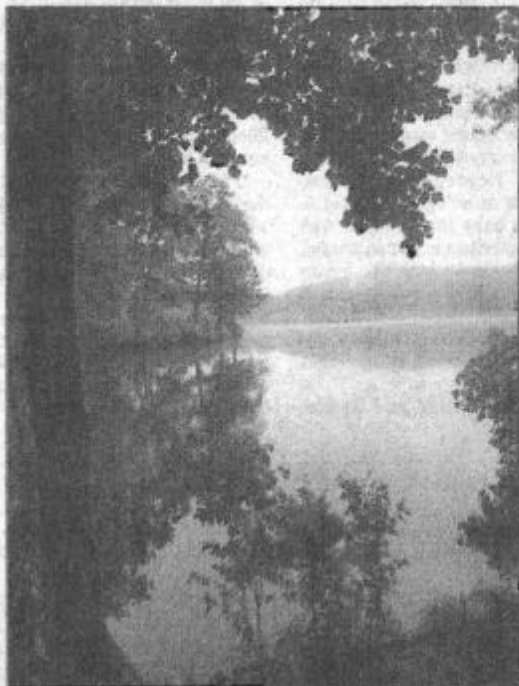


Janie Pierce Park facts

What: Janie Pierce Park
Where: Transylvania Road, Southbury
Named after: Jane "Janie" Grey Pierce, a former school teacher who sold the land to the town with the request that it be kept in its natural state.

vania section until her death in the mid-1970s. Pierce loved her property, which straddled the Southbury-Woodbury

Please turn to 2B, PARK



Tom Kabeka / Republican-American

Janie Pierce Park, off Transylvania Road in Southbury, is a tranquil place to spend a day. The park was named after a former school teacher who sold the land to the town.

PARK: Teacher known for love of nature, kids

Continued from 1B

town line, and hoped the town could preserve it for future generations.

"She was interested in keeping the land as is," said Sanford G. Tschander, Pierce's former neighbor, who still lives near the park on Transylvania Road. "She loved it there."

Pierce, who never married, lived with her parents in a large Victorian at the corner of Transylvania Road and Route 67. Gladys Burdick, Tschander's sister, said neighborhood children used to play croquet on Pierce's lawn. They also swam in her pond in the summer and ice skated there in the winter.

Burdick said Pierce, who taught in a one-room schoolhouse at the base of Grassy Hill Road, just over the town line in Woodbury, had a big influence on her life. She said Pierce taught her how to sew and took her to Sunday school at the South Britain Congregational Church.

In the spring and summer, Burdick would listen mornings as Pierce — wearing a large straw hat — "sang soprano" while tending her gardens.

"It was so much fun to hear her over there," she said.

Burdick used to help Pierce plant petunias. After they worked, Pierce would invite Burdick and other neighborhood children into her home for cookies and cold milk.

Burdick has the wooden stool she

used to sit on in Pierce's kitchen. It still bears the notches where the milk glasses rested, she said.

"You worked for her. Then you were hauled into the kitchen, and there you sat," she said.

"She helped out everybody," said Tschander, who mowed Pierce's lawn and did some tenant farming on her land. "She tried to do good."

Besides the park and pond, Pierce's name also graces a subdivision of homes off Route 172, just south of the Transylvania Road intersection. Pierce's Colonial Acres, which includes Colonial, Coachman's and Carriage drives, Patriot Road, Surrey Lane and Charter Oak Road, was built in phases, starting about 20 years ago. Pierce owned most of the land on the ridge that extends from the pond south to what is now the northwest corner of Heritage Village.

But her pride and joy, according to those who knew her, was the area around the pond. The park, which is open to town residents, has hiking trails, benches and picnic areas that overlook the pond. Hiking, canoeing, fishing and picnicking are allowed from dawn to one hour after sunset. Last year, scouts installed boardwalks to make the hike through the park more enjoyable.

Parsons said the park was already one of the town's jewels. "It's one of our high-profile parks," she said. "It gets used by a lot of people."

Transylvania Pond Color Aerial Map

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The Connecticut Environmental
Review Team



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the Connecticut Environmental Review Team.
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It contains no authoritative data.
September 2008.

Southbury, CT

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Transylvania Pond Aerial Map

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The Connecticut Environmental
Review Team

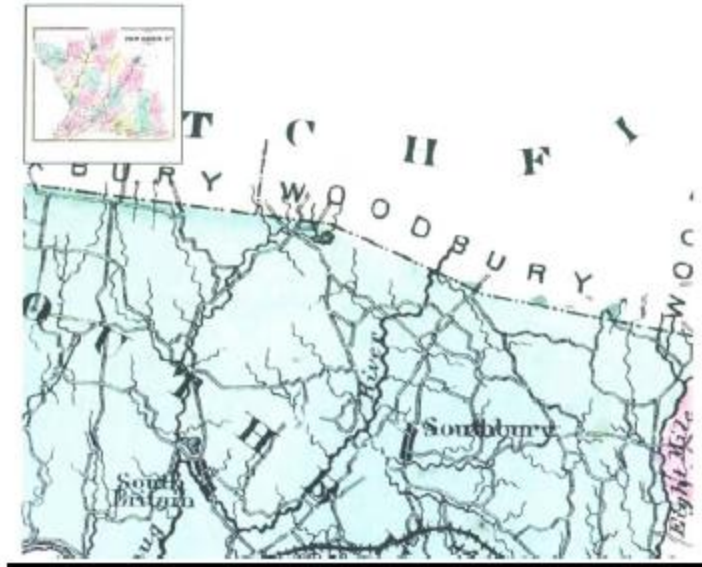


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Southbury, CT



1868 Map



1893 Map



Trail system at the park



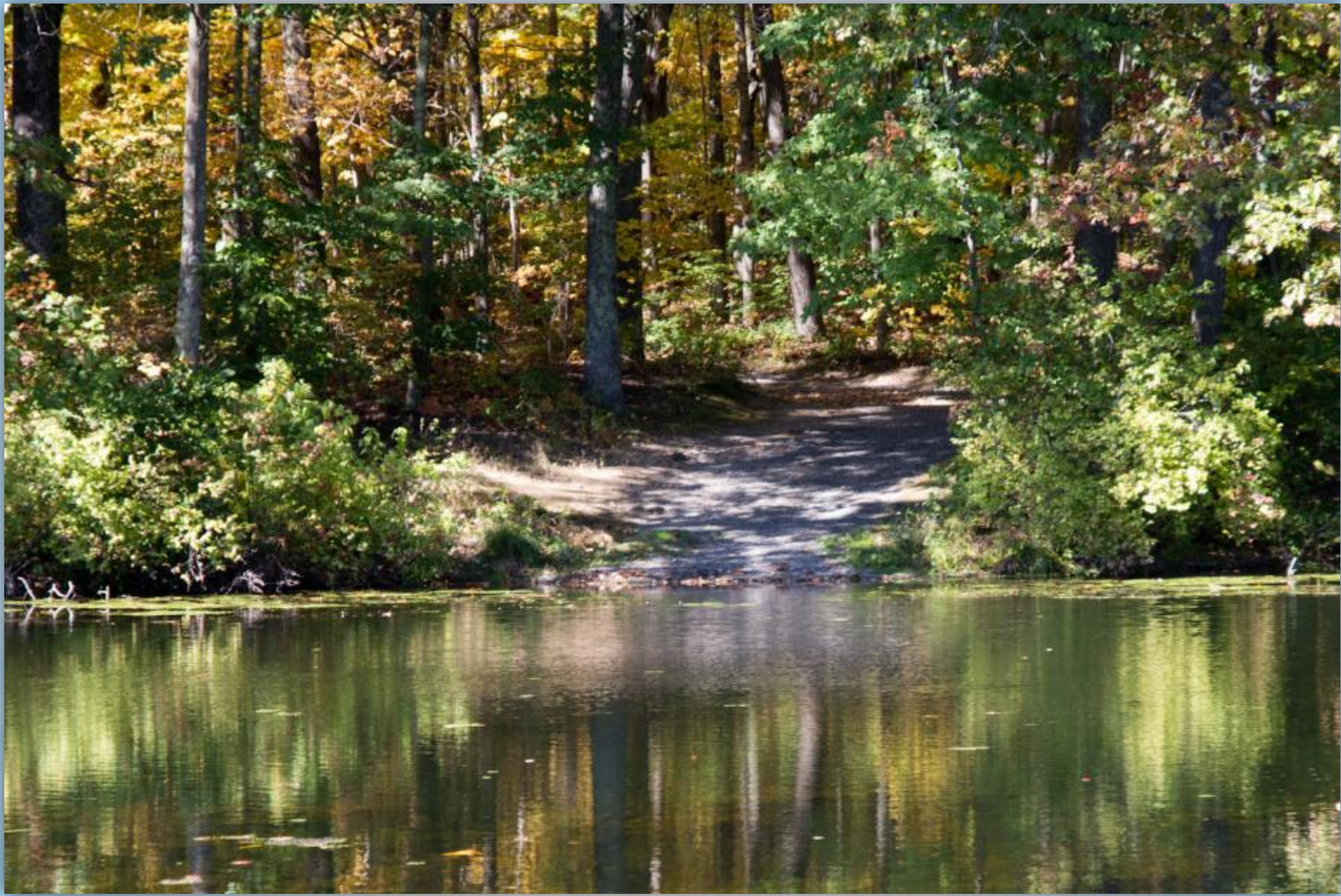


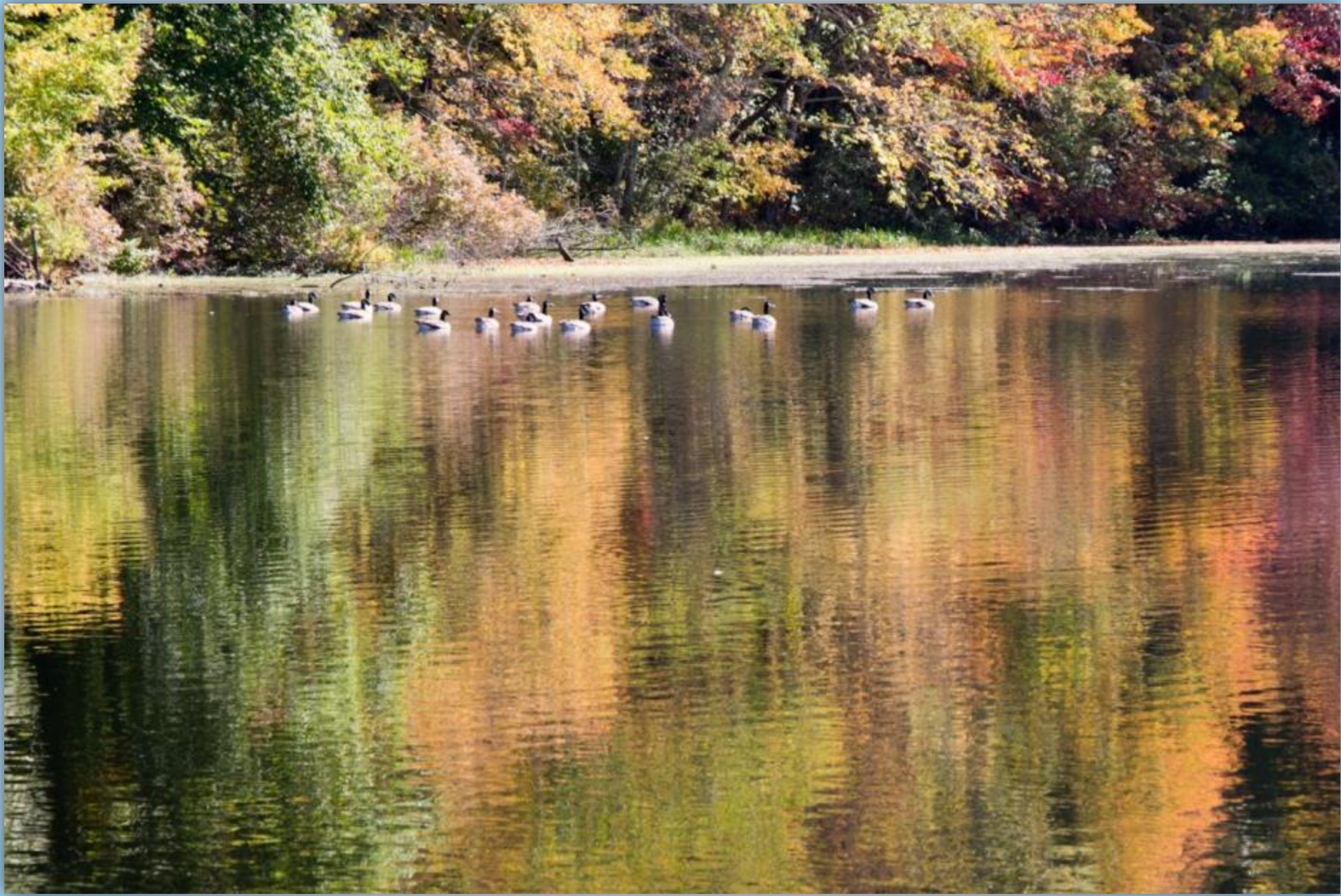




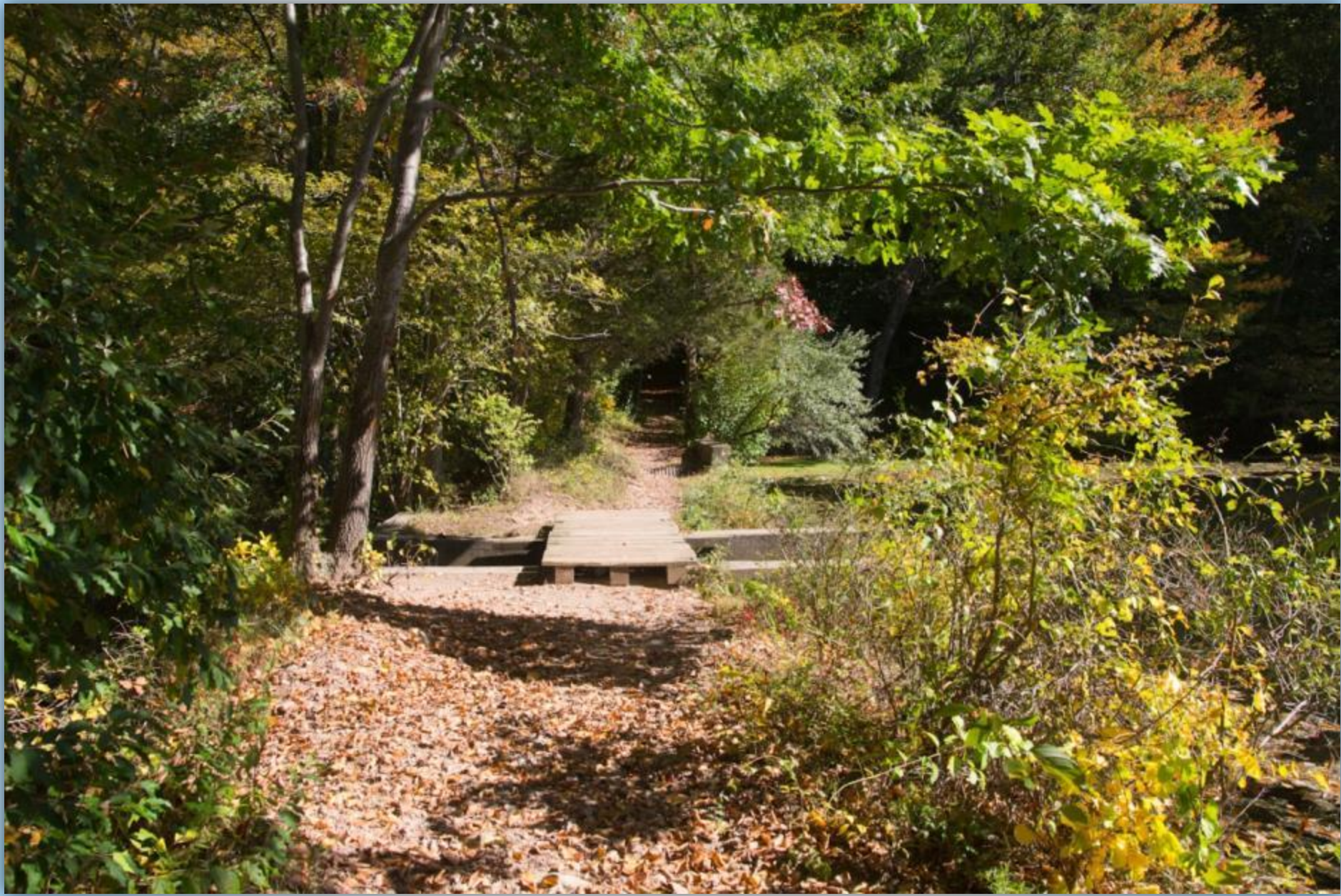






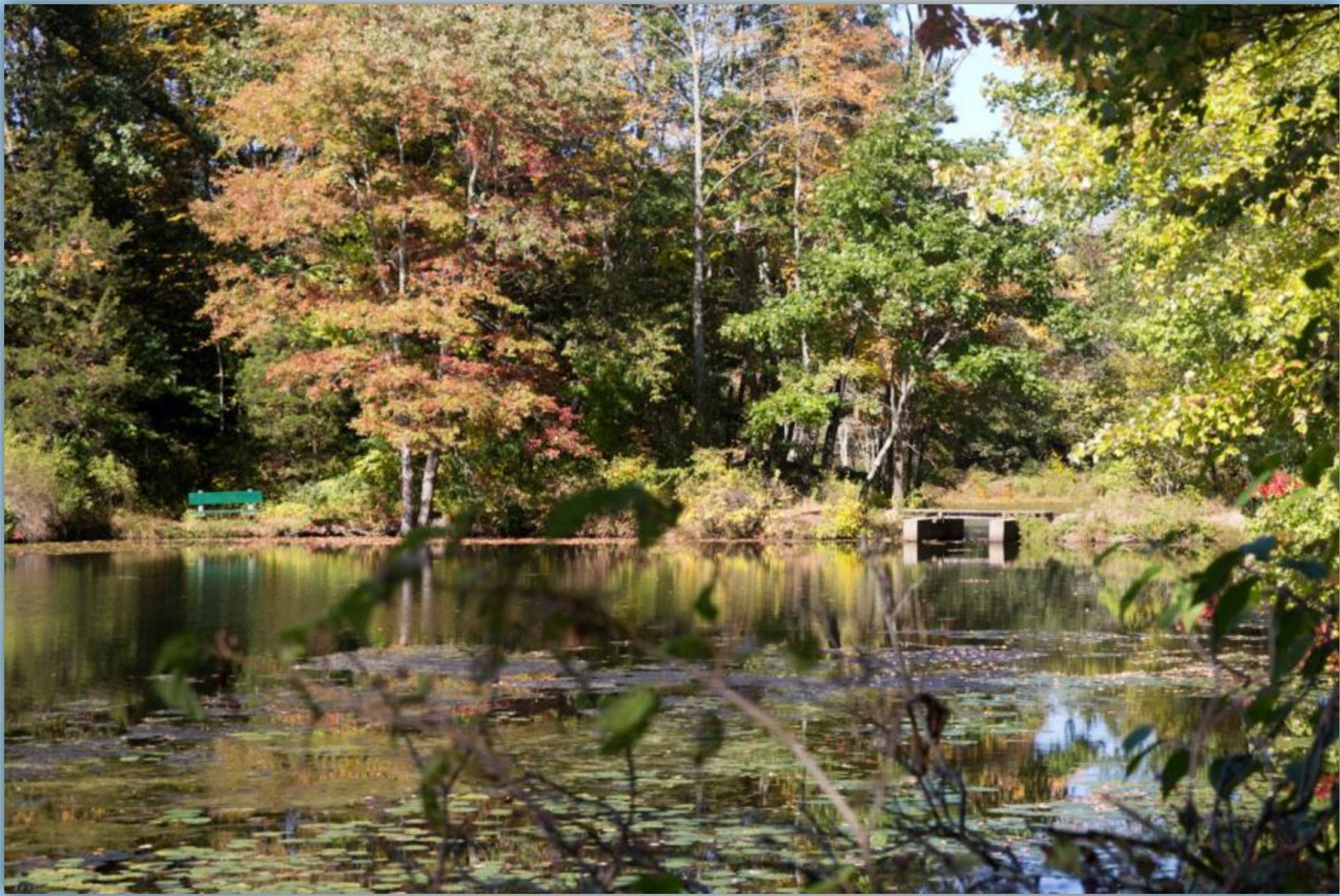














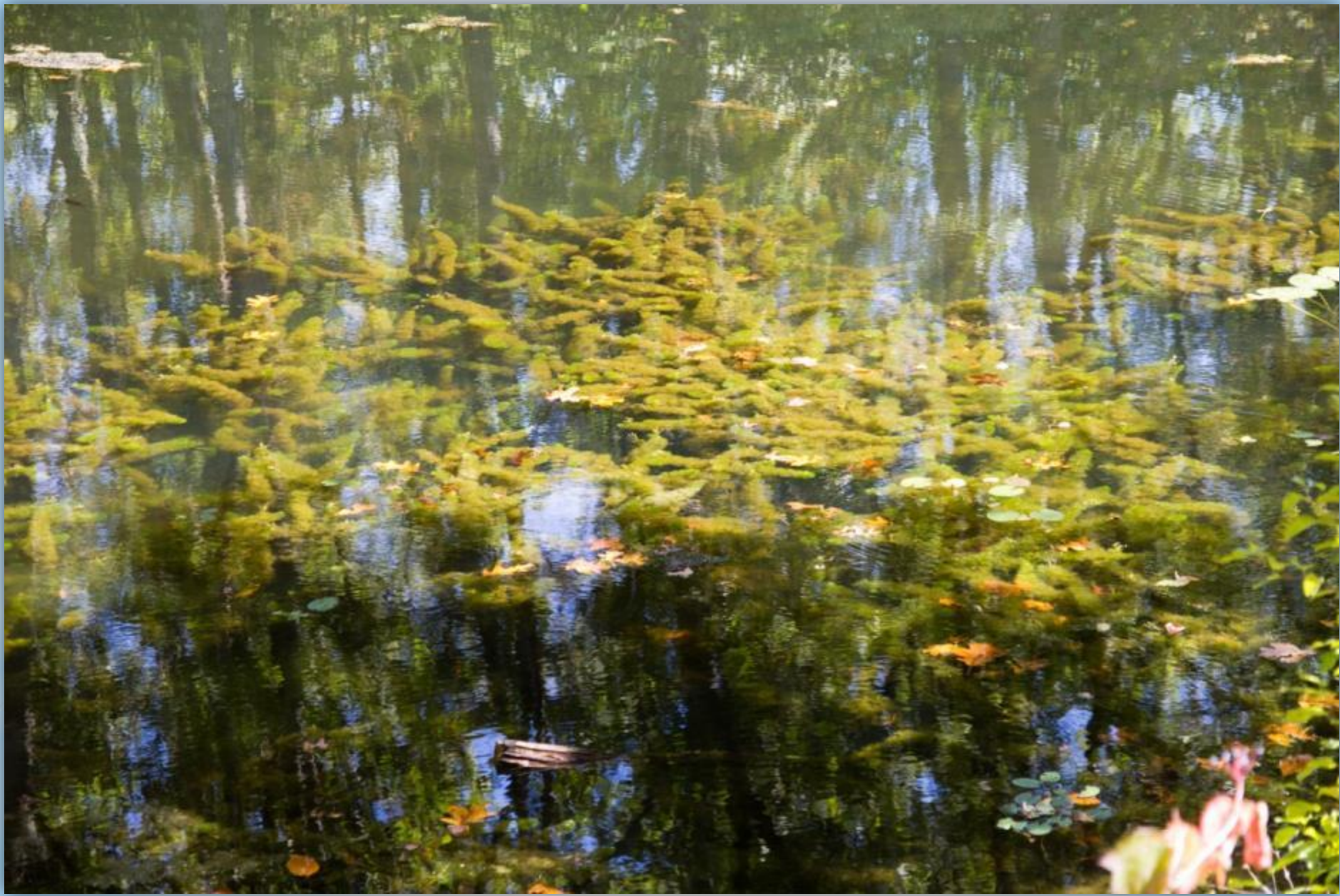


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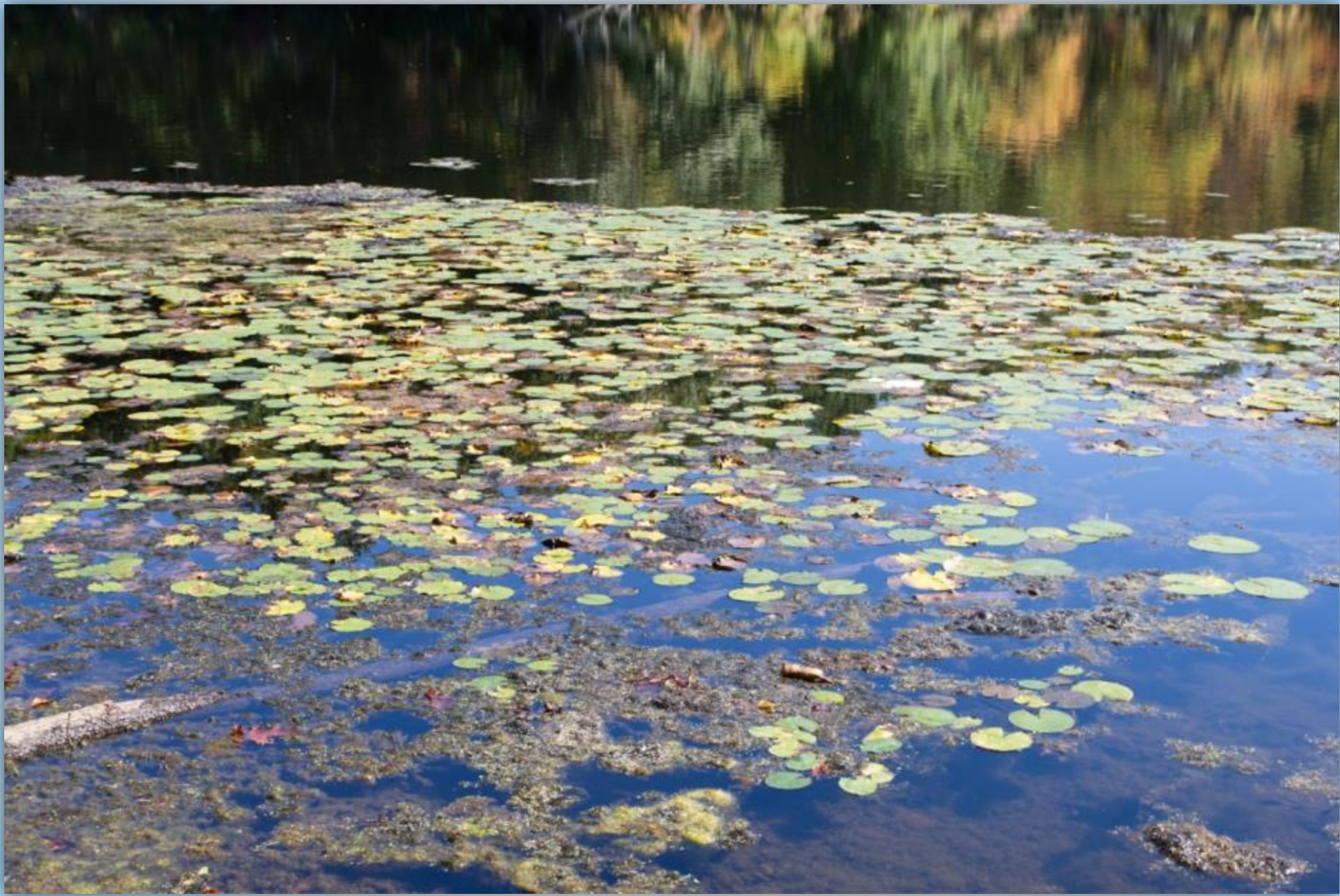
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Commission Acts to Clear Janie Pierce Pond



Before: The pond in Southbury's Janie Pierce Park is clogged with weeds and water lilies. The Southbury Conservation Commission is acting to prevent the pond from turning into a bog.



After: This scene occurs every fall, after the weeds in Janie Pierce Pond die naturally and sink to the bottom of the pond. The Southbury Conservation Commission is going to clear part of the pond by killing the weeds permanently. The company hired to treat the pond, Northeast Tree and Pond Service of New Milford, is the same company that keeps the ponds in Heritage Village clear of weeds and algae. —Bee Photos, McMillen

SOUTHBURY — The Southbury Conservation Commission is acting quickly to kill the weeds choking Janie Pierce Pond before the problem gets worse. On August 14, the Board of Selectmen voted to transfer \$950 from its contingency fund to the commission. This money will be combined with \$1,050 of the commission's own budget for a total of \$2,000, the amount needed to treat 12 acres of the approximately 40 acre pond with weed killer.

The pond will be treated with two aquatic herbicides: Aquathol, which is a trade name for liquid Endothal, and Diquat. Both herbicides work systemically. They are absorbed by the roots of the pond weeds and water lilies, killing the plants. The herbicides, which are also effective against algae, will be applied to the north end of the pond only; the weeds in the south end of the pond will be left as cover for fish.

The work will be done by Northeast Tree and Pond Services of New Milford, environmental specialists chosen by the commission from a list of companies recommended by the state Department of Environmental Protection. Commission members hope to clear enough of the pond so that Southbury residents may once again use it for canoeing and fishing. No loss of fish is expected.

The herbicides are effective within eight hours, and fish may be taken from the pond within three days.

The Conservation Commission has been working since March to make the Janie Pierce Pond a viable passive recreation area once again. Commission member Gus Rodrigues has visited the pond with a state biologist and a scientist from the state fisheries; the recommendations for treating the weeds in the pond were made by these state representatives.

All the commission members agree that something has to be done immediately to prevent the pond from turning into a bog. Commission member Jack McMillen recounted stories of Janie Pierce charging people \$1 to fish in the pond, but now the weeds are so thick "there were kids trying to fish around the shore and they couldn't get a line in."

There was money left over from the revenue sharing funds the Conservation Commission had been given to build nature trails in the park. It seemed a simple matter to ask the Board of Selectmen to transfer the unused nature trail funds to this new project. It wasn't.

Because the nature trail funds were revenue sharing funds, they could only be used for that purpose. "We are about to be audited," said Selectman Rick Wheeler when the Conservation Com-

mission appeared before the Board of Selectman on July 24. "If you don't use the revenue sharing funds for what they are designated for, you get negative brownie points."

It was Town Treasurer Paul Smith who suggested taking a sum of money from the town's contingency fund and replacing it later with the commission's retitled revenue sharing money. At the next revenue sharing meeting, the \$950 the town has advanced to the commission will be taken from the commission's nature trail fund and put into the general fund. The town will pay itself back out of the general fund. This seemed a more practical suggestion than the plaintive one made by a commission member: "Couldn't we tell them we were putting a trail through the pond?"

The funds for the reclamation of Janie Pierce Pond should be available within a few days. Work on the pond will begin as soon as possible.

Pierce Park Pond Cleared of Weeds

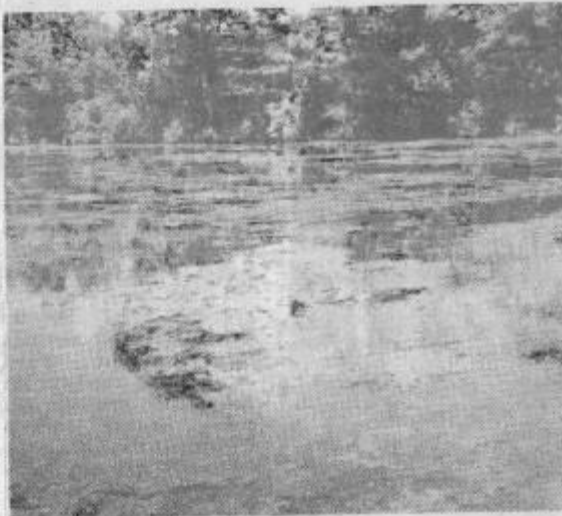
SOUTHBURY -- A transformation took place recently on the 40-acre Transylvania Pond in Southbury's Janie Pierce Park.

The Southbury Conservation Commission hired workers to operate a weed harvester that was last used on the pond four years ago. Once again the water was cleared of a tangle of pond weeds and water lilies, making it boatable and fishable. The harvester used was a back-up machine of the Lake Zoar Authority that had not been used on that lake this year.

Road foreman Eugene Metcalf removed the cut weeds from the harvester with a backhoe and had 20 truck loads transported to the land fill.

Two years ago the pond was treated chemically to remove the weeds. While this method is esthetically pleasing it is not as effective as cutting, the commission said. The treated weeds fall to the bottom of the pond creating more nutrients for new growth. It is hoped that harvesting can be repeated every year for a few years to discourage return of the noxious growth.

Page 48



Before it was cleaned out, the pond at Janie Pierce Park in Southbury was difficult for canoes and rowboats and almost impossible for fishing.

VOICES

September 17, 1988



Paul Hanson instructs Walter and Rob Gniazdowski on the operation of the weed harvester that was used to clear the pond of its weeds.

Right: After five days of weed cutting, the pond is returned to a "thing of beauty" for boaters, fishermen and hikers.



* PUBLIC COMMENTS

- * Tell us your comments
- * Write your comments and drop in the Comments Box
- * Send your comments to webmaster@southbury-ct.gov