Island Creek History and Backround

Island Creek Pond comprises 35 acres and is supplied by natural springs. Combining with local runoff, it forms Island Creek, which flows for 2 miles into Kingston Bay. The pond and creek were named by Pilgrim forefathers for a small island formed at the outflow. The Island Creek fish run predates the colonial era. Native Americans taught the Pilgrims how to use herring and other fish to fertilize their corn. Town records indicate that Island Creek was a desirable resource of herring and smelt for food, fertilizer and bait for residents during the spring. Island Creek has been utilized as a power source for grist and lumber mills. The Mill Pond (an approximately 7 acre pond located at the Tremont Street intersection) was created from one of these dams. The remnant of the first dam, licensed by the town in 1702, can be seen just a few hundred yards downstream of Elm St. Both ponds were farmed for ice in the winters. In the 1930's, the county fire authority constructed a small control dam to increase the size of Island Creek Pond as a water source - blocking any remaining herring passage. Several inscriptions are still quite visible on the piers of this dam. Town records indicate fish passage was usually considered when these dams were constructed, though it is unclear if herring were able to reach Island Creek Pond during most of the 19th century. In 1907, a concrete fish ladder was constructed below Mill Pond and the structure was repaired by the Division of Marine Fisheries during the 1960's. However, the design of that ladder enabled fish passage only when water flow was suitably high. In the mid-1800's, a railroad line was constructed between Kingston and Duxbury to supplement the stagecoach and ferry service. The rail is now inactive, but a culvert and overpass remain in place on the lower end of the creek. The iron rich springs produced bog iron deposits and these were mined in this area. Also, one of the few areas of bedrock exists adjacent to Elm St and that was quarried for local use (the bridge beneath Tremont St and the RR culvert appear to be constructed from this material). As the shipbuilding industry waned in the 1800's and as the industrial revolution catalyzed economic and population growth, new industries developed. Locally, the cranberry industry grew quickly. By 1915, twenty cranberry bogs were registered in the town, half of them using the watershed for irrigation. There is an active bog to the northwest of the pond that still relies on Island Creek Pond for water.

The most recent restoration project was initiated by the Duxbury Bay Management Commission in 2004 and managed by the Duxbury Conservation Department. The goal of the project was to restore and preserve the quality of the pond consistent with the Commission's vision of preserving our pristine bay.

Regulations

Smelt Fishing

Smelt may be taken in all inland waters by hook and line only from May 16 through the last day of February. The possession of smelt other than during the established open season is prohibited.

River Herring (Alewife and Blueback)

The catching or possession of River Herring is **prohibited**.

Dogs: Dogs must be kept under control.

Water Removal

Permit Required from Duxbury Conservation Commission for water withdrawal.

Questions?

Contact: The Duxbury Conservation Department
Hours: Monday through Thursday:
8:00 AM until 3:00 PM
Duxbury Town Hall
878 Tremont Street, MA 02332
(781) 934-1100 ex. 134

Contributers

The Island Creek Fishway restoration was an initiative of the Duxbury Bay Management Commission.

The project was supported in part through generous grants by the following:

Duxbury Bay Management Commission, Jon McGrath-Representative

Duxbury Conservation Commission, Joe Grady-Administrator

Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment

Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Fish America Foundation

Battelle