

CHILMARK POND COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

Pond Openings 2018/2019

November 18, 2018-February 7, 2019

April 24-26, 2019

July 2, 2019-

The fall opening lasted for 11 1/2 weeks, which was the second longest opening on the record & resulted in a very successful flushing of the pond.

At the other extreme, the Spring opening was closed by Mother Nature on the second day. This was unfortunate since the pond didn't get a flush, but also because openings require co-ordination with Biodiversity Works to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the nesting shorebirds after April 1st.

Since the island has had drought conditions in May and/or June during five of the last six years, we believed that the level of the pond would not rise to a level conducive to a successful flushing prior to the summer season. However, we had abnormal amounts of rain during both months. When it wasn't raining, it was overcast, which meant that little or no evaporation occurred. The pond continued to rise throughout the spring, until the marsh became inundated with water. This is very undesirable, as the marsh is an important filtering system, and continued inundation leads to its deterioration.

Therefore, we made the decision to open the pond. Having to co-ordinate with both Biodiversity Works & Brickstone Construction led to us being unable to open the pond prior to July 2nd. The original plan was to try to close the cut after the next high tide, something that we had never done before, in order to have enough depth in the pond to avoid the oxygen depletion that may occur with warmer summer water temperature in the pond. However, the cut rapidly widened to over fifty feet during the opening. Both the width and the depth were too large to close by machine. The hatching of the plover eggs on the west side of the cut on July 5th precludes us from bringing the machine back to close the cut now that the opening has diminished in size, until the chicks fledge. On the positive side, we are getting a good flush with the pond still being open as of July 11th.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha Cottle
Stephen Lewenberg
William Randol