

Monitoring the Water Quality of Hardy Pond

Sally Wetzler, co-chair of the Hardy Pond Association, a project of the Waltham Land Trust

Periodically Hardy Pond has experienced spring fish kills, with various theories as to their cause. The most recent happened in 2012, but only seemed to have affected a few species of fish, an apparent anomaly that had a number of environmental scientists scratching their heads. With over half a million cubic yards of water in Hardy Pond, and no idea as to its chemical and biological well-being, the Hardy Pond Association contacted University of MA (Boston) for some assistance.

Dr. Alan Christian, Director of the Environmental Studies Program, and Dr. Robyn Hannigan, Chair of Environmental Earth and Ocean Sciences, designed a water quality monitoring program to determine a



MICHAEL WILLIAMS

Rachel Green samples the water.

baseline assessment of the Pond's condition. Starting last fall, undergraduate intern Rachel Green has come once a month to take samples and readings on water clarity, oxygen levels, salinity, pH, etc. Mike Williams of the Hardy Pond Steering Committee assisted in getting her to the deep water testing site, no small feat when rowing in windy, cold weather. Though Rachel has graduated, a new intern will be on board for the coming year. Dr. Christian will soon be drawing up the year's summary of the samplings and data thus far, with an interpretation of the findings.

We are most grateful for the time and energy of these volunteers in helping with the stewardship of Hardy Pond, leading us to a better understanding of its condition. Perhaps future fish kill mysteries will be solved, or can even be averted.