

Preface

It is time for us to move forward with a strong consensus and with a clear recommendation to the Natural Resources Commission. The problem of eutrophication is well known. Our solutions center on two distinct choices:

Remove the dam and allow a natural brook (with some modifications) to emerge.

Keep the dam and the pond and try to find some way to combat the excessive vegetation that continues to degrade the resource.

There are many pluses and minuses that can be listed for both choices.¹

We have tried to find some objectivity for our decision by using the criteria in the document *Envision Concord: Bridge to 2030*.² Using this document, however, our survey of Task Force members discovered how subjective it is. The Task Force has, as intended, proponents for each side who cannot help but allow their views to bias their interpretation of the criteria.

In this situation, it seems reasonable to not eliminate either choice currently. This, of course, has the effect of postponing dam removal since it is the one choice that is final and unalterable, but it would give an opportunity to those who believe that there are methods that can be tried to see if they are effective.

There is one thing upon which there is unanimity in the Task Force. It is the belief that something needs to be done to bring improved health to the pond/watershed.

Therefore, we recommend that that the Natural Resources Commission set up an ongoing Warner's Pond Watershed Management Committee, that would report and make recommendations to the NRC.³ We have considered recommending that the management strategy be implemented by the Natural Resources Staff and the NRC but we believe that it would take up far too much time to be done effectively and with consistency.

Instead, we recommend that the Committee would meet monthly, sometimes in subcommittees as they prepare a recurring and adaptive management strategy. This may include such methods, on an annual basis, as the use of herbicides, hand harvesting, suction harvesting, a seasonal drawdown. The strategy would evolve as the methodologies are assessed.⁴

¹ See Appendix A

² See Appendix B

³ See Appendix C

⁴ See https://www.harvard-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf676/f/uploads/submission_letter_with_exhibits2024_reduced.pdf

Also, the Committee may propose capital expenditures including:

1. A dredging plan (if a financial plan can be constructed)
2. A fish passage (if the Talbot Mills Dam on the Concord River is removed)
3. A better mechanism (a pumping system or enlarged sluice gate) to perform an effective annual drawdown to combat invasive plants.

This proposal does not preclude dam removal. If these other methods are not satisfactory, and if the pond deterioration continues, it remains as an option.

Details

The goal would be to monitor the pond and the watershed while experimenting with methods to:

- 1) Reduce invasive vegetation
- 2) Enhance the environment for wildlife.
- 3) Enhance the recreational potential for the community by cooperating with other town entities such as the Recreation Commission, the Council on Aging, The Historical Commission, the Community Preservation Committee, etc.
- 4) Create opportunities for wider community involvement by recruiting volunteers to survey wildlife, monitor the water quality, hand pull water chestnuts; consult with expert volunteers on other facets such as financing, engineering and recreation.
- 5) Increase awareness and cooperation with the communities connected through the Nashoba and Fort Pond Brooks.
- 6) Study the feasibility of the capital projects already stated and recommend, as appropriate, to the Natural Resources Commission.
- 7) Recommend improvements to the public access areas along Commonwealth Ave and Pond St.

The proposal assumes that this active management would be supported by a Pond Management Firm⁵ hired by the NRC and to be in effect for at least five years with evaluations, pond health assessments, dam risk assessment, and more thorough financial investigations to ensure that any proposal is fiscally sound.

Specifically, our recommendation is for the NRC to create a Warner's Pond Watershed Management Committee who would report and make recommendations to the NRC. The committee, like the present task force, would be comprised of:

⁵ Example: <https://www.aquaticrc.com>
And <https://macolap.org>

A representative from the NRC,
 A representative from the Friends of Warner’s Pond,
 A representative from the Organization for the Assabet River System (OARS),
 4 others who have expertise that would be useful.

Costs

We believe the first five years of operations could be funded through a re-application to the Community Preservation Committee. In the plan below, the order of the capital improvements (fish passage, improvements to public access, sluice gate) can be changed without effecting the overall budget.

Active Pond Management (does not include dam maintenance under CPW)	2026		2027		2028		2029		2030	
	Costs	Funding Source:CPA	Costs	Funding Source:CPA	Costs	Funding Source:CPA	Costs	Funding Source:CPA	Costs	Funding Source:CPA
Hire a Pond Management Consultant (annual)	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Permits and Additional Analysis	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Invasive Plant Removal (annual)	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Office Support	\$ 3,000.00		\$ 3,000.00		\$ 3,000.00		\$ 3,000.00		\$ 3,000.00	
Pumping mechanism or new sluice gate			\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00						
Fish Passage					\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00				
Improvements to Public Access							\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00		
Totals	\$ 123,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 1,098,000.00	\$ 1,095,000.00	\$ 598,000.00	\$ 595,000.00	\$ 173,000.00	\$ 170,000.00	\$ 98,000.00	\$ 95,000.00
From CPA: ongoing total request ending in 2030				\$ 1,215,000.00		\$ 1,810,000.00		\$ 1,980,000.00		\$ 2,075,000.00

Activity	Plus	Minus
Dam Removal	Restore the brook to approximate state before the dam	Remove an established ecological niche: pond and open water
	Significantly decrease the underwater invasive plants that are choking the pond	Provides space for new land invasive plants that would require a financial commitment to combat
	Provide wetland habitat which holds great diversity than any other environment	Makes scout island less accessible by water for younger kids
	Allow kayaking on an extended brook system	Reduces the property values of homes abutting the pond
	Decrease the water temperature : better for underwaterlife	Changes Gerow property from its intended use
	Increase oxygen in the water: better for uderwaterlife	Removes a place with significant communy identification
	Provide fish migration from sea and the AssabetRiver	Is an irreversable decision
	May be partially funded by Federal and state grants	Narrows the Types of Recreational Activities
Dredging with fish passage	Significantly decrease the underwater invasive plants that are choking the pond	Requires significant financial investment from the town
	Provide fish migration from sea and the AssabetRiver	Requires ongoing financial commitmntfor the maintenance of the pond
	Maintains an established ecological niche: pond and open water	Requires ongoing financial commitmntfor the maintenance of the dam
	Make scout island accessible by water for all	Does not significantly increase wetland habitat
	Protects and enhances the present recreational use	
	Protects the property values of homes abutting the pond	
	Maintains Gerow property for its intended use	
	Protects and enhances a place of significant communy identity	
Establish a Recurring Management Plan with a fish passage	Decreases the underwater invasive plants that are choking the pond	May have setbacks or limited success in reducing invasive plants
	Provide fish migration from sea and the AssabetRiver	Requires financial commitment for upfront capital costs
	Maintains an established ecological niche: pond and open water	Requires financial comitment for annual recurring management
	Make scout island accessible by water for all	Requires ongoing financial commitmntfor the maintenance of the dam
	Protects and enhances the present recreational use	Does not significantly increase wetland habitat
	Protects the property values of homes abutting the pond	
	Maintains Gerow property for its intended use	
	Protects and enhances a place of significant communy identity	
	Provides for experimentation of methods to reduce invasives	
	Provides for Communication among the entities that are connected to the Pond.	
May still allow for dredging or dam removal		

Appendix A: Pluses and Minuses of each proposal.

APPENDIX B

Envision Concord has some bold goals for the town. It was an effort that involved many residents and town employees to craft the vision for Concord as we move ahead.

5 Criteria found in Envision Concord 2030:

1. History and Character

- a. Will this option have an impact on the historical character of the pond/dam/island?
- b. Will the option have a significant visual impact of the area/landscape?
- c. Will the option impact the history/ importance/uses of Scout Island?
- d. Will this option improve the quality and quantity of open space?

2. Livability and Values

- a. Will this option increase the quality and quantity of recreational assets?
- b. Will this option allow for greater programming of open space/recreation?
- c. Will this option provide an equitable solution to all socio-economic groups?
- d. Will this option address multi-generational resources and options for their uses?
- e. Will this option affect public enjoyment and use of the pond?
- f. Will this option affect the quantity and quality of conservation land? (not clear; is the formal Town Conservation Land?)
- g. Will this option enhance physical and social (i.e., gathering) opportunities for the community?
- h. Will this option have an impact on public health – mosquitoes/diseases/contaminants?

3. Mobility and Accessibility

- a. Will this option maintain/increase connectivity (to Town centers/bike trails/etc.)?
- b. Will this option improve access to the water body/landscape for pedestrians/bikes/cars?
- c. Will the option increase accessibility of the water body/landscape to all mobilities/ages (is the solution ADA accessible)?

4. Ecological Sustainability

- a. Will this option enhance the ecology/biodiversity of the resultant water body and adjacent land?
 - i. The wildlife abundance and diversity
 - ii. The plant life
 - iii. The water quality
 - iv. The habitat
- b. Will this option provide a sustainable ecological solution over time?
- c. Will this option have a positive impact on fish abundance/diversity?
- d. Will this option increase the likelihood for native vs. invasive species (fish and plants)?

- e. Will this option have a positive/negative impact on greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestering?
- f. Will this option improve the resilience of the habitat (flooding risk)?
- g. Will this option impact the resilience of the community infrastructure (roads; houses; etc.)?
- h. Will this option have an impact on the downstream system - **chemicals/fish/flooding?**
- i. Will this option have an impact on contaminant levels in the water and land?
- j. Will this option increase the dependence on synthetic chemicals?

5. Fiscal sustainability

- a. Will this option meet the Town's fiscal criteria as outlined in the checklist – which outlines the issues?
- b. Is the option feasible from technological and engineering perspectives – short and long term?
- c. Are there alternative funding sources available for the implementation of this option?

Appendix C: Comparisons to Bare Hill Pond, Harvard, MA

Although a much larger pond (7x as large as Warner's Pond) it has been facing the same problem of underwater invasive vegetation and has been actively combatting it since the mid-1950's.

Their website provides a wealth of information that is useful to us:

<https://www.harvard-ma.gov/bare-hill-pond-watershed-management>

Below is an executive summary, from that website, prepared for the Commonwealth in 2023.

Executive Summary

Bare Hill Pond (or the "Pond") is a 321-acre Pond in the Nashua watershed that sits within a 2427 acre local watershed in the center of Harvard, MA. In its natural state, Bare Hill Pond was approximately 200 acres prior to the addition of a dam in 1838 to power mills in the Town. The increased area was formerly used as sheep meadow and the hills surrounding the Pond had been heavily deforested for lumber; thus the name "Bare Hill Pond." Sheep farming declined after the opening of the Erie Canal in the 1840s leading to reforestation of pine, hemlock and chestnut trees in the 1800s. The expansion of the Pond over former sheep meadow and runoff from the surrounding hills added significant nutrient load to the Pond sediments over many years.

The watershed remained largely undeveloped prior to the 1950s as Harvard was a mostly rural and farming community. Over time, homes and seasonal homes were built around the shore of the Pond and there are approximately 100 homes around the Pond at this time with considerable re-growth of forest. Excessive growth of invasive species was first noted by residents in the mid-1950s. Beginning in 1959, the Select Board appointed a Bare Hill Pond Committee and private funding was raised for a five-year herbicide program using Silvex. It was reported to have cleared the pond of "weeds." Treatments continued in the 1960s and 1970s and a harvester was acquired in the 1970s to address what herbicides did not address. Concerns about the safety of the then-available herbicides emerged in the late 1970s. Even with the herbicide treatments, variable milfoil grew uncontrolled in many locations. In 1983, the Town voted to restrict future use of herbicides and purchased a larger harvester. The result, in hindsight, is that use of herbicides over 20 years likely resulted in removing native and non-native plants, but when the practice was discontinued, and harvesting became the primary method of control, milfoil spread throughout the Pond leading to the 1987 Whitman and Howard Study and the 1998 TMDL Report finding that Bare Hill Pond was endangered due

to excessive growth of invasive species (milfoil, fanwort and water chestnut). The harvesting provided temporary relief to some areas, but by 2001, the Pond was nearing a eutrophic state in late Summer with phosphorus readings of 0.044 mg/l. Areas were becoming impassible to boats and swimming was hazardous in many locations.

The Bare Hill Pond Watershed Management Committee (“BHPWMC”) engaged experts to consider its options and determined that the prior efforts to focus on “weeds” alone was treating a symptom and was not addressing the underlying challenges of eutrophication, high phosphorus and invasive species. The Committee reviewed its options, and as discussed in this Watershed Management Plan, adopted a habitat-based approach that was designed to address the goals of the 1998 TMDL report. The strategy was to begin to use winter drawdowns to reduce phosphorus by increasing turnover in the Pond, and to control the invasive species that were differentially impacted by winter drawdowns. The harvester was re-purposed to operate only in locations of the Pond that were dominated by water chestnut plants.

This work was planned, and then put in operation using practices in the newly issued GEIR and using specific habitat assessments and guidelines based on two studies by ENSR for the BHPWMC in 1998 and 1999. Careful protocols were established and submitted to the Conservation Commission for regulation under an Order of Conditions. Central to the strategy was to proceed incrementally to ensure habitat protection and restoration, based on well-defined protocols for data monitoring and assessment. The initial drawdown was 1.5 feet, and it was followed by 3 years of gravity-based drawdowns at the dam of 3.5 feet.

At this time, BHPWMC applied for a Section 319 grant, because it became evident that while the drawdown was improving the Pond and its habitat, a 3.5-foot winter drawdown was not sufficient to achieve the TMDL goals. With the award of the Section 319 grant, the Committee (largely through volunteers) constructed a pump house to conduct deep winter drawdowns under careful protocols established under the oversight of the Conservation Commission. Incremental increases of depth at 6” per year led to the conclusion that the habitat could be both protected and restored with annual 6.5-foot drawdowns. The goals of the TMDL were met after several years.

Much has been learned since 2003, with over 20 years of monitoring data. First, not all winter drawdowns will have strong freezes and there can be excess rainfall or pump mechanical issues that can limit or interfere with the plan. Second, the impact is not a one-year impact but one that builds on prior years. That said, data demonstrates there is a significant return of native species that now out compete invasive species in the drawdown zone. Third, taking a year off completely or from pumping below 3.5 feet can create setbacks as phosphorus increases and invasives rebound. Monitoring of fish, turtles, frogs, mussels and other plants and species

indicate that the selected timing and rate of the winter drawdowns does not appear to be harmful to their populations or habitats.

Drawdowns do not control seed reproducing species like water chestnut. Water chestnut plants were historically being marginally controlled by containing them using hand pulls to contain them to the Clapp's Brook inlet in the NW area of the Pond. By devoting the harvester only to that area, and focusing hand pulls on stray water chestnuts observed in other areas, water chestnuts have gone from an infestation to nearly extinct in the Pond. This took 6-8 years of harvesting prior to plants flowering and creating new seeds. Eventually there was too little to harvest and by pulling and marking where any remaining plants are seen, water chestnut plants are now handled by one person pulling a few plants a year. Water chestnuts have been virtually eradicated from Bare Hill Pond and native species have returned. Those areas are shallow, and the drawdowns have made it difficult for milfoil and fanwort to take hold where water chestnut plants have been dominant.

Based on these efforts, a second strategy was implemented to control storm water non-point source pollution. Rain gardens were designed and constructed to capture the majority of high priority storm water from Town Center, schools, and roads that were draining into the Pond. A second Section 319 grant was sought and used to fund their construction. The goal was to reduce, to the extent possible, additional phosphorus entering the Pond. A phosphorus input study was conducted and identified the sites that should have rain gardens. Some streams enter the Pond after being filtered in existing wetlands and did not require intervention. Notably, the largest contributor to phosphorus in the water column is from Pond bottom sediment or in-lake loading.

The drawdowns have reduced the phosphorus well below the TMDL goal of 0.030 mg/l at most sample locations in the Pond. This creates important resiliency that helps to stave off eutrophication. This is in large part because the pump draws water from below 12 feet in depth where in-lake loading is likely at the highest concentration.

All of that said, several challenges remain in the watershed. The first is increased in-lake loading due to higher temperatures and drought conditions in the summer due to Climate change. In 2020 and 2021, the Pond experienced the first recorded hazardous algal blooms. In those years, anoxic conditions rose from the 14 foot level to 10-12 feet in depth. Higher phosphorus levels were found at several locations in

late July. In the winters prior to these expanded, anoxic conditions, pump mechanical issues and excess rain in December made it difficult to have successful drawdowns, reducing the resiliency of the Pond to these climate related effects.

Sunlight reaches the bottom in the 10-12 foot zone and likely triggered the algal blooms in those 2 years. In the subsequent 2 summers the drawdowns achieved the depth goal, and despite significant heat and anoxic conditions, there were no algal blooms likely due to the resiliency created by the drawdowns. Thus, a key additional strategy that was not considered in the early years is to use the drawdowns to address this climate change challenge.

Lastly, the deep drawdowns do not address spot areas of the Pond that remain wet in winter or that are deeper than the drawdown zone. Invasive species are still the predominant natural species in these areas and pose a hazard to swimmers and other users of the Pond. A high priority area is the Town beach because it is in an area that exceeds 6.5 feet, the drawdown has limited or little effect. These areas range from less than half an acre to 1-3 acres. The BHPWMC is planning to utilize diver assisted suction hose contractors to remove selectively the smaller areas that remain unaddressed. The plan would be to permit the use of this technology on the Pond, to engage a contractor for control in the Town Beach and boat ramp area and to allow other Pond abutters to use that permit and engage the contractor in areas that they control.

Throughout all of these activities, the BHPWMC engaged in outreach and information sharing at meetings, in the local paper, in mailings and at annual pond tours with our expert wetlands consultant. Funding of these activities requires Town meeting discussions and approvals as well. Because Bare Hill Pond is actively used by so many residents in Town, there is continual interest in understanding and learning about the Committee's activities. A continued focus is on best practices for residents in the watershed and the avoidance of fertilizers.

Lastly, under the Town By-laws, the BHPWMC is required to comment at ZBA hearings on special permits in the watershed and is required to comment at Planning Board meetings on development in the watershed that impacts storm water runoff and is asked to comment on applications for Notices of Intent in the watershed by the Conservation Commission. All of these activities serve an important role in educating and enhancing watershed protection.

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April 29, 2025

Pond management

History & Character 5

Livability 5

Mobility 5

Eco Sustainability 4

Fiscal Sustainability 5

Dam Removal

History & Character 2

Livability 1

Mobility 1

Eco Sustainability 3

Fiscal Sustainability 3

Dredging Baseplan

History & Character 4

Livability 3

Mobility 3

Eco Sustainability 3

Fiscal Sustainability 4

Dredging 50,000CY

History & Character 4

Livability 4

Mobility 4

Eco Sustainability 4

Fiscal Sustainability 4

Dredging 100,000CY

History & Character 5

Livability 5

Mobility 5

Eco Sustainability 4

Fiscal Sustainability 4

Explain how arrived at ratings for each proposal

Pond management

History & Character An historic pond at current size has been in place since at least 1850, and a pond of some configuration has existed there since the 1600's used for industrial purposes and contributions to town commerce. It is a historical asset. Town residents have always appreciated and continue to appreciate the pond and its natural resource values, and continually use it for recreation, as has been done for generations. Scouts bought Scout Island as a scouting resource for camping and ceremonies. Fishing, birding, boating, skating are all enhanced by maintaining an open and accessible large pond. Managing invasive aquatic plants through pond management activities relieves pressure on native aquatic plants so they can rebound through either passive restoration or active restoration/replanting. Maintaining the pond enhances the open water pond views, which can now be seen from Gerow Park and Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, by eliminating the unsightly invasive plants that can be seen at the surface during the summer months. Views of open water are very appealing to humans and studies have shown that gazing at bodies of water can lower heart rate and increase feelings of well-being.

Installation of a natural fish passage into the current dam's spillway would allow historic anadromous migratory fish species to once again swim up Nashoba Brook, if the downstream Talbot Mills dam were to be removed or modified to allow fish passage. This would restore a significant natural and historic fish run that the entire community could support and celebrate. Certain species of river herring, such as Alewife, prefer to spawn in quiescent water, such as Warner's Pond. All other migratory fish spawn in the main stem of rivers and would do so in the Concord and Assabet Rivers downstream of Nashoba Brook/Warner's Pond.

Livability Maintaining the pond and managing it will significantly improve the recreational opportunities the pond offers, mostly during the summer months when invasive plants are known to choke out large areas of what would otherwise be open water for paddling or fishing.

All socio-economic groups can benefit from enhanced recreation during the summer. Pond management will increase opportunities for public enjoyment and use of the waterbody, and at adjacent upland areas like at Gerow Park – especially during summer months when aquatic invasive species are present. If they were managed and removed, the pond would become more accessible – like it used to be before the invasive plants were introduced. Pond management contributes to public health by allowing paddling mid-summer on quiescent water and views of open water are very appealing to humans and studies have shown that gazing at bodies of water can lower heart rate and increase feelings of well-being.

Mobility Pond management increases/enhances access to the pond and its quiescent waters, which can become degraded when aquatic invasive plants are present mid-summer. Pond management benefits all age groups and levels of ability wanting to access the pond in canoes or kayaks because it is less safe to try to canoe or kayak on a narrow stream. Narrow streams like Nashoba Brook can be very shallow during dry months mid-summer, during periods of droughts, or during high flows in the spring or fall when we typically have large storm events which can create rapid flows in a brook. Narrow stream or brook access does not provide or allow the same level of safe year-round access for all in the community.

Eco Sustainability Pond management will enhance biodiversity by reducing/controlling invasive aquatic plants and allowing native aquatics to grow back instead. Safe aquatic herbicides can be used at key times in spring or summer to control invasives when water flows through the pond are very low, thereby reducing any concerns about the residence time of the water in the pond. There is very little flow through, or volumetric “turn over” during the dryer months, which would allow for a feasible and effective management effort using herbicides – following a management plan that aims to limit the number of applications, frequency, and quantities of herbicides to the greatest extent possible. Many other neighboring towns in MA, and beyond, do this to manage their public pond resources. There is no reason why Concord cannot do this too for its one public pond community resource. Important to note that the ponds at Concord Greene were treated with aquatic herbicides to manage invasive plants last year. It can be done at Warner’s Pond. Also, managing aquatic invasive plants is more efficient than managing riparian wetland invasive plants, which requires cutting, spraying, hauling/removal, and multiple teams of staff working long days and periods to manage a large area. One-two people in a boat applying herbicide at the necessary/approved rate is all that is needed to see effective control of aquatic invasive plants. Aquatic herbicides are rigorously tested and approved for safe use by the EPA. Aquatic herbicides also break down over time, and have a half-life decay rate. Their concentrations begin to disperse as soon as it is placed in water. Sun light and microbes break it down to its basic elemental forms. They leave no residues behind and are non-detectable in water after their decay has been completed. I shared information about these facts with the Task Force. The Univ. of Florida has easy to read fact sheets about aquatic herbicides.

Removing invasive plants increases available dissolved oxygen levels in the pond, which benefits all aquatic species and improves habitat for more diverse fisheries populations. The endangered wood turtle upstream of the pond is a species of concern for everyone in town, but the general loss of habitat and habitat fragmentation across the town and the whole region, has contributed more to this species’ decline than anything else. Wood turtles can utilize many different types of riparian cover, which is present in Nashoba and Fort Pond Brooks. They do

prefer cold water streams, but Nashoba Brook is not considered a cold water or “trout stream” because it gets too warm in the summertime, regardless of the presence of Warner’s Pond. This is important because warmer water also cannot hold as much dissolved oxygen, which native species like trout need more of to survive. Warm water native species like bullhead-catfish, pumpkinseed/sunfish, or pickerel, which can all be found in Warner’s Pond year-round (among others), all tolerate lower levels of dissolved oxygen. The upstream water in Nashoba Brook that enters the pond mid-summer, and the water that is also downstream in the Assabet River, both currently become too warm during the summer to support cold water species like trout or wood turtles. This limits those species’ abilities to migrate during the summer. The pond itself is not the cause of this. A pond that is not managed, however, contributes more to these negative factors. Dense beds of invasive aquatic plants crowd out the water’s surface during the summer, which allows the plants to collectively absorb more of the sun’s energy, thereby contributing to an increase in water temperatures. By removing/managing these invasive plants when they are present during the summer months, water temperatures could be reduced, and more native plants could return, which would support a more biodiverse system and species that prefer cooler water.

If there is an official Nashoba Brook/Fort Pond Brook wood turtle restoration plan, written by state of MA Natural Heritage wildlife biologist, for the population that may exist north of the pond, such a plan was never shared with the Task Force. If such a plan exists, that needs to be understood. The presence of Warner’s Pond may not be a significant concern for the sustainability of this local population of wood turtle.

Migratory birds including the pied-billed grebe (state listed rare species), mergansers, and other waterfowl species are found on the pond during the fall and spring migrations. They use the pond to recover and to feed before continuing their migration. Osprey and bald eagles dive and fish at the pond taking advantage of the deep and open water. None of these species would be found in a scrub shrub wetland or narrow/shallow stream like Nashoba Brook because they need deep marsh or quiescent open water habitat to find their prey.

Also, assuming installation of natural fish passage occurs with the pond management proposal in the future, after the Talbot Mills dam in Billerica is either removed or modified to allow fish passage, access for migratory fish during the spring into Warner’s Pond would significantly be improved and made possible.

Overall, water quality and existing aquatic habitat would be improved by managing the pond and reducing the invasive plants. This benefits the downstream river system as well. A thoughtful management plan needs to be developed that prioritizes the initial control of invasives then follow up with spot treatments where needed in the future – thereby reducing the amount of synthetic chemicals needed over time. Large gaps in treatment to control the return of large areas of invasives, should not be recommended.

Effects to flooding and risk of flooding is unchanged with this proposal. According to the recent hydraulic flow modeling done by EA’s sub-contractor, the risk of flooding at the dam was shown to be more affected by the presence of the Comm Ave bridge than the dam itself. The dam does allow flood waters to pass over it efficiently. It was, however, recently overtopped in Dec 2023 by flood stage water, but the flood elevations were coming from the Assabet River, which backs up into Nashoba Brook. The dam was not the cause of any high/flood waters experienced.

During that same flood event, downstream of the dam, the Brookside Square parking lot adjacent to the Brook was flooded. The dam had no effect on those flood elevations – it was coming from the Assabet River. Important fact for everyone to understand.

Greenhouse gases are insignificant consideration at Warner's Pond. All floodplains, wetlands, and waterbodies contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Generally, anaerobic bacteria consume organic or plant matter under water and can emit methane (regardless of whether there is a dam present). Aerobic bacteria do the same above water – and emit CO₂. This is too complicated to understand and account for at Warner's Pond. All wetlands in town emit greenhouse gases, but the cars and residential heating systems all emit significantly more greenhouse gases than whatever comes out of Warner's Pond and Nashoba Brook.

Fiscal Sustainability Assuming the use of CPA funds for pond management and continued use of MCI work crews to help w dam maintenance/vegetation maintenance; pond management is the cheapest and easiest proposal to fund, even if town capital were needed to supplement it on an annual basis. Investing in town-owned public/recreational resources has only been a basic task for the town and does not require debate. Mowing and maintaining Emerson Field has a cost. People value Emerson Field. Maintaining Warner's Pond has a cost. People value Warner's Pond.

Dam Removal

History & Character Dam removal would not maintain the existing uses of the pond. Recreation options on a quiescent 55+ acre pond would be drastically changed and it is not likely that year round water access for paddling would be possible post dam removal. Nashoba Brook is generally very shallow, floods during large storm events, and has periods of high (dangerous) flow rates during spring and fall storms. Will people want to paddle in a restored Nashoba Brook? Maybe – but it becomes significantly more challenging to get into and out of a canoe or kayak in fast moving water. It becomes significantly more challenging to launch a canoe or kayak from shallow water. It also becomes more challenging to paddle through a narrow brook in a scrub shrub wetland system. Looking at historical maps provided by Ann Clifford to the Task Force, aerial imagery, and reference streams with similar topographical and bathymetric characteristics (like Lubbers Brook in Wilmington, MA) – It appears to me that Nashoba Brook will not have distinct banks as the water will spread out laterally over a large area where the pond currently is located. Just like it did prior to the current dam being built as it was drawn in 1830. There will likely be a central distinct open stream in the middle of a large scrub shrub wetland complex, similar to Lubber's Brook in Wilmington, MA – but that would be due to that being the area within the wetland complex with concentrated flows. There is no bank in the Lubber's Brook scrub shrub wetland complex – I have been there which is why I am referencing it. The water in Lubber's Brook spreads out laterally where it flows through Wilmington because the topography is so flat. This, along with the exposed bed rock where the dam was placed, are likely two good explanations for why the pond was built and placed in its current location. It would be a good spot for a broad pond due to the topography that exists in that location. The pond bottom at Warners Pond is also likely very flat once the deposits of soft sediments and muck (i.e., undecomposed organic plant matter) is removed or washed away post dam removal. Paddling through a narrow opening in the middle of a scrub shrub swamp is challenging. That becomes even more challenging when seasonal low water levels are present

and kayak and canoe paddles will likely hit the bottom of the Brook. Dam removal is more of an ecological consideration and should be considered and studied in more detail regarding changes to usability and recreation opportunities on the Brook. People do not typically paddle on Nashoba Brook upstream as those sections of the Brook are also filled in with scrub shrub wetland habitat and the water channel is also quite narrow (north of Route 2), and it is filled with downed trees which prevent paddling opportunities. I have paddled on the upstream sections of the Nashoba Brook and Fort Pond Brooks recently. The presence of downed trees and beaver dams makes easy paddling very difficult, which would continue into the future if the dam were removed.

Access to Scout Island does not appear to be possible via a canoe post dam removal. Waders and walking through knee deep water, across a 40-60ft wide stream (or even broader wetland) in the summertime appears to be what would be required. Access through a restored riparian wetland system will not be allowed unless new trails would be permitted by NRC. Such trails would also not be accessible during high water events during storms. Fishing in a narrow brook surrounded by shrubs is also not possible, especially for young kids. It is too hard to cast in those surroundings.

Riparian/wetland plant communities would change but it is hard to argue whether it would be more diverse than current conditions. An open water pond habitat is rare on the landscape in this area. Concord has a lot of riparian/wetland habitat in town currently. It seems to me that maintaining an open water pond/wetland system that currently supports many native plants and wildlife, supports more biodiverse plant and habitat communities on the landscape.

Whether viewing a narrow brook and active riparian floodplain is more visually appealing is not clear to me. I would again call out that there is plenty of wetland/riparian zones with trails that provide viewing opportunities in town. There is very few other open water, 100% public town-owned, free to use, and easily accessible, appropriate for all ages and skill level, open water resources in town. Possibly no other such resources exist in town. Viewing open water resources is proven to be appealing to humans.

Livability Overall removing the dam and open water pond resource does not enhance Concord's desirability for its residents or neighboring communities. No one will be able to access the restored wetland complex post dam removal. There will be no trails, and fishing opportunities in a shallow and narrow brook surrounded by scrub shrub wetland habitat will be challenging if not impossible for young people, who currently fish at the pond from multiple access points and docks.

I don't see how all socio-economic groups in town would benefit from dam removal. What would people do in the pond area for recreation once the pond is gone? There is no free, public, easily accessible open water pond system in town to replace it. All socio-economic groups benefit more from having access to the pond.

Mobility There will be no improvements to a waterbody post dam removal. Paddling and fishing in Nashoba Brook is significantly more challenging than doing so on a quiescent open water 55+ acre pond. It is not realistic to expect all age groups and socio-economic groups and mobilities to find ways to safely paddle on Nashoba Brook, especially during low water months in the summer, during droughts, or when encountering beaver dams, downed trees, etc., In fact,

overall, it is very difficult to paddle the Fort Pond or Nashoba brooks and requires getting out of a canoe/kayak and portaging around these natural obstructions (speaking from personal experience). This would remain a constant issue into the future even if the dam were removed.

Eco Sustainability Dam removal has many known ecological benefits, primarily benefitting migratory fish. There currently is no fish passage on the dam, but there is evidence that fish can get over the current dam during periods of high flows and the dam is overtopped – which happens occasionally during seasonal high water/large storm events. The current dam, therefore, does not prevent all fish passage from occurring all the time. If fish passage is the primary ecological goal, dam removal is not needed to accomplish that as a natural fish passage stepped system can be installed in the current dam's southern spillway.

Post dam removal there are a number of riparian invasive species that would become a major concern in the area where the pond used to be. Reed-canary grass is just upstream of the pond in Fort Pond Brook. It's a large seed bank that will provide continuous upstream pressure to spread downstream into the Warners Pond wetland footprint. It is a non-native invasive plant that likes wet areas. Without dedicated management by the town, on a recurring annual basis, I fully expect this grass to take over that section of the Nashoba Brook system. There are other similar invasive species out there that are a concern as well that many in town are very familiar with, such as phragmites and buckthorn. These are also difficult plants to keep out of your restored/disturbed wetland/riparian areas and require dedicated management to prevent their spread and establishment. Their seeds will be deposited in the drained pond area over time by wind or birds. The town's inability to manage or respond to these species in other parts of town, especially in town owned Conservation Land, is concerning for the future of the area.

Greenhouse gases are insignificant consideration at Warner's Pond. All floodplains, wetlands, and waterbodies contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Generally, anaerobic bacteria consume organic or plant matter under water and can emit methane (regardless of whether there is a dam present). Aerobic bacteria do the same above water – and emit CO₂. This is too complicated to understand and account for at Warner's Pond. All wetlands in town emit greenhouse gases, but the cars and residential heating systems all emit significantly more greenhouse gases than whatever comes out of Warner's Pond and Nashoba Brook.

Managing riparian invasives could actually require more synthetic chemicals in the restored/drainage pond area compared to what may be needed to manage the open water pond system. On an annual recurring basis, it may be very similar to what is needed to manage the pond. If the town decides to do no maintenance of the invasives that will appear over time, then yes, that will require no synthetic chemicals, but the ecological decline and costs would be very high as a result.

Effects to flooding and risk of flooding is unchanged with this proposal. According to the recent hydraulic flow modeling done by EA's sub-contractor, the risk of flooding at the dam was shown to be more affected by the presence of the Comm Ave bridge than the dam itself. The dam does allow flood waters to pass over it efficiently. It was, however, recently overtopped in Dec 2023 by flood stage water, but the flood elevations were coming from the Assabet River, which backs up into Nashoba Brook. The dam was not the cause of any high/flood waters experienced. During that same flood event, downstream of the dam, the Brookside Square parking lot

adjacent to the Brook was flooded. The dam had no effect on those flood elevations – it was coming from the Assabet River. Important fact for everyone to understand.

If there is an official Nashoba Brook/Fort Pond Brook wood turtle restoration plan, written by state of MA Natural Heritage wildlife biologist, for the population that may exist north of the pond, such a plan was never shared with the Task Force. Therefore, the presence of Warner's Pond may not be a significant concern for the sustainability of this local population of wood turtle. I would encourage that such a plan be written and provided to the public to understand what is actually needed to restore the statewide declining populations of wood turtles.

Fiscal Sustainability The cost to remove the dam appears to be higher than the money currently available with CPA funds that might be used to pay for it. Compared to dredging it is cheaper but it is not finite. The post dam removal channel creation and stabilization costs are mostly unknown and likely to be higher than currently estimated. Additional studies and hydraulic modeling should be done to understand where Nashoba Brook would naturally/likely flow, and how it would flow. Would it flow in a central channel, or spread out laterally in a broad wetland system or braided channel? We don't really know. This requires more money to pay for those studies to more accurately understand the post dam condition.

State grants are not available for dam removal of a dam that is in good condition. Failing dams become "priority projects" for the MA Dept of Ecological Restoration. The town would likely need to come up with town capital \$ to help pay for dam removal. I don't believe new CPA funds could be obtained to pay for actual dam removal because that does not enhance recreation in this case, and it does not enhance historical resources.

Managing the conservation land will require town staff, and budget, to do it into the future, post dam removal. It is not a finite done once/no maintenance-cost proposal. The dam removal proposal outlines stream restoration and an adaptive management plan that requires 5 year interval updates. This suggests continuous maintenance efforts are required post dam removal.

Dredging Baseplan

History & Character An historic pond at current size has been in place since at least 1850, and a pond of some configuration has existed there since the 1600's used for industrial purposes and contributions to town commerce. It is a historical asset. Town residents have always appreciated and continue to appreciate the pond and its natural resource values, and continually use it for recreation, as has been done for generations. Scouts bought Scout Island as a scouting resource for camping and ceremonies. Fishing, birding, boating, skating are all enhanced by maintaining an open, deep, and accessible large pond. Managing the pond by using dredging deepens it and reduces/removes invasive plant populations and removes excess nutrient (P) laden sediments that have accumulated over time and essentially fertilizing invasive plants. Invasive plants appear at the surface reducing the recreational opportunities during the summer months by making paddling and fishing more difficult or impossible. Removing areas of invasive plant populations also allows for native aquatic plant restoration to occur either through passive restoration or active restoration/replanting. Deepening the pond enhances the

recreation opportunities on quiescent open water. Also, open water pond views can be maintained by dredging by ensuring invasive plant growth is either eliminated or significantly reduced during the summer months. Maintaining the pond and deepening it by dredging also allows for a more biodiverse landscape to remain. Open water pond habitat, that is not a kettle hole wetland, is not common in town and is valuable to wildlife. The pond can also be seen from Gerow Park and Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Views of open water are very appealing to humans and studies have shown that gazing at bodies of water can lower heart rate and increase feelings of well-being.

Installation of a natural fish passage into the current dam's spillway would allow historic anadromous migratory fish species to once again swim up Nashoba Brook, if the downstream Talbot Mills dam were to be removed or modified to allow fish passage. This would restore a significant natural and historic fish run that the entire community could support and celebrate. Certain species of river herring, such as Alewife, prefer to spawn in quiescent water, such as Warner's Pond. All other migratory fish spawn in the main stem of rivers and would do so in the Concord and Assabet Rivers downstream of Nashoba Brook/Warner's Pond.

Livability Dredging the pond would significantly improve the recreational opportunities in the areas where dredging occurred, mostly during the summer months when invasive plants are known to choke out large areas of what would otherwise be open water for paddling or fishing. All socio-economic groups can benefit from enhanced recreation during the summer. Pond management by dredging would increase opportunities for public enjoyment and use of the waterbody, and at adjacent upland areas like Gerow Park – especially during summer months when aquatic invasive species would otherwise be present. Dredging the pond would enhance its accessibility year-round recreation potential for everyone in the community, not just Concord – like it used to be before the invasive plants were introduced. Dredging contributes to public health by allowing paddling mid-summer on quiescent open water and views of open water are very appealing to humans. Studies have shown that gazing at bodies of water can lower heart rate and increase feelings of well-being.

The dredging baseplan A achieves the least amount of Livability criteria compared to dredging plans B & C.

Mobility Where dredging has occurred, this would increase/enhance access to the pond and its quiescent waters, in those locations. The pond becomes degraded when aquatic invasive plants are present mid-summer. Dredging benefits all age groups and levels of ability wanting to access the deeper waters of the pond in canoes or kayaks. It is less safe to try to canoe or kayak on a narrow stream. Narrow streams like Nashoba Brook can be very shallow during dry months mid-summer, during periods of droughts, or during high flows in the spring or fall when we typically have large storm events which can create rapid flows in a brook. Narrow stream or brook access does not provide or allow the same level of safe year-round access for all in the community.

The dredging baseplan A achieves the least amount of the Mobility criteria compared to dredging plans B & C.

Eco Sustainability

Maintaining the pond and deepening it by dredging allows for a more biodiverse landscape to remain. Open water pond habitat, that is not a kettle hole wetland, is not common in town and is valuable to wildlife

Removing invasive plants increases available dissolved oxygen levels in the pond, which benefits all aquatic species and improves habitat for more diverse fisheries populations. The endangered wood turtle upstream of the pond is a species of concern for everyone in town, but the general loss of habitat and habitat fragmentation across the town and the whole region, has contributed more to this species' decline than anything else. Wood turtles can utilize many different types of riparian cover, which is present in Nashoba and Fort Pond Brooks. They do prefer cold water streams, but Nashoba Brook is not considered a cold water or "trout stream" because it gets too warm in the summertime, regardless of the presence of Warner's Pond. This is important because warmer water also cannot hold as much dissolved oxygen, which native species like trout need more of to survive. Warm water native species like bullhead-catfish, pumpkinseed/sunfish, or pickerel, which can all be found in Warner's Pond year-round (among others), all tolerate lower levels of dissolved oxygen. The upstream water in Nashoba Brook that enters the pond mid-summer, and the water that is also downstream in the Assabet River, both currently become too warm during the summer to support cold water species like trout or wood turtles. This limits those species' abilities to migrate during the summer. The pond itself is not the cause of this. A pond that is not dredged, however, contributes more to these negative factors. Excess nutrients in pond sediments, shallow pond depths, and dense beds of invasive aquatic plants crowd out the water's surface during the summer, which allows the plants to collectively absorb more of the sun's energy, thereby contributing to an increase in water temperatures. By removing/managing these invasive plants by dredging the pond, water temperatures could be reduced during the summer months, and more native plants could return, which would support a more biodiverse system and species that prefer cooler water.

If there is an official Nashoba Brook/Fort Pond Brook wood turtle restoration plan, written by state of MA Natural Heritage wildlife biologist, for the population that may exist north of the pond, such a plan was never shared with the Task Force. Therefore, the presence of Warner's Pond may not be a significant concern for the sustainability of this local population of wood turtle. I would encourage that such a plan be written and provided to the public to understand what is actually needed to restore the statewide declining populations of wood turtles.

Dredging also deepens the pond. Deeper water is cooler, which can therefore, hold more dissolved oxygen. Under those conditions, the pond could function as an improved refugia for fish during warmer summer months. Migratory birds including the pied-billed grebe (state listed rare species), mergansers, and other waterfowl species are found on the pond during the fall and spring migrations. They use the pond to recover and to feed before continuing their migration. Osprey and bald eagles dive and fish at the pond taking advantage of the deep and open water. None of these species would be found in a scrub shrub wetland or narrow/shallow stream like Nashoba Brook because the need deep marsh or quiescent open water habitat to find their prey. If the pond is not dredged, over time, shallower wetland and scrub shrub habitats would likely be more common.

Removing areas of invasive plant populations by dredging, also allows for native aquatic plant restoration to occur either through passive restoration or active restoration/replanting.

Also, assuming installation of natural fish passage occurs along with a proposal to dredge the pond in the future, after the Talbot Mills dam in Billerica is either removed or modified to allow fish passage, access for migratory fish during the spring into Warner's Pond would significantly be improved and made possible.

Overall, water quality and existing aquatic habitat would be improved by dredging the pond and reducing the invasive plants. This benefits the downstream river system as well.

Greenhouse gases are insignificant consideration at Warner's Pond. All floodplains, wetlands, and waterbodies contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Generally, anaerobic bacteria consume organic or plant matter under water and can emit methane (regardless of whether there is a dam present). Aerobic bacteria do the same above water – and emit CO₂. This is too complicated to understand and account for at Warner's Pond. All wetlands in town emit greenhouse gases, but the cars and residential heating systems all emit significantly more greenhouse gases than whatever comes out of Warner's Pond and Nashoba Brook.

Effects to flooding and risk of flooding is unchanged with this proposal. According to the recent hydraulic flow modeling done by EA's sub-contractor, the risk of flooding at the dam was shown to be more affected by the presence of the Comm Ave bridge than the dam itself. The dam does allow flood waters to pass over it efficiently. It was, however, recently overtopped in Dec 2023 by flood stage water, but the flood elevations were coming from the Assabet River, which backs up into Nashoba Brook. The dam was not the cause of any high/flood waters experienced. During that same flood event, downstream of the dam, the Brookside Square parking lot adjacent to the Brook was flooded. The dam had no effect on those flood elevations – it was coming from the Assabet River. Important fact for everyone to understand.

The dredging baseplan A achieves the least amount of the Ecological Sustainability criteria compared to dredging plans B & C.

Fiscal Sustainability Existing CPA funds can be used to pay for dredging. It has not been made clear to the task force whether additional large sums of money from CPA/CPC could be obtained to help pay for a dredging effort, in addition to the money previously acquired (ear marked for dredging) from the CPA. Regardless, over time, the cost to dredge the pond becomes more efficient if the cost is annualized and thought of as a one-time, long term investment. The more that is dredged, the more time it will take for those areas in the pond that were deepened would fill in with sediment. A sediment loading study that uses actual grab samples in the Nashoba Brook and Warner's Pond is needed to understand the actual sediment loading rate into the pond. Until that happens, we only go by ESS' estimate that dredged areas would take approximately 100 years to fill back in. Investing in town-owned public/recreational resources has only been a basic task for the town and does not require debate. Mowing and maintaining Emerson Field has a cost. People value Emerson Field. Maintaining/dredging Warner's Pond has a cost. People value Warner's Pond.

Dredging of the pond has never occurred since it was first created, and it has taken approximately 175 years for historic sediment loading rates into the pond to cause it to experience the shallow depths it exhibits now, which benefits troublesome and undesirable invasive plants. Stormwater management practices have improved over the years, and storm water catch basins have been installed in many places within the Nashoba Brook watershed, which likely has reduced sediment loading pressure on the brook from developed areas and roadways. In addition, the farm fields north of Warner's Pond maintain a vegetation buffer around the pond edge, which was likely not always present. In the past, large storm events may have contributed significant sediment loads into the pond, carried by surface flow/run off. That does not appear to be happening today. Overall, it is possible sediment loading into the pond is less than what the 2012 watershed management plan report estimated, which used a modeling approach and land use classification maps only. There was no ground-truthing or data inputs from the system being studied to calibrate the model.

A dredging plan should not be considered a recurring and expensive management option when considered in a broader context. Dredging would only need to occur once every 100+ years – but the more that is dredged (cubic yards removed) the longer that timeline would be extended and the larger the return on the investment would be realized by the many future generations of community members who value and use the pond for year round recreation and wildlife appreciation.

Dredging 50,000CY

History & Character see explanation for baseplan A. Same reasons/considerations for ranking of the criteria would be inserted here.

Livability see explanation for baseplan A. Same reasons/considerations for ranking of the criteria would be inserted here, except the ranking for Livability and Values is increased by one point due to increased dredging area & volume

Mobility see explanation for baseplan A. Same reasons/considerations for ranking of the criteria would be inserted here, except the ranking for Mobility and Accessibility is increased by one point due to increased dredging area & volume

Eco Sustainability see explanation for baseplan A. Same reasons/considerations for ranking of the criteria would be inserted here, except the ranking for Ecological Sustainability is increased by one point due to increased dredging area & volume

Fiscal Sustainability see explanation for baseplan A. Same reasons/considerations for ranking of the criteria would be inserted here.

Dredging 100,000CY

History & Character see explanation for baseplan A. Same reasons/considerations for ranking of the criteria would be inserted here, except the ranking for History & Character values is increased by one point due to increased dredging area & volume.

Livability see explanation for baseplan A. Same reasons/considerations for ranking of the criteria would be inserted here, except the ranking for Livability and Values is increased by two points due to increased dredging area & volume.

Mobility see explanation for baseplan A. Same reasons/considerations for ranking of the criteria would be inserted here, except the ranking for Mobility and Accessibility is increased by two points due to increased dredging area & volume.

Eco Sustainability see explanation for baseplan A. Same reasons/considerations for ranking of the criteria would be inserted here

Fiscal Sustainability see explanation for baseplan A. Same reasons/considerations for ranking of the criteria would be inserted here.

8) Pond management before dredging, before dam removal.

Pond management is the least expensive management option that preserves the pond. Preserving the pond is an important thing for the town to do, especially because Warner's Pond is called out specifically in three separate town master plans (West Concord Master Plan, Concord Open Space and Recreation Plan, and Envision Concord 2030 plan) as having value and importance for the town. I believe the pond would become even more important in the near future as a free, easily accessible, open water recreational and wildlife viewing area in West Concord. Future housing and commercial developments make preserving this public resource even more valuable than it was when the master plans were written. Reducing and controlling aquatic invasive plants could delay the need for a more significant management intervention, like dredging, for many years. The pond has never been managed on an annual basis, so no one has seen what those results will be and how effective they could be. That should be the priority – all future decisions should be made based on the results of a continuous and dedicated, pond management campaign. Fund raising and dredge plan refinement could occur in response to future identified needs in the pond after the aquatic invasive plants have been managed. Dredging 100,000CY is therefore, my second ranked option, followed by dredging Plan B then Plan C, as they are likely still worth doing, but they are less effective at removing the accumulated sediments in the pond in the shallowest areas. Dam removal is the last option as it does not meet most of the goals outlined in the Envision Concord 2030 plan, and it would permanently remove an important and valued open water, easily accessible, free, public resource. The dam forming the pond can easily be improved upon to enhance fish passage, like other towns have done. The pond is a unique feature in town and should be celebrated for what it offers the town. It is well known to West Concord residents, and typically thought of as hard to find by Concord residents who don't know about it, and therefore, they don't value it. Gerow Park changes everything and the pond is now very well known and even more accessible than before for ALL Concord residents to enjoy.

9) Consensus seems achievable if the TF agrees to pursue pond management to improve the water quality and reduce invasive plants, and to build a fish passage system if Talbot Mills dam is removed. Dredging or dam removal may not be necessary in the future, but if they are, pond management gives the town the time and resources it needs to develop a more informed plan, that has more stakeholder input, and town wide consensus prior to forcing a decision on something most people don't even understand.