

# Tillinghast Pond Management Area 2010 Financial Summary

## Revenues

TNC Operating Funds:	\$22,184
Hope Goddard Iselin Foundation:	11,569
REI Foundation:	5,000
Agricultural Lease:	990
<hr/>	
<b><u>Total:</u></b>	<b>\$39,743</b>

## Expenses

Personnel:	\$28,174
Facilities:	10,051
<i>Tillinghast Pond observation deck</i>	<i>5500</i>
<i>Signage Program</i>	<i>1830</i>
<i>Brown Family Preserve marker</i>	<i>1460</i>
<i>Pond Trail bog bridge materials</i>	<i>1261</i>
Other:	1,518
<hr/>	
<b><u>Total:</u></b>	<b>\$39,743</b>

February 15, 2011

The Honorable Mark Tourgee  
President, West Greenwich Town Council  
71 Kimberly Drive  
West Greenwich, RI 02817

Dear Mr. Tourgee:

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy and the Tillinghast Pond Management Council, I am pleased to provide this summary of activities for the Tillinghast Pond Management Area (TPMA) for 2010, which I hope will be of interest to you and your colleagues on the Town Council.

**Trail Improvements:** In 2010, the Conservancy and its partners continued to expand opportunities for public recreation at TPMA. We completed a loop around Tillinghast Pond by opening an additional 1.7 miles of hiking trail, and built an observation deck at the north end of the pond. Volunteers from American Power Conversion installed a terraced canoe and kayak launch at the Plain Road parking lot, improving access to the water and reducing erosion into the pond. APC donated all of the materials for this project. In addition, Conservancy staff and volunteers completed preliminary clearing for the next hiking trail: a roughly 2-mile loop on the west side of Plain Road, which is scheduled to open in June 2011.

**Public Outreach:** Conservancy staff led five interpretive walks at TPMA, joining with partners including the West Greenwich Land Trust and the Appalachian Mountain Club, and attracting just over 100 visitors. The Conservancy plans to sustain or increase this level of programming in 2011, and we are also exploring a possible partnership with the West Greenwich Horseman's Association.

**Timber Harvests:** The Nature Conservancy is committed to fostering the notion of a traditional "working landscape" in West Greenwich. In April 2010, Miller Firewood & Logging completed year-long, 27-acre timber harvest on the west side of Plain Road, essentially clear-cutting an area where white pines were overtaking a stand of dying oaks. While contributing to the local forest economy, we also sought to achieve a complementary goal of increasing open shrub habitat for woodcocks, hawks, and other birds. Doing so, however, required the operator to remove a significant number of young white pines, for which there was little or no market value. In addition, the Management Council required that the timber be removed with a forwarder (rather than a skidder) and that the operator avoid crossing the hayfield known as the Amy Allen lot. All of these factors sharply reduced the project's capacity to raise revenue.

Through the bidding process on the Plain Road project, the Conservancy identified a second operator – Premier Tree Service – that was willing to cut and chip poor quality white pine in exchange for the material. Starting in March, the contractor cleared approximately 10 acres surrounding the former Patalano estate on Narrow Lane, a historically pastured area that had become thick with white pine and

non-native, invasive shrubs after it was abandoned in the late 1980s. Grasses and wildflowers have already started to re-colonize the new forest opening, attracting numbers of birds and butterflies and improving the aesthetics of the trail.

**Habitat Restoration:** Last spring, the Department of Environmental Management and the Rhode Island Natural History Survey announced the Forest Health Works Project: an 18-month effort to control invasive plants in priority forests in western Rhode Island. The Nature Conservancy arranged for the treatment of two trouble spots at Tillinghast Pond: the newly opened area around the Patalano estate and a former mill site on Hazard Road. At both locations, private contractors treated Japanese barberry and other invasive plants at no cost to the Conservancy or the town of West Greenwich. The costs of the program are covered by a grant from the US Forest Service. It appears that the summer and fall treatments were successful, but a third treatment will be scheduled for this spring if necessary.

In early fall, the Management Council started work on the restoration of a two-acre marsh, adjacent to an un-named pond on the Cioe parcel, east of Narrow Lane. Over time, the marsh has been colonized by non-native *Phragmites* reeds, and the native marsh vegetation is disappearing. With a grant from the US Fish & Wildlife Service, and after securing permits from RIDEM, The Nature Conservancy hired a contractor to spray the *Phragmites* with an herbicide approved for aquatic use. TNC staff and volunteers are cutting the dead reeds this winter to allow sunlight to reach the marsh surface, with the hope that cattails and other native plants will quickly reclaim the wetland.

**Open Space Conservation:** The Nature Conservancy closed on a 42-acre parcel on the south side of Hazard Mill Pond, owned by David Capwell. Funding was provided by The Champlin Foundations and an open space grant from the US Department of Transportation. RIDEM holds a conservation easement over the property, providing additional legal protection. Town Planner Jennifer Paquet was extremely helpful in approving an administrative subdivision, working with the land owner and our surveyor under a very tight deadline. At present, the Conservancy is planning for only limited public access to the property, as it is a relatively small parcel and does not abut other conservation land. Likewise, the Conservancy does not have the capacity to provide for fishing or boating access to Hazard Mill Pond, and instead will concentrate such efforts at Tillinghast Pond.

Thank you for this opportunity to report to the Town Council regarding the Tillinghast Pond Management Area. I have enclosed for your review a brief financial statement outlining the Conservancy's TPMA revenue and expenses for 2010. If I can provide any additional information, please feel free to call me at (401) 529-1072.

Sincerely,

Timothy Mooney  
Preserves Manager