

Community Land & Water Coalition



February 2024

VOLUME 9

February 2024 Newsletter

In 2024, CLWC entered its **third year of successful grassroots organizing** in Southeastern Massachusetts! We are raising awareness about **threats to our drinking water** and our region from unregulated sand mining operations, inappropriately sited industrial solar projects, and overdevelopment.

Sand mining like that in Southeastern Massachusetts is a **global problem**. The magazine Scientific American story *Inside the Crime Rings Trafficking Sand* is ours. A transnational security investigator trying to stop illegal sand mining in Africa says in Scientific American,

"You cannot illegally mine sand in daylight if you don't have people helping you," he says—people in high places. "Big companies are being protected, perhaps by ministers or deputy ministers or whoever. It's a whole system." Everyone in the sand-trafficking market "benefits from it, from top to bottom."

CLWC's decade of research on sand mining in Southeastern Massachusetts reaches the same conclusion. In broad daylight **endless trucks travel** our rural roads and interstate highways, hauling away sand from mines operating **blatantly for decades with no accountability or environmental studies**. This is only possible with help from people in high places.

CLWC exposes the local story in its report and movie, *Sand Wars: An investigation into the money, politics and corruption behind sand mining and its silent environmental crisis in Southeastern Massachusetts*.

Take Action >> [Sign CLWC's Petition for a Sand Mining Moratorium](#)



News highlights from Southeastern Massachusetts

Sand Wars

- Carver MA:** [Earth Removal Committee](#): Instead of its usual one-meeting rubber-stamp of "earth removal permits" for commercial sand mining operations, the ERC faces mounting public pressure. On January 31, 2024, the ERC continued permit hearings for proposals by [A.D. Makepeace Cranberry](#) and [E.J. Pontiff Cranberry](#) to **expand mining for a total of about 2.5 million cubic yards of sand and gravel** worth about \$40 million. Watch the January 31 meeting [here](#). **Attend the next meeting on Wednesday, 2/21 at 7 p.m., Carver Town Hall.**
- Kingston MA:** In January, the Kingston Water Commissioners voted to urge the Board of Selectmen to deny the Plympton Sand & Gravel application for a mining permit because it will **"negatively impact" drinking water**. The permit is still under consideration by the Board of Selectmen. Read more >> [CLWC blog](#).
- Halifax MA:** On Feb. 4 a superior court judge denied a request by Morse Brothers, a mining and cranberry company, to stop the Town of Halifax from imposing earth removal permit conditions for a mining expansion on Monponsett Pond. Read more >> [CLWC blog](#) and [Plympton-Halifax-Kingston Express](#)
- Plympton MA:** In January, the Plympton Zoning Board denied a request that would clear the way for SLT Construction to expand its Spring Street, Carver, mining operation to include a demolition debris crushing, sorting and transport facility. Read more >> [Plympton-Halifax-Kingston Express](#) and [CLWC blog](#).

Solar Gone Wrong

- Wareham MA:** After over a year of public hearings and deliberations, the Planning Board denied the application of Long Road Energy LLC for a large ground-mounted solar project over the Sole Source Aquifer that would clear-cut 21 acres of forest. Read more >> [CLWC blog](#). The Planning Board continues to hold the line on inappropriately sited solar projects, is requiring more information on lithium ion batteries, and denied a permit for a project that violates the Town's new solar bylaw.
- State SMART Solar Subsidies:** Major public comments were submitted to the [state](#) calling for redirecting solar subsidies. Read more >> [Mass Audubon Study](#), [Growing Solar/Protecting Nature](#).

Major Development Threats

- Plymouth MA: Airport Expansion:** Victory! A Jan. 16, 2024 decision by state and federal environmental agencies directs more environmental study, especially on drinking water. Read more >> [CLWC blog](#)
- Plymouth MA:** Wastewater Treatment Plant: Victory! State requires a full environmental impact study. Read more >> [CLWC blog](#). Sign the petition on [Chiltonville.org](#)
- Plymouth MA: AD Makepeace, Red Brook expansion, Deer Pond: Wetlands appeal.** CLWC and a Ten Residents Group appealed the Conservation Commission's wetlands permit to MassDEP. A site review shows possible wetlands violations by the company by filling a wetland to create the road around the pond. Read more >> [CLWC blog](#).
- Kingston MA:** Thorndike Development announces **it will not proceed** with plans to [clear about 30 acres of forest](#) and put in a dense project in an inappropriate location.

CALENDAR

Follow our [on-line calendar](#) for weekly updates

WAREHAM

Wednesday 2/21 at 6 p.m. Zoom and In person
Conservation Commission, Public Hearing
Development: Squirrel Island Road a/k/a Hidden Trails LLC / Off County Road
Hearing on wetlands permit for **dense residential development in the wrong place**. It will clearcut 37 acres of Pine Barrens forest in a Critical Natural Landscape containing streams and wetlands. The area has extensive wildlife habitat in one of the most remote and undisturbed sections of Wareham. Attend on 2/21 and urge the Conservation Commission to deny the Order of Conditions permit because the application does not meet the state or town wetlands laws. The developer will report on a Chapter 21E site assessment of chemical pollution.

Monday 2/26 at 6 pm Zoom and in person
Planning Board, Public Meeting
Solar: AD Makepeace Cranberry/New Leaf Solar
Permit extension requests for solar at 27 Charge Pond Road and 150 Tihonet Road. Read more >> [CLWC blog](#).

April, 2024, Date To Be Determined
Planning Board: Wareham MA 3, LLC
Solar: 91 & 101 Fearing Hill Road - Site Plan Review - Map 91 & 71, Lot(s) 1000 & 1007
Large solar project on 22 acres of Pine Barrens forest located on a hill. An archaeological survey has been completed but the results are being kept from the public by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the developer. Read more >> [CLWC Blog](#).

Watch video on solar impacts in Wareham >> [Wareham What Have We Done](#)

PLYMOUTH

Plymouth Airport Commission
First Thursday of Every Month at 7 pm
Zoom and In Person: [Link](#)

CARVER

Wednesday 2/21 at 7 pm, Carver Earth Removal Committee
Proposals to expand sand mines at 2 locations: TELL THE ERC TO DENY THE PERMITS!
E. J. Pontiff Cranberries Inc., 104 Tremont Street.
Expansion of sand mine for 1.5 million cubic yards – about \$20 million worth! Read more >> [CLWC blog](#).
Makepeace Cranberry, 46 Federal Road at Read Custom Soils
Expansion of sand mining for 1.4 million cubic yards about \$30 million worth. Read more >> [CLWC blog](#)

KINGSTON

Tuesday 2/13 at 6:15 pm in person
Kingston Board of Selectmen
Continued Public Hearing on Plympton Sand & Gravel Earth Removal Permit for a proposed sand mine. Read more >> [CLWC blog](#)

STATE LEGISLATION TO EMPOWER MUNICIPALITIES TO REGULATE LARGE SOLAR

Click [here](#) to send a letter to your state legislator asking them to co-sponsor S. 1319/H. 2082, a bill to empower municipalities to regulate large solar. Read more >> [here](#)

NEWS

SAND MINING

Long Island, NY: A [New York Times story highlights](#) how sand mining removes filtration for the aquifer and creates an open wound for contamination to enter the groundwater. The same thing that is happening in Southeastern Mass.

SOLAR GONE WRONG

Plainville, MA: [CBS news story](#) "Unconscionable." Residents say flooding from solar project harms their homes.

Douglas, MA: Massive silt and runoff from a [Blue Wave Solar](#) company [ground mounted solar construction site](#) flows into wetlands and Manchaug Pond, the Headwaters of the Mumford River. Blue Wave has also clear cut approximately [100 acres of pristine Pine Barrens forest](#) in Wareham for 10 MW of solar and is planning a massive solar project on approximately [120 acres in Northfield MA](#) on prime agricultural land.

Johnston, RI: The [Zoning Board votes unanimously](#) to reject a controversial ground-mounted solar array in a heavily wooded part of town.

CONNECT WITH US!

Communitylandandwater.org

Our [mission](#) is to preserve, protect and steward land and water resources in Southeastern Massachusetts. We are losing them fast.

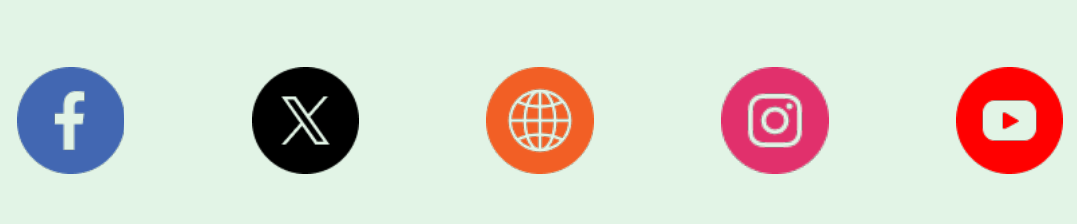
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Volunteer, find a group in your town, and get involved! Your voice makes a difference!

Get in touch:
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Phone: 774-260-7864

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