

AFFIDAVIT

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Following is an account of organisms I have found, seen, or caught in the Green Harbor River, Marshfield, MA, upstream from the dike.

I was born in 1955 and remember growing up vacationing at our cottage on our family's island in Green Harbor River.

I can clearly recall during the 1960's we would find mussels, clams (not nearly as many as in the harbor), crabs, hermit crabs, horseshoe crabs, sea worms, and a variety of snails around the banks of our island in the Green Harbor river on the inland side of the dike. When the tide was low, there were about five to ten feet of mud flats around the island perimeter and on the opposite river banks. Although the island was made of sand, the river bottom was soft mud and silt. During that decade, there was a regular turning of the tides. As the tide rose, you could hear the roar of water rushing through the gates under the dike. At high tide we would row across to swim in the incoming flow at the opening in the dike (the older, stronger swimmers in the family would swim the whole distance from island to dike). A few brave souls would even jump from the top of the dike. Off the edge of the island we would swim and play what we called water whiffleball - where home plate was the end of a dock, the bases were boats and floats anchored off shore. The water there and upstream was a little murky - you could see bottom in maybe 5 - 8 feet deep water, and there was a definite channel in the middle of the river where the bottom was not visible. When attempting to touch bottom in the channel, it was difficult to determine if you had indeed touched it as the bottom was so silty. We could catch flounder (we used in fish chowder), striped bass (witnessed catches but never caught one myself), and eels (catch & release) in the river. Common bird life included herons which waded around the northern/eastern shore and King Fishers which would dive bomb into the water to catch small fish. Occasionally we would see otters along the shoreline sliding down the banks and into the water, although I only recall their presence for a few years in the late 60's. Cat-nine tails and Phragmites were prominent along the north/east shore. A form of thick algae/weed would grow up to the waters surface in mid-summer that would get so thick that when boating, we would try to

follow the same track and keep a clear path. Once this annual bloom passed, the water was totally usable again.

After the tide gates were installed on the harbor side of the dike, the water quality became dramatically degraded with little incoming tide able to flow upstream, which weakened the outward flow at low tide. More and more silt built up and settled in the river and the water became difficult to see through and it often had an unpleasant odor. Bottom was not visible in over a foot of water which resembled weak coffee. Fish (and other wildlife) became difficult to find, and we didn't feel brave enough to eat anything we caught. Where before the tide gates the water was too salty to freeze well in the winter and the incoming tide always kept an area of open water in the channel, after the tide gates were installed the ice froze quicker, harder, and made for easier safer foot access across the river. This of course proved to be detrimental to our island. As local teens started skating on the ice, they started using and abusing our property - breaking into our cottage for parties and warmth - until they burned the cottage down. During the 1970's (my teens and early twenties) we would occasionally tent at the island, but the poor quality of the water caused it to be much less desirable to enjoy typical recreation such as canoeing/boating, swimming, fishing or camping.

Since then, I have not spent much time at our island. Each year I stop once or twice just to walk down to the rivers edge and check the water during the spring, summer or fall. Each winter I generally cross the ice just to walk the island to inspect and reminisce. Last fall I took a canoe ride around the island after noting during the summer that more sea water appeared to be flowing upstream than I had witnessed in many years. I was surprised that although still quite murky, the water quality was notably better than in recent years.

I do hereby certify and make oath that the above statements made by me are true first-hand accounts.

Donald G. Blauss
Name

(Signed)

(Dated)

Subscribed and sworn this _____ day of _____
in the year 2004.

Notary Public