

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 1958 and my family summered on the island in Green Harbor River. It was a salt-water river. I remembered playing in the water and seeing snails, crabs, hermit crabs, star fish, shrimp, sea worms, horseshoe crabs, jellyfish, and tiny little sea horses. There was rock weed growing in the salt water across the river on the rocks. Upriver near the power lines I remember the clams squirting water out of their holes in the mud. There were thousands of muskrats and sometimes otters. It was like this until the very end of the 1960's when apparently the dike was made to block salt water from entering the river. The water was very dirty one summer when we arrived after the change had been made in the dike. After this we did not swim in the water any more. The water was brown, warm, and stagnant. After the change in the river, the water remained foul for the most part. Occasionally, debris would become lodged in the tide gates and allow salt water to come in. During these times, I had seen striped bass in the river. In August of 1977, within two weeks I saw three stripers wash up dead near the dike. The water was very warm as there had been no significant tidal induction to replenish the river water with oxygen. The fish apparently died because of the poor water quality. During these times white perch were frequently fished for by myself, but mostly and diligently sought after by a group of people from Dorchester. Also that year, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts allowed the trapping of eels above dikes and dams. A trapper, (who successfully caught eels) from Duxbury had a string of two dozen or more eel traps directly up the river for a mile or so.

After being away from the river for the most part for a few years, in 1989 I returned to the area and found that the dike was admitting a considerable amount of salt water into the river. For the next four years enough salt water to support marine life was entering the river. As the tidal

volume increased during these years, enough sluice blocks were removed from the dike to allow for adequate drainage. By the time the town replaced the tide gates all the sluice blocks had been removed for maximum drainage. At that time the town hired contractors to replace the tide gates. During the four year period the salt water ecosystem completely dominated the river for a mile or so above the dike. Bait fish were extremely abundant, and the egrets along with the herons found more food available to them. Many mornings I saw terns feeding on schools of fish entering on the tide. Besides crabs and periwinkles, sea worms had colonized the shores of the island. One day in 1993, much to my surprise while I was raking the muck from our beach and boat landing on the island, I discovered that soft-shell clams about the size of my baby fingernail were alive and well in the sandy beach area. One day in the morning sun I observed flounder. When the new tide gates were put on within less than a week the sea worms on the island crawled out of their holes and lay dead. During the mid 1990's the water remained standing once again. I saw an occasional snapping turtle in the river and also one that was lodged in the steel trash grates on the harbor side of the dike eating small green crabs.

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

Eric Blauss
Name

Signature

Date

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

Notary Public