

Pond, once a swimming hole, became a ‘dead zone’

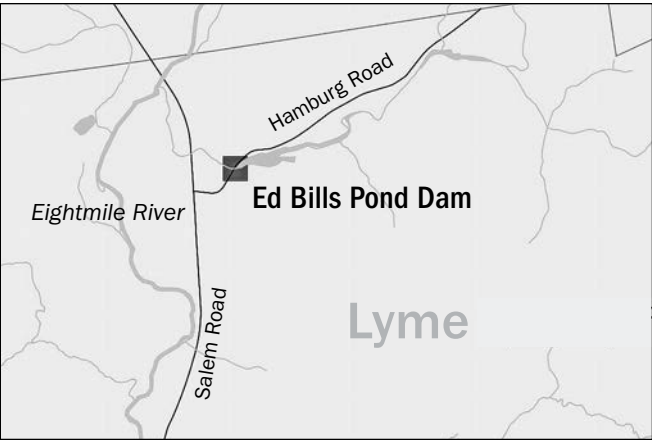
FROM A1

the former resident who built the dam some 70 years ago as a neighborhood swimming hole, it had become so clogged with dead leaves and silt over the years that it was unusable for recreation and most wildlife.

“It was an anoxic dead zone,” Harold, director of river restoration and fish passage for the Connecticut chapter of The Nature Conservancy, said of the oxygen-depleted water.

The project to remove the dam, she said, took nearly a decade of planning and a year of “boots on the ground,” heavy equipment and labor paid for with more than \$500,000 in grants from state and federal agencies, nonprofit groups and private donors.

Along with the aquatic species found during the summer



SOURCE: CONNECTICUT DEEP SCOTT RITTER/THE DAY

snorkeling survey, Harold said, migratory fish including alewife, blue-back herring and sea lamprey can now swim upstream to spawning habitat they had been unable to reach because of the dam, even with

a fish ladder at the site.

“This is the last dam on the east branch of the Eightmile River,” she said, adding that two dams upstream previously were removed.

Harold led the project with

Amy Singler, project manager for both the conservancy and American Rivers, also a non-profit environmental advocacy group.

“It’s really exciting to see an ecosystem restored, to see the flow coming back,” Singler said.

Frogard Ryan, state director for the conservancy’s Connecticut chapter, said the project took many “twists and turns” along the way, through the complex process of permitting, obtaining landowner easements and raising funds, but persistence and patience paid off.

“This has opened up eight more miles of habitat,” she said. “This is a proud day for us.”

Designated a National Wild & Scenic River in 2008, the

Eightmile River is now significantly closer to full restoration of its original free-flowing conditions, Harold said. After breaching the dam a year ago, the work entailed removal of accumulated mud and debris, as well as stabilization of the banks.

“We do our best to let the river retake its own channel,” she said.

The dam had been owned by Fritz Gahagan, grandson of Ed Bill. Gahagan said he once wanted to restore the pond, but ultimately came to realize that getting rid of the dam

would be better for the environment.

Throughout the state, Harold said, there are about 4,000 dams on rivers and streams that impede passage of migratory fish. Many are in disrepair and pose a liability to owners. Projects like the removal of the Ed Bills Pond dam, she said, demonstrate how wildlife and people can both benefit when rivers are allowed to return to their natural state.

“There’s plenty more work to be done,” she said.

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Trump rebuffs debate claim that he ‘loves’ Putin

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JOSH LEDERMAN Associated Press

Henderson, Nev. — Donald Trump pushed back Wednesday on Hillary Clinton’s accusation that he’s cozying up to Russian President Vladimir Putin after the charge put Trump’s running mate on the defensive during the vice presidential debate.

Trump offered effusive praise for Mike Pence’s performance — but also claimed credit for it — even as both campaigns acknowledged that the sole vice presidential debate was unlikely to alter the race’s trajectory.

The celebrity businessman said his relationship with Russia’s leader would be determined by how Moscow responds to strong U.S. leadership under a Trump administration.

“They say Donald Trump loves Putin. I don’t love, I don’t hate. We’ll see how it works,” Trump told a rally outside Las Vegas.

Clinton on Wednesday shrugged that off, saying



Pastors from the Las Vegas area pray with Donald Trump during his visit Wednesday to the International Church of Las Vegas, and International Christian Academy.

Trump has “this weird fascination with dictators.”

“My opponent seems not to know the difference between an ally and adversary,” Clinton said at an evening fund raiser in Washington. “There seems to be some misunderstanding about what it means to have a dictatorship and provide leadership.”

The billionaire candidate sought to take away an ar-

gument that Clinton and her running mate, Tim Kaine, have ramped up in the final weeks of the campaign as they work to portray Trump as dangerous for American interests overseas. While U.S.-Russia relations nosedived over failed diplomacy in Syria, Trump has complimented Putin, calling him a strong leader and even encouraging him to track down Clinton’s missing emails,

though Trump later said he was being sarcastic.

“You guys love Russia,” Kaine said in Tuesday’s debate. “You both have said Vladimir Putin is a better leader than the president.”

In a forceful rebuke, Pence described Putin as a “small and bullying leader,” but blamed Clinton and President Barack Obama for a “weak and feckless” foreign policy that had awakened Moscow’s aggression in Ukraine and meddling in the Middle East.

The U.S. and Russia back opposing sides in Syria’s civil war but both are fighting the Islamic State group there. The U.S. cut off talks with Russia about Syria this week after the latest cease-fire collapsed, blaming Russia for failing to fulfill its commitments under the deal.

“I can say this: If we get along and Russia went out with us and knocked the hell out of ISIS, that’s OK with me, folks,” Trump said, using an acronym for the extremist group.

Lighthouse Inn plans will be ‘something good’ for city

FROM A1

recent plan for the property came from Michael Dattilo, owner of the Water’s Edge Resort & Spa in Westbrook, who had proposed a multimillion-dollar restoration of the inn and construction of townhouses on the 4.2-acre property.

Dattilo had said he was never able to reach a deal for rights to the nearby Guthrie Beach, an integral part of his plan. He never signed a development agreement with the city.

With the property becoming unmanageable and buildings falling further into disrepair, the city decided it was time to shift it into private hands.

The city enlisted JJ Manning Auctioneers to auction the property. The first bid on Wednesday came in at

\$20,000 and, with occasional friendly nudges from auctioneer Justin J. Manning, president of the company, the price rose steadily in \$10,000 increments.

The closing on the property will take place on or before Nov. 18, or 45 days from the auction, as mandated by the contract signed with registration. The buyer also agreed to pay 10 percent premium to the auctioneer and showed up to the auction with a \$20,000 deposit.

At its current assessment of \$1.6 million, the property should bring in about \$67,000 annually in tax revenues.

Christy declined to reveal any more about his plans or a timeline for work, but smiled and said, “It will be something good for the city of New London.”

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Deer hunt just one part of base’s natural resource plan

FROM A1

Historically, hunters have taken the deer they’ve killed home and processed them for their own consumption, McKenzie said.

Only deer are allowed to be hunted on base, and managing the deer population is just one element of a broader natural resources management plan on the base. Officials examine a number of impacts in managing the deer population: whether the population is so big that it’s starving itself or affecting vegetation, or whether it’s

posing a safety risk such as cars striking the deer.

The Department of Defense manages more than 25 million acres of land worldwide, more than 97 percent of which is located in the U.S. or in U.S. territories. Hunting is allowed at its installations across the country.

Base spokesman Chris Zendan pointed to Naval Weapons Station Earle in New Jersey, where the deer population has been so large at times that deer have come up to people and nuzzled them.

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