



**Mill Brook Watershed
Management Committee**

**Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*) Removal at Mill Pond
Special Town Meeting Warrant Article**

9/14/2025 Public Info Session

REVIEW OF TOWN AND MILL BROOK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ACTIONS

2014

- Town votes against proposal to dredge Mill Pond at Town Meeting
- Mill Brook Watershed Management Committee appointed by WT Select Board
 - Committee directed to assess health of Mill Brook watershed and provide management recommendations

2018 - 2020

- Preliminary report completed by Committee with recommendations for future study
- WT Town votes to allocate CPC funds for robust study and stream health assessment, with aid of professional contractors

2021

- Second study initiated by Mill Brook Watershed Management Committee after pandemic delays
- WT Town Meeting votes to allocate second half of CPC funds to finish study

2024 - 2025

- Focused study completed and reports published
- Findings and management recommendations to address stream health presented to WT Select Board
- Findings and management recommendations presented to public at February information session, 2025
- April WT Town Meeting votes to fund complementary assessment of stream health for the Tiasquam River
- April WT Town Meeting turns down citizens petition to create a Mill Pond Preservation Committee

Current Actions and Direction for Mill Brook Watershed Management Committee

Following Select Board and Town Meeting directives, the Mill Brook Watershed Management Committee are currently pursuing several priorities (identified in 2018 & 2024 reports):

- Seeking grant funding to complete an alternatives analysis of all potential restoration options at Mill Pond, including dam removal and a smaller pond with Mill Brook flowing freely around it ('stream bypass')
 - Alternatives analysis is a necessary step that will assess feasible management options at this location and will investigate associated costs, benefits, and impacts
 - Ideal restoration actions will prioritize ecological, aesthetic, and historical value of this location
- Pursuing removal of invasive Grey Willow from public property along shoreline of Mill Pond
- Exploring State funding options for culvert enhancement/replacement along North Road crossing sites
- Committee began year-long data collection and health assessment of Tiasquam River in May, 2025

Other Updates of Note:

- Members of WT Historic District and Mill Brook Watershed Management Committees met with Mark Rasmussen of Buzzards Bay Coalition to discuss possible restoration and management options at Mill Pond in May, 2025
- Members from both groups will attend a site visit on the Cape this September (thank you Sheila Morse for arranging this!)

Grey Willow Removal at Mill Pond

Grey Willow - *Salix cinerea*

- Invasive deciduous tree or shrub native to Europe, West Asia, North Africa
- Grows rapidly in wetlands in dense thickets, re-sprouts from roots, branches.
- Outcompetes replaces native wetland plants, forming vast and dense thickets.
- Aggressive root system can disrupt wetland habitats, cause blockages, reductions in flow, alter natural hydrology, increase sedimentation rates.
- Removal via mechanical, targeted herbicide, or both.

Mill Brook Watershed Management Committee Actions:

- Work with contractors to acquire a quote for removal
- Pursue funding

Not to be confused with:

Water Willow or Swamp Loosestrife – *Decodon verticillatus*

- Native wetland species
- Habitat for Water-willow Borer – *Papaipema sulphurata*, a Threatened species in MA.



Grey Willow - *Salix cinerea*



Water Willow - *Decodon verticillatus*

WARRANT ARTICLE DETAILS

Committee has engaged with Wilkinson Ecological (WE) to complete this project. WE has a proven track record of working within sensitive Vineyard wetlands at a competitive cost

- 15 trees have been identified for removal on public property, primarily along the western bank
- Estimate includes removal and 1 year of continued management
- This project will remove a problem species and will complement any future management actions at the site
- Relatively straight-forward process to approve and implement

Grey Willow Locations, Public Property, Mill Pond



Breakdown of Quote from Wilkinson Ecological

2025 Design and Permitting Services - \$9,540

- Restoration Plan
- Land Management Protocol
- Notice of Intent (NOI) Package
- Estimated Travel Expenses (\$200 included)

Land Management Estimate - \$26,545

- Initial invasive plant management: manually removing 15 grey willows on Town property
- Estimated Travel Expenses (\$4,645 included)

2026 Active Plant Management - \$4,340

- Active invasive plant management of previously treated grey willows throughout the growing season
- Estimated Travel Expenses (\$1,165 included)

ESTIMATED PROJECT TOTAL - \$40,425

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS

DISCUSSION

MORE INFORMATION

