

Endangered minnow threatens Mill Pond dredging

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MARSTONS MILLS — State conservation officers want more information about the population of the bridle shiner, an endangered minnow, at Mill Pond before they determine the fate of what Barnstable town officials believe is a vital dredging project.

Town planners had been designing the dredging project at Mill Pond for years — the pond is almost completely filled with silt and sediment, according to Conservation Administrator Rob Gatewood. But Gatewood learned last month that the pond falls within the state endangered species program's zone of concern for the bridle shiner, which means the fish are believed to be present in the pond.

Gatewood submitted the project to state officials for further review, and they notified Gatewood this week that further study of the pond is required before a decision can be made on the project. Such a study, which includes a full habitat survey of the pond, could cost the town tens of thousands, Gatewood said.

"The devil is in the details," he said. "And the details aren't cheap."

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