

To: Mr. John Moulson, Chair  
Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, Town of Preston

From: Jennifer Hollstein, 12 Lynn Drive, Preston, CT, 06365

Date: December 21, 2021

I am writing to express my opposition to the Application of Blue Camp, CT LLC to the Preston IWWC dated October 11, 2021. I may not be an ecology or biology expert, but I have owned a home at 12 Lynn Drive on Avery Pond for 10 years and I believe that, in and of itself, allows me to share some of my concerns in regards to Blue Camp's proposed luxury recreational campground.

My concerns are as follows:

1. According to the Wetlands Assessment & Impact Analysis prepared by REMA, on pages 10 and 11, it is noted that each of the Wetland areas surveyed were "seasonally flooded (i.e. early Spring)" In the 10 years I have lived on Avery Pond, the water level and subsequently the water table on my property, have nearly always been high. The majority of the year the lower portion of my yard that abuts Avery Pond is at best "squishy". Nearly every time there is significant rainfall that section of my yard becomes flooded. It is not just in the Spring as the REMA "expert" insists, it happens year round. I am submitting copies of 13 pictures I have taken in just the last 3 years when my yard was flooded. That is not the actual amount of times it has flooded. I would guess it has flooded, to some degree, approximately 50 times in the 10 years I have lived here. My neighbor at 10 Lynn Drive also shared a picture with me from March of 2010, of another neighbor canoeing down the road when Avery Pond actually flooded up over Lynn Drive. I am submitting that picture as well. According to IWWC regulation 1.3 "The purpose of these regulations" is in part in "deterring and inhibiting the danger of flood and pollution" So, I ask the IWWC, will the development of this luxury campground increase the vulnerability of the water level of Avery Pond and possibly cause more frequent, if not more severe flooding?
2. As noted in Concern #3 of Exhibit 13, the letter from Gary Piszczek, Chairman of the Conservation and Agricultural Commission - Who actually owns Avery Pond? When I first heard about the proposed

campground I started asking the same question. I came across the same answer as Gary from both the Town of Preston and the State DEEP - that no-one knows. In my deed for 12 Lynn Drive it states "Together with such rights as Country Squire Homes, Inc. may have to use the waters of Avery Pond". In the 10 years I've lived here I've always considered Avery Pond an extension of my back yard and to me, that having the rights to use it obligates me to do my part to help keep it clean and preserve it. My fiancé and I kayak on the pond quite frequently and every time we go out we bring a garbage bag for, as we call it "litter patrol". Just one example of one of the pieces of garbage we collected on our last trip out, was a deflated mylar ballon. It's hard to say where it came from, but it's not the first one I've found. Mylar balloons are a significant threat to wildlife. Wildlife can be injured or killed from eating the balloons because they are indigestible and the balloon ribbons are responsible for animal and bird entanglement and strangulation. We also bring knives to cut down the various abandoned fishing lines and lures that get tangled in the overhanging trees and brush. There was another time that we went out and when we passed the boat launch, I saw a small bird that had become tangled and died in a piece of fishing line that had been left in a tree. These are only two minor examples of litter on Avery Pond, but my concern is for the inevitable increase in trash that will result from the occupants of 304 camping sites and the environmental impact it will have on the water and the wildlife of Avery Pond.

3. Lastly, according to IWWC regulation 1.3, "The purpose of these regulations" is in part "preventing loss of fish and other beneficial aquatic organisms, wildlife and vegetation and the destruction of the natural habitats thereof". Blue Camp had an ecologist come out and survey the proposed development site and they did find and note SOME of the wildlife present on that day. But, living on Avery Pond for the last 10 years and watching the wildlife everyday I can confirm that there is a much bigger picture than can be seen in just one sampling. Many of Preston residents are aware of the Bald Eagles on Avery Pond ...they are INCREDIBLE and I feel fortunate to have them perch and feed in the trees right in my back yard, but there has been so much more: Watching the Monarch butterflies that lay their eggs in the milkweed where the proposed entrance to the campground is, the Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds and other pollinators that fly from flower to flower; the frogs as they chirp their mating calls in Avery Swamp and then the schools of tadpoles that follow; the crayfish that crawl up over

the yard to find a place to burrow to spawn and when you step near them they rear up and wave their claws at you; the Osprey that return to nests on Indiantown Brook Road and can be seen diving into Avery Pond to catch fish and then perch in the trees where the proposed "floating dock" is to be built; the snapping turtles that occasionally cross the yard in search of egg laying ground; the painted turtles that do the same and you can watch as the quarter sized hatchlings struggle to get back to the water once they hatch; the Belted Kingfisher that you can hear making his strange chirp, but is hard to see and that nests in the trees overhanging the area where the "glamping cabins" are proposed; the Hooded Mergansers, Ring-Neck Ducks and other diving ducks that fish on Avery Pond as they migrate through in the Spring and Late Fall; the fox that can be heard "screaming" at night and seen in the early morning looking for food; the playful mink that you can see swimming across the shore and then quickly running across the yard with a huge fish that it caught; the Blue Herons as they catch and swallow a fish or eel whole or as they nest in the shore area where the "glamping cabins" are proposed; all of the numerous songbirds that nest and feed...from the Baltimore Orioles to the Eastern Bluebirds; the very seldom seen Wood Ducks that nest every year in Avery Swamp; the little Green Heron that stalks fish in the wetland vegetation and has a call that you always remember once you've heard it; the swans that grace the pond with their presence and can be seen bobbing awkwardly for food or diligently preening themselves; the Mallards that return to nest every year in Avery Swamp and watching the ducklings as they first follow their mother so closely and then grow and go off on their own; the Cormorants that perch in the trees along the wetland edge where the "glamping cabins" are proposed and that spread their wings out in a peculiar way to dry them out after diving for fish; the magnificent Great Egrets that have perched in the trees along the shoreline where the "floating dock" is proposed; the Red-Tail and Red-Shouldered Hawks that swoop down through the yard and send all the birds scattering for safety; the shorebirds like the Killdeer and the Spotted Sandpiper with it's funny way of bobbing it's tail end up and down as it searches for prey; the bats that dive-bomb my back yard at dusk in search of insects; the aquatic life that you know is out there, but you don't see all the time, like the water snakes, bass, pickerel, catfish, sunfish and eels; and of course the Canadian Geese...the Geese that have fuzzy, adorable goslings, but that leave your yard a mess; the Barred Owls that you can hear calling across the

pond, but you rarely ever see; the Seagulls that show up in the winter and seem odd to see on a pond; the huge Pileated Woodpeckers that can be heard drumming out the wood of the trees in Avery Swamp; and the occasional White -Tailed deer that you just happen to catch running through your yard. On page 15 of REMA's Assessment it states "Direct, secondary impacts are proposed for the installation of a floating dock, which will provide recreational access to Avery Pond for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, and passive recreation (e.g. wildlife observation)" ....my concern is that the exact spot Blue Camp proposes to build this floating dock and encourage wildlife viewing is exactly where some of the pond wildlife nests and feeds. And with all of the recreational activities Blue Camp is encouraging in that area, my concern is for the threat to the habitat of that area, as well as, the overall effect it will have on all the food chains and ecosystems of all of Avery Pond.

When I first came to look at the house at 12 Lynn Drive, I pulled in the driveway and the first thing I saw was a Blue Heron stalking along the shore. Then I saw Avery Pond and I saw the opposite shoreline with no homes on it...completely wild and I fell in love with the small quiet town of Preston and the idea of a peaceful, relaxing place to make my home with the possibility of abundant wildlife to watch and appreciate and a pond to sit out in my kayak in and escape from all the noise and busyness of life.

I ask IWWC to please take into consideration my "expert" knowledge that comes from living on and using Avery Pond for the last 10 years and REJECT Blue Camp CT's proposed luxury campground.

Thank you,  
  
Jennifer Hollstein