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Opinion

Herring River project endorsed by experts in coastal restoration

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Yarmouth resident Ronald Gabel has ignored important facts in his criticism of Wellfleet's Herring River restoration project ("Stakes are too high to bet on Herring River project's success," Your View, Oct. 24).

First, Herring River today is in violation of federal clean water standards and is a source of bacterial contamination. As a result, hundreds of acres of shellfish beds are closed.

Second, local residents and shellfish stakeholders in Wellfleet, who Mr. Gabel assumes don't understand their situation, know full well what's at stake. The town's Shellfish Advisory Board recently wrote that restoring tidal flow "will benefit those in the shellfishing community, the residents of Wellfleet, and ... fish that use the Herring River estuary to spawn each year." Once the new tide gate infrastructure is in place, tidal flow will be restored incrementally, and system responses will be continuously monitored. Responses will be compared with modeled predictions, so that adjustments in tidal flow, if needed, can be made.

In addition to benefits for shellfishing and spawning fish, the project will increase the town's resilience to sea level rise.

The project has earned endorsements from regional and national organizations with expertise in coastal restoration, along with the support of citizens of Wellfleet and the region.

Carole Ridley, East Harwich

The writer is coordinator of the Herring River restoration project.