The Newsletter of the McWain Pond Association

THE MCWAIN NEWS

Winter 2002

New Trustees

Many thanks to new trustees Diane Bell 207-892-6478 and Dottie Wilson-Morse 207-583-4632.

Boaters Notice

To help fund the anti-milfoil campaign, owners of motorized boats are required to buy a Lake and River Protection sticker. The cost is $10 for boats registered in Maine, and $20 for out-of-state registrations. Purchase stickers at town offices or any place that sells hunting and fishing licenses.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the McWain Pond Association will be held July 20, 2002 at Camp Waziyatah, starting at 10 am.

Update: The Milfoil Threat
Campaign Intensifies

By Mary Martin

Were it not for an alert gas station attendant in Gray last summer, Eurasian milfoil could already be spreading its lake-killing tentacles in the Oxford Hills region, according to Peter Lowell, executive director of Lakes Environmental Association (LEA).

An attendant spotted the invasive weed on a 'jet ski' being trailed by a visitor from upstate New York. The visitor was headed for Crystal Lake in Gray. That one strand of milfoil might have started the process of turning a swimmable, navigable lake into a swamp.

"People should know," Lowell said, "It *can* happen here."

In the summer of 2001, the LEA became aware of variable-leaf milfoil infestations in six more lakes in southern Maine, bringing the total so far identified to 12.

Among the infestations in the Lakes Region are: Cushman Pond in Lovell, Sebago Lake, Parker Pond in Casco, Thompson Lake in Otisfield and the Songo River. Lily Brook in Casco was closed to motorized boating last summer when the weed was discovered there.

The particularly dangerous Eurasian milfoil has not yet shown up in the lakes region. But, as the Gray incident illustrates, it may be just a matter of time.

However, the state Legislature last June passed a landmark bill which may help improve the odds. The "milfoil law" calls for boat trailer inspections, an interagency task force on invasive aquatic plans, and increased funding for the education activities of the Department of Environmental Protection and the Volunteer Lakes Monitoring Program.

The Department of Transportation last summer monitored 32 border crossings between Maine, Canada and New Hampshire on a pilot basis, aiming to stop the spread of invasives on boats arriving from problem areas.

LEA intensified its-

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Around McWain

By a vote of 37-5, a proposal to change the association's name was approved at the last annual meeting. That makes it official: We are now the McWain Pond Association, which conforms with the name on most maps, although you may continue to call the lake whatever suits you.

Bill and Nancy Hanger participated in the Maine Audubon Society's loon count last July and identified four adults, no chicks, and at least one egg destroyed due to high water in late spring. Overall, the Society estimates that there were about 2,552 adults and 425 chicks in the southern half of Maine last summer, which shows a "steady upward trend" in the endangered population.

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Report: LEA Water Quality Data 1995-2001 for McWain Pond

	Secchi	Alkalinity	Chl-a	pH	Conduct.	Color	Oxygen	Phos.
2001	6.0	5.8	3.37	6.8	35	17	5.4	9
2000	5.1	4.0	4.04	6.3	36	21	5.2	9
1999	6.7	5	2.77	6.6	41	15	6.4	8
1998	5.7	6	2.39	6.2	No data	21	4.3	9
1997	6.7	6.8	2.65	6.8	No data	17	6.3	13
1996	6.1	6	3.97	6.8	No data	16	5.1	7
1995	6.7	6.6	1.76	6.9	No data	9	6.3	9

Transparency is a measure of clarity and is done using a **Secchi** disk. The 8-inch round disk with black and white quarters is lowered into the water until it can no longer be seen. The depth at which it disappears (in meters) is recorded. Transparency is affected by the color of the water and the presence of algae and suspended sediments.

Alkalinity is a measure of the amount of calcium carbonate in the water and it reflects the ability of the water to buffer pH changes. In Maine lakes, alkalinity generally ranges form 4 - 20 parts per million (ppm). A higher alkalinity (greater than 10 ppm), indicates that a lake will be able to withstand the effects of acid rain longer than lakes with lower alkalinity (less than 4 ppm). If acidic precipitation is affecting a lake, a reduction in alkalinity will occur before a drop in pH.

Chlorophyll is a pigment found in algae. Measuring the level of chlorophyll in a lake indicates the amount of algae present in the water column (ppm). Chlorophyll results are more important on lakes that are highly colored because phosphorus and transparency results are less accurate

pH is important in determining the plant and animal species living in a lake because it reflects how acidic or basic the water is. pH is a measurement of the instantaneous free hydrogen ion concentration in a water sample. Bogs or highly colored lakes tend to be more acidic (have a lower pH). Readings close to 7.0 (neutral) are considered healthy.

Conductivity measures the ability of water to carry electrical current. Pollutants in the water column will generally increase lake conductivity. With the highest possible reading of 100, measurements in the 30s and 40s are considered low to moderate.

Color is a measure of tannic or humic acids in the water. These usually originate in upstream bogs with organic decomposition.

Dissolved oxygen is also measured at one-meter intervals from the surface to the bottom of the lake. Over the course of the summer, oxygen is depleted in the bottom waters through the process of decomposition of organic matter like dead algae. When there is excessive decomposition, all available oxygen is used up and coldwater fisheries are threatened. If dissolved oxygen concentrations are significantly depleted in bottom waters, a condition occurs which allows phosphorus to be released into the water column from bottom sediments. This is called phosphorus re-cycling and can cause increased algae growth. Dissolved oxygen is measured in parts per million (ppm).

Phosphorus is a nutrient that is usually present in only small concentrations in the water column. It is needed by algae for growth and reproduction and can therefore give an indication of the potential for an algae bloom. Algae blooms caused by excess phosphorus loading can deplete dissolved oxygen levels in deep water. Phosphorus is measured in parts per billion (ppb).

Transparency (m)		**Phosphorus (ppb)**		**Chlorophyll (ppb)**		**Color (SPU)**	
in meters		**in parts per billion**		**in parts per billion**		**Standard Platinum Units**	
10.0 +	excellent	less than 5.0	low	less than 2.0	low	less than 10.0	low
7.1 – 10.0	good	5.1 – 12.0	moderate	2.1 – 7.0	moderate	10.1 – 25.0	moderate
3.1 – 7.0	moderate	12.1 – 20.0	high	7.1 – 12.0	high	25.1 – 60.0	high
less than 3.0	poor	20.1 +	very high	12.1 +	very high	60.1 +	very high

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volunteer-staffed courtesy inspections at public boat launches last summer and will do more this summer. McWain has not been a focus of the LEA inspections because it does not have a public boat launch. The lack of public boat traffic probably helps reduce the risk to McWain, Lowell said. However, it is no guarantee. Cushman Pond, he noted, became infested from a weed brought in on a bait bucket. "People just need to be incredibly vigilant and not treat it as something that can't happen here," Lowell said. "Tens of thousands" have been spent trying to rescue Cushman. "They are just barely hanging on. If you don't think about it, it can happen overnight."

If you are interested in becoming active in the anti-milfoil campaign, contact LEA. Learn more at www.mainelakes.org or call 207-647-8580.

President's Message

Greetings to all!

I hope your holidays were healthy and happy. And, I hope that you and your families have all weathered the September 11th tragedies. There is some good work going on behind the scenes this winter for the association.
That brings me to the first issue - the changing of the lake association name to the McWain Pond Association. John Sawyer has graciously agreed to help us with the legal name change, donating his time and legal expertise. The process will cost us only $5! The change should be official by spring.

We are still working on the Newcomers' Packet which includes helpful information for new pond owners. I hope to have this ready for distribution in the spring, as well. Nancy and Bill Hanger are about to undertake a review of town records to identify current pond owners and update our list. This will enable us to approach new property owners and invite them to join the association.

Heather Labenski has revised our membership renewal form to reinstate a business membership that will include two free ads in the association newsletter. This will help defray the costs of producing the newsletter. Gary Smith, another member who is an attorney, is donating his services to help us acquire non-profit status, to exempt us from taxes on our dam property. It will also make membership fees and donations to the association tax-deductible.
Bruce Whichard is reviewing and organizing the association's archives. Not only are there documents related to the association, but over the years, we have collected materials about conservation and protection of watershed areas. Our goal is to eventually create a lending library for association members.
I would like to thank all those who volunteer their time for the association.

I hope 2002 holds many good things for all our families. Please feel free to contact me or any of the trustees with issues, concerns, and ideas. I welcome the chance to talk with you. You can reach me during the winter by phone (978-537-2827) or email (susanwdoyle@cs.com).
I look forward to seeing you all again in the spring!
Sue Doyle

Mercury Pollution Hits Dangerous Levels

About one-third of Maine loons are at high or extremely high risk from mercury pollution, according to the Bio-Diversity Research Institute in Falmouth. Mercury harms the ability of loons to successfully reproduce. Mercury levels in Maine are dangerously high to humans, as well. Pregnant women and children are advised not to eat most freshwater fish and some seafood, according to the Maine Bureau of Health. As the newsletter goes to press, the Maine Legislature is expected to vote on two bills aimed at reducing mercury pollution from electrical switches, thermostats, thermometers, and other common products.

Around McWain *continued from Page 1*

More recently, Hangers, year-round residents, reported that "ice in" was late this year, Dec. 27. As the result of little early snowfall, there were about 10 consecutive days of great skating, the best old-timers can recall in 40 years. Even better, the skating coincided with a full moon, which made for gorgeous nights on the ice.

The editor asks that you pummel her with suggestions for newsletter content by phone, email or snail mail:
Mary Martin 4 Molly Rd., Andover, MA 01810 978.474.1727 marymartin@mediaone.net Thanks.

Minutes of the McWain Pond Association Annual Meeting July 21, 2001 Birch Rock Camp

President Susan Doyle called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and introduced Rick Deering, director of Birch Rock Camp. Rich mentioned that this is the 75th successful season for Birch Rock boys' camp and this year, for the first time, a week-long family camp will be held from August 11-18. Heather Labenski, representing Camp Waziyatah, reported that her family's coed camp is enjoying another good season. Bart Hague first introduced Mary Kate McTiegue who, with her family, is the new owner of Camp Waganaki, the former boys' camp. Bart then introduced our guest speakers Lisa Burns and Karen King of the Denmark firm Cabins and Castles. They answered many questions from members concerning appropriate buffers and plantings to control shoreline erosion. They mentioned several kinds of erosion: surface run-off, erosion from the lake inland toward the shore and seeping ground water. Some simple planting remedies include day lilies and blueberry bushes; these and other native plants put down root systems to slow the water run-off. Our speakers offered brochures and are available for consultation.

As is our custom, all members in attendance introduced themselves to the group. Ed Muzik , for the nominating committee, presented the suggested slate of new Trustees; Henry Plate and Ken Tremblay will each serve a continuing term and Diane Bell and Dottie Wilson Morse will join the group as new Trustees. The terms of Nancy King and Bart Hague will expire, although Bart will serve as our liaison to the Congress of Lake Associations. A successful motion directed the secretary to cast one vote to approve the slate of trustees.

Henry Plate read his proposal, originated at the 2000 meeting, that we change the name of the association to the McWain Pond Association to bring us into compliance with all official maps of Maine, which list us as McWain Pond, or, in some instances, Long Pond. After much discussion, including the history of the Lake designation by the early camps and the official pond/lake definition by the State of Maine (we are technically a lake), the membership approved the change by a vote of 37 to 5.

Nancy Hanger, for the Membership Committee, announced that we currently have 156 members and that folders containing explanatory and welcoming material are available for all new pond residents. Sue thanked Mary Martin for her fine work as editor of the most recent newsletter; and Mary asked for volunteers to help her with writing and ideas for articles.

John Thompson distributed copies of the Water Quality Committee's 2001 report. John has served ably as chairman of the committee for 15 years and will hand over this responsibility to Bill Roy and his committee. McWain Pond is currently in the moderate-to-high risk category as determined by LEA. Generally, conditions of transparency and dissolved oxygen are typical of the past 10 years; water temperatures have been a bit high during July. The biggest concern of all Maine lakes is the invasion of milfoil. Several Maine lakes are already infected with a variety of this fast-spreading, non-native plant that quickly chokes the waters. We have posted warning signs that include prevention steps in all pond neighborhoods. Traces of milfoil can come in on boats that have been in infected lakes as well as in live wells that have been used when fishing in those lakes. Patrick Leslie, our LEA intern, reminded all boat owners and their guests to wash boats and rudders very carefully if they have been used in other bodies of water. Once milfoil is established, it is very costly to control, cannot be eradicated, and has a history of lowering property values. Future steps to maintain the water quality of the pond include: using non-phosphorus detergents, calling on the expertise of Earl Morse when he becomes a permanent resident, and using the results of Patrick Leslie's research when his study of run-off and sediments is completed. The Fare Share Co-op in Norway sells non-phosphorous detergent, as does the Harmony House catalogue. A member made a suggestion that we put into action, at this meeting, something definitive about milfoil prevention; he also asked us to consider future development and its impact on water quality.

Sue reported on the Waterford Selectmen's decision not to include an item about personal watercraft in the March Town Warrant. Apparently the difficulty of enforcement was a major drawback to the proposed ban. All power boaters were reminded to stay outside the two hundred-foot shoreline zone and to use headway speed, with no wake. Approaches to shore should be made at a 90-degree angle. Sue reported on the progress of the group studying a possible tax-exempt status for the association. Apparently, we currently have a federal tax exemption. Peter Sevcik gave a brief report on his research on the dam ownership. The dam appears to be in good condition and has been monitored carefully by the Gammon family. He will continue his research. Henry Plate asked for any leads on the histories of Camp Passaconaway or Camp Joseph. Patrick Leslie explained that his research project involves monitoring the sediment rate and nutrient species in eight streams that feed into the pond. Sue thanked Peter Sevcik for his donation of a computer; it will be used to help track the history of water quality. The issue of the private stocking of trout in the pond is being researched with the State of Maine. Sue thanked the Maine Audubon and LEA for their informational pamphlets. She also thanked Bobby Whichard for creating the flyers announcing the annual meeting; and Bruce Whichard and Terry and Heather Crocker who aided in house-to-house delivery of the flyers. The membership was reminded of the square dance in Earl and Joanne Morse's barn. All are welcome and proceeds will benefit LEA. Next year's Annual Meeting will be held at Camp Waziyatah on Saturday, July 20, 2001.

Annette read the following Trustee Resolution and asked for a moment of silence: The McWain Pond Association wishes to recognize the loyal contributions of Peter Kerns, director and owner of Camp Waziyatah, to this association and expresses our sympathy to his family for their loss. Following the meeting's adjournment the trustees met to approve the new trustee slate.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Tomaino, Recording Secretary