Shorefront owners Pay to Play at Sebago Cove

By Christine O'Leary
Save Sebago Cove President

With the loss of federal funds this year, our mission this summer was to fund, insure, staff and operate our DASH (Diver-Assisted Suction Harvester) boat with private citizens' money! We called it "Pay To Play" and it worked!

We offered property owners in Sebago Cove the opportunity to pay for the removal of variable leaf milfoil

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Fall

Milfoil Update 2011

Volunteer Carl Stillwell and DEP's Paul Gregory and John McPhedran look for hydrilla in Davis Stream.

Inside

On Damariscotta Lake, more hydrilla and a milfoil 'catch'

By Julia McLeod
Stewardship Coordinator and Educator
Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association

DEP's Denise Blanchette

A second infestation of hydrilla was found in the Damariscotta Lake watershed – this time in Davis Stream, which is one of the major tributaries to the lake. A local resident knowledgeable about invasive plants discovered the hydrilla in Davis Stream in Jefferson over Labor Day weekend. All boats have been banned from that portion of Davis Stream.

The restriction by the state departments of Environmental Protection and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife starts 400 feet upstream of Jefferson Market and extends north on the main stem of the stream until it reaches Route 126. It's effective immediately and will run through ice formation.

In a news release, the agencies said they hoped preventing use of the section of stream would stop the spread of hydrilla to other parts of Damariscotta Lake. Before the discovery of the plant in early September, hydrilla had been documented in the lake, but the infestation was limited to a 0.3-acre lagoon on the west

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Sabbathday Lake starts IPP

The Sabbathday Lake Association has had a very productive year regarding the search for invasive aquatic plants. Last year we decided to organize an Invasive Plant Patrol, and with the help of the Maine Volunteer Monitoring Program (VLMP), we conducted an IPP field survey seminar at the end of the summer. With much enthusiasm and a core volunteer group of 12 members, we put together an IPP plan of action for Sabbathday Lake.

We met as a group in May to set up a working plan with a goal of completing at least a Level 2 screening. The lake was broken down into sections and volunteers chose the sections they wanted to survey. After attending several VLMP seminars at the Bracket Center in Auburn, we held a scope-building session in July.

On a Saturday morning, 12 volunteers showed up and we completed several viewing scopes. In order to pay for the materials needed for the scopes, Chris Ricardi, Cheryl Fortier, Paula Gauthier and Kathy Cruse of the IPP team organized a very successful fund-raising event (Night of Music).

By late September, I'm happy to note that we completed the Level 2 screening for invasive aquatic plants. Some of the surveys were completed by snorkeling, but most were done using the new scopes. Everyone enjoyed the experience and the enthusiasm was very apparent.

One of our goals for 2012 is to have all the volunteers certified by the VLMP and to complete a Level 3 survey of the entire lake.

I would like to recognize Roberta Hill and Christine Guerette and their associates for their dedication, support and enthusiasm surrounding the Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants. They were instrumental in helping the Sabbathday Lake Association form our IPP team.

I would also like to thank Don Hayes from the Branch Lake (Ellsworth) IPP for sharing his ideas and thoughts regarding the creation of the Sabbathday Lake IPP team.

– Mike Cloutier

CBI program starts in Norway

The Lakes Association of Norway (LAON) just kicked off our CBI program in late August. Our small but enthusiastic crew did a total of 27 hours of inspecting and had many encouraging encounters with boaters.

A couple walking by stopped for a long discussion with us and then volunteered to post information in their local restaurant since "boaters come in all the time." We also spent additional time evaluating the signage in the Park with Debra Partridge, head of Norway Parks and Recreation. We are confident that by next season, all of the signs near the boat launch will be bright, clear, current and well placed.

Later in the fall, we will develop our connections within the regional high school to engage students in fulfilling their community service requirement by working with us next summer. We think we're off to a good start and are primed for a strong season next year.

– Susan Jacoby

Piper Pond free of invasives

We're happy to say that so far we are clear of that ugly milfoil problem at Piper Pond in Abbot. We keep a pretty good watch of boats coming in and have a large sign at the launching place....Thanks for the good work.

– Pat and Gerry Vigue

Greetings from Clearwater Lake

Our waters remain clear with no traces of invasive plants. A few more mystery snails are present but we harvest many of them (without tasting any!) in late August which keeps the public beach area clear. It has become increasingly difficult to get and retain volunteers. The same people come forward but in general the phone calls are either not returned or the people decline for various reasons. On the other hand, our main paid inspector is extremely conscientious, educating the boaters in a congenial fashion. We find that our very obvious sign has worked well to educate the public when no one is on duty. We are so pleased to host the name"Clear" water Lake. Thanks to all!

– Mardy Bogar

The Milfoil Update is produced by the Lakes Environmental Association with funds generated by the Maine Lakes and Rivers Protection Sticker and the support of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Contact: Roberta Scruggs at LEA, roberta@leamaine.org, 207-647-8580, www.mainelakes.org or Maine DEP Invasive Species Program: 800-452-1942, milfoil@Maine.gov, www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/topic/invasives/index.htm

Above, Denis Roberge shoots photos and video of curly-leaf pondweed control efforts. Right, DEP diver Denise Blanchette with a day's harvest. Below, an older curly-leaf turion is show on the left and a newer one on the right.

Progress made in West Pond's curly-leaf battle

By Dennis Spinney
West Pond Association

Our 2011-2012 crop of curly-leaf pondweed is growing, so we harvested until the first part of October, while the plant is very small. This is our best time to harvest when the curly-leaf pondweed is just a single plant with the turion still connected at the base. We have much less biomass and can cover a much larger area in a short time.

We had a very productive season this year and actually saw a reduction in the amount of curly-leaf floating around the pond compared to previous years. We have high hopes that our efforts are starting to really pay off.

We added 100 feet of floating hose to our DASH, which proved to be worth its weight in gold. It improved diver visibility a great deal and we are now able to work around native weed beds without doing damage to them. It is also very helpful when working around rocks and other bottom obstructions.

We had great volunteer participation throughout the harvest and from other organizations as well. Thanks to Denis Roberge and Lakes Environmental Association, much more awareness to the *other* invasive weed came to light this year. Many thanks to Denis and LEA! John McPhedran and his group at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection were and are (as always) a great help.

With continued support, we will be back on and under the water in early May to continue the fight in keeping West Pond the wonderful pristine pond it is.

Damariscotta Lake

Continued from Page 1

side of the lake and was thought to be contained there. Maine DEP staff and Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association (DLWA) staff and volunteers worked together to survey the rest of Davis Stream and begin removal efforts. Six patches of the plant were found, most fairly small.

On September 20 DEP and DLWA removed seven garbage bags full of the plant and placed four benthic barriers. DLWA staff and volunteers returned September 21, September 27, and October 7 to collect fragments and remove remaining rooted plants. A surface use restriction now bans aThis new discovery comes almost exactly two years after DLWA volunteer Dick Butterfield found the first hydrilla infestation in Damariscotta Lake. That infestation is in a 1/3-acre lagoon on the western shore of the lake, around three miles south of the outlet of Davis Stream.

Maine DEP has worked diligently to contain and control the hydrilla there. It is an easier location to achieve that goal since the lagoon can be isolated from the rest of the lake. Davis Stream, with its strong spring currents, cannot be isolated in the same way. Controlling hydrilla in Davis Stream will require an ongoing and persistent effort by local volunteers to check the stream often and remove the plants that will inevitably come back for years to come.

Ever since hydrilla was initially discovered in Damariscotta Lake, DLWA volunteers and staff have been surveying the littoral zone for other signs of the plant.

DEP diver Denise Blanchette pulls up hydrilla from Davis Stream while DEP's Karen Hahnel (center) and DLWA's Julia McLeod (left) help.

In 2010, 174 lake lovers volunteered more than 700 hours of their time to complete plant surveys. Though all paperwork is not in yet, volunteers are on track to complete around half as many surveys in 2011.

As of now, 100% of the shoreline and shallow areas of the lake have been surveyed for hydrilla and other invasive plants over the last two years. Many sections were surveyed both years.

After the big push of the first year in 2010, DLWA has set the goal of surveying at least one third of the lake's 45-mile shoreline every year so the whole lake is surveyed every three years. DLWA has provided training, including new snorkeling classes, and equipment to volunteers. Six coordinators around the lake are each in charge of a zone of shoreline. They communicate with the volunteers who fall within their zones and hand out equipment.

In good news, DLWA volunteers and staff again increased their number of hours spent at the Bunker Hill Road/Route 213 boat launch and the number of boats inspected.

On August 14, DLWA seasonal staff member Amanda Moeser removed two plants of Eurasian water-milfoil off two jet skis that were on their way into Damariscotta Lake. The jet skis were arriving from Conesus Lake, a 3,420-acre lake in the Finger Lakes region of New York that has a large and well-documented infestation of Eurasian water-milfoil. Conesus Lake is also plagued with two additional invasive species – zebra mussels and curly-leaf pondweed, as well as frequent toxic blue-green algae blooms.

The milfoil plants were found in the jet skis' intake valves, which were under the watercraft. The discovery reinforces the need to do thorough checks, even when that means kneeling down and looking underneath.

DLWA volunteers are hard at work protecting the lake they love, even through the disappointment of the new discovery of hydrilla.

Crawl, Walk, Run: Lake Arrowhead Hits Full Stride!

By Dave Sanfason
LACC Vice President

In its third year, Lake Arrowhead Conservation Council (LACC) has harvested more than 10 tons of Variable leaf milfoil from Lake Arrowhead in Waterboro and Limerick.

With the help of Lake Arrowhead Community and the lake's bordering towns, plus assistance from DEP and a robust membership, LACC has put together a milfoil removal program second to none! The LACC team consists of a strong, nine-person board of trustees led by Mike Fitzpatrick, President. The day-to-day operation is coordinated by Dave Sanfason, LACC Vice president.

Our divers are the best! The LACC DASH dive team members are Gino Valeriani, Delian Valeriani, Steve Church and Doug Ball. Our captains know the lake and know how to operate the specialized equipment of our vessels.

Our data collection using GPS devices on each boat, gathering new way points at each harvesting site, sets a new standard," quips Sanfason, a retired Army Colonel. LACC owes a huge debt of gratitude to our DASH crew members Mark Harris, Bill Jufre, Steve Dawson, Scott Davis, Mark Whittaker and John Sanfason, who, from Father's Day to September 17th, worked six days a week on two DASH boats removing milfoil from Lake Arrowhead's waters.

Gladys Sanfason, Dave Sanfason's mother, in front of LACC's compost pile containing 10 tons of milfoil removed this season.

There are several indicators that LACC's prodigious removal program is making a difference. Reports from the numerous Lake Arrowhead coves indicate the presence of milfoil plants and fragments is down from previous years. Amounts of floating milfoil fragment "mats" have been reduced and the amount of milfoil fragments caught on exiting boats is down from last year.

Though these are positive indicators, we all realize that to really get control of one of the largest VLM infestations anywhere will take a large, long-term, sustained effort. It took 13 years for the VLM to establish itself here; it will probably take at least that long to get it under control.

In addition to the financial support of its members, DEP and the surrounding communities, LACC runs a fifty-fifty raffle, a yard sale, a golf tournament and a fishing derby to help raise funding to support its programs.

It's a total team effort. Our CBI team consisting of Paul, Carol and Coleen Carey, Bob and Lucille Gilchrest and Michelle Sanfason protects our lake from new invasives and other water bodies from our VLM! The inspectors are experienced and excellent!

This year, LACC has really hit full stride in its team approach to milfoil control.

In addition to the financial support of its members, DEP and the surrounding communities, LACC runs a fifty-fifty raffle, a yard sale, a golf tournament and a fishing derby to help raise funding to support its programs. It's a total team effort.

Pay to Play at Sebago

Continued from Page 1

from their shoreline. The charge was $125.00 for each hour, with a minimum of two hours. Customers would buy two hours for themselves and some bought another hour for the Cove, so we could harvest milfoil in the public boat channel. In addition, we tithed 10 percent of the cost of every hour purchased back into the Save Sebago Cove financial structure.

To date we have sold 90 hours of milfoil removal through Pay to Play membership and accumulated more than $10,000 of private money. Associations also made contributions for removal around "their water."

We found our customers were very interested in having their milfoil removed as well as working together with the Sebago Cove community to reduce the 62 percent infestation rate of the cove. Each customer received a site visit to establish a removal plan and a post-removal report post of the amount harvested from their shoreline or wherever the customer designated.

Top, Sebago Cove is 62 percent infested with variable milfoil. Left, Save Sebago Cove's DASH (Diver-Assisted Suction Harvester) boat. Bottom left, a happy customer with "his milfoil."

We suctioned water and milfoil into clam baskets and lobster crates. We found the centrifugal force of the water, the wall of the basket and the round shape actually worked to wad up the milfoil like yarn. We then transferred the milfoil into black lobster crates that we drilled for drainage. The amount of milfoil contained in 8.3 lobster crates was the equivalent of 1 cubic yard.

One happy customer saw 2.5 cubic yards of milfoil removed and composted onto his property. His property, like many in the Cove, is for sale. He believed milfoil removal may set his property ahead of some of the other properties for sale. He also told us he and his wife have never enjoyed their shoreline more and that the swimming was fantastic!

We want to thank the Portland Water District for investing $2,000 in our operation. We think of Save Sebago Cove as the "Little Cove That Could."

We know that the quality of the water of Sebago Cove is very important to PWD and we are counting on partnering with the water district for years to come to literally Save Sebago Cove.

Good questions, thoughtful answers from Wilson Lake

When Peter Lowell, who coordinates Maine's invasive plant grants, saw the final report of the Friends of Wilson Lake Association, he emailed Wynn Muller with a special request.

"This is a great report, especially the last section," wrote Lowell, LEA's executive director. "Can we highlight your ideas in the CBI newsletter?"

Muller agreed. Below are his comments, which may help others as they think about options for the 2012 season.

"Rather than restate those comments written in the interim report, I will instead look back to last year's final report, which listed the problems we experienced, what we intended to do to correct them and the results of our actions. Last year we had some boredom and immaturity issues with our student monitors. We also learned that our coordinator would not be back. Hence we held a series of meetings to determine how to address these concerns. We held three meetings over the winter to address the following issues. They are restated here along with our resolutions.

1. **Is milfoil monitoring still a top priority for the organization?** We agreed that this was the top priority of the organization and we still feel that way.
2. **Shall we continue with students or switch to reliable adults?** We determined to try for a mix of mature students and agile adults. We were unable to recruit adults, but did agree that students must be at least 16 years of age at the start of the summer to become a monitor.
3. **Should we hire a paid coordinator?** We agreed to recruit and hire a paid coordinator at $12 per hour with any monitoring time compensated at a similar rate. We were fortunate to locate the perfect individual. He is presently also preparing a coordinator's manual. He and I both agree that in future years a stipend for the position of say $500 would be a better method for handling the position.
4. **Should we change from an 8-hour day to two shifts of 4 to 5 hours each?** We decided to try the 4-hour shift approach and it worked much better. First, the boredom issue was drastically reduced. Second, it provided for much better handling of the rain issue. Now, after a few hours we could release the morning person, but still expect the afternoon person to check in on the weather conditions. We were concerned that a second shift might fail to show up, leaving the first shift person in limbo. This never happened.

"The 8-hour shift was too long. Also the move to a new coordinator was important. That he was paid was of lesser important. A coordinator burns out just like anyone else and there is a need for new ideas to keep the program new and refreshed."

– Wynn Muller, Friends of Wilson Lake

5. **If we increase the cost of the program by implementing either 3 or 4 above, should we compensate by dropping the Friday afternoons or Memorial Day or Labor Day from our schedule of monitoring?** We were fortunate to receive a small grant which enabled us to continue the same hours without the need for any cutting of hours. In the process we re-learned that the hours on Friday afternoon were more productive than the Saturday and Sunday hours of 8 through 10. Hence we did not add hours to the weekends.
6. **If we decide not to hire a paid coordinator, should we divide up the coordinator duties in some manner?** While this does not quite apply since we did hire a paid coordinator, we did decide to remove from his duties the scheduling of support staff. Our support staff personnel are volunteers from the association with the aim of involving more people in the program and providing relief to the coordinator from responding to the issues which come up beyond the monitor's control. Each support will work one or two weekends a summer and have the responsibility of being an "on call" person for student questions or problems. They are all fully trained as monitors and could, and occasionally do, cover in an emergency. We determined that an association member could better handle the function of scheduling support as they would have better knowledge of the personalities of the members and might be more diplomatic.

All in all we are most pleased with the results of our year. We do plan to keep our committee active over the winter to remain on top of all these issues."

Battling invasives: How long can this go on?

By Peter Lowell
Lakes Environmental Association

The story line is the same wherever you travel: a local lake association tries to mount an effective assault bearing an enormous economic burden and relying on a small group of over worked volunteers. You have to wonder how long this can go on. That's why LEA has chosen sustainability as the primary focus of the Maine Milfoil Summit in 2012, a year that also marks the 10th anniversary of Maine's milfoil sticker.

The situation LEA knows best – our own seven-year effort to control variable leaf milfoil on the Songo River and Brandy Pond in Naples -- also illustrates the complex problems facing Maine's lake communities. The Songo River is probably the state's busiest waterway. It has also been the focus of significant controversy because of its extensive milfoil infestation.

In early 2011, a bill was submitted to close the Songo Lock to boat traffic and the fireworks started. The debate was all about restricting access on a corridor that connected Long Lake and Brandy Pond to Sebago Lake. Marina owners were the opponents of closing the lock and the Naples and Bridgton chambers of commerce were drawn into what turned out to be a heated confrontation. Concern over economic impact squared off against the fear of spreading plants to upstream lakes. Public access is a sacred cow in Maine, but clean lakes are as well. Both have economic implications.

Yet from that debate, a partnership emerged that may be a useful model. Following the initial legislative uproar and the scuttling of the bill, it was decided to formulate a plan that would attempt to deal productively with all of the issues. The energy, time and resources that would be consumed by fighting needed to be diverted to solutions. Here is the sequence of events that ensued:

- A committee was formed to generate a plan for funding expanded harvesting with the goal of clearing 800 feet of river downstream from the lock. This work was to be conducted by LEA staff in addition to their work upriver and in Brandy Pond.

Peter Lowell with milfoil from the Songo River.

Photo by John Patriquin/Maine Sunday Telegram

- The Portland Water District and the Town of Naples offered new funding and the Lake Region 4H Club received a grant to construct bottom barriers to augment the control efforts of the milfoil crew working on LEA's DASH boat (diver-assisted suction harvester).
- LEA designed a new barrier composed of the shrink-wrap used for boat winterization and rebar. Naples Marina donated 300 feet of wrap and 4H Club members helped assemble the barriers.
- Since boat inspections at Songo Lock exceed 4,000 a year, it was essential to have a strong CBI program there. DEP agreed to continue the increased funding it had provided in 2010, when the call for closing the lock was first made by LEA with support from Bridgton and Harrison, the upstream towns.
- A Naples businessman at Causeway Landing made prime space available for an outreach office for both chambers of commerce and LEA. This created a spirit of cooperation to protect the region's economic and ecological health.
- Naples Marina and Causeway Marina sponsored a benefit cruise on the Songo River Queen, raising about $2,300 for milfoil control efforts.

By the time the LEA milfoil crew disbanded in August, the 800-foot safety zone had been cleared as had the upper river, Brandy Pond and the lower Crooked River. This did not constitute total eradication, as some plants

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Echo Lake volunteer hours increase sharply

By Lea Stabinski
Echo Lake Volunteer IPP Coordinator

Thanks to a sharp increase in volunteer hours, the 2011 IPP survey of Echo Lake and Taylor Pond (Fayette and Mount Vernon) went well this summer. We are fortunate that we have a flexible and deep crew of plant patrollers. There were several people from Echo Lake who took the Invasive Plant Identification course and/or the survey methods course offered by the Volunteer Lakes Monitor Program in July. All together, we had 22 trained people sharing the survey work on Echo Lake.

Although four people from last year didn't return, we had several new people who participated this year. This may sound like quite a force of volunteers and it is compared with other lakes. However, the truth is that we still need to at least double the number of volunteers to have reasonable assignments (not more than two to three hours work).

Thanks to a more comprehensive system of evaluating the number of hours of volunteer service, to date we have logged 224 hours of work, slightly more than 5 1/2 weeks of labor. (Last year we recorded 140 hours of volunteer work.) We found no invasive species of plants in Echo Lake or the upstream Taylor Pond. Both water bodies contain good, native milfoils (some of the following: low water milfoil, Farwell's milfoil and alternate flowered milfoil).

The native milfoil was found in six different places in Echo Lake, mostly in calmer waters. We found two new sites this year and one was at the boat launch, so we have enough milfoil around to keep us alert and checking for the number of whorls, leaflets and kinds of fruit. Volunteers surveyed the boat launch area once a month from June through September.

Several of us were involved in teaching a half-day educational program for campers at Camp Winnebago for boys. We used the Paddle Program taught by the VLMP using the Quick Key guide to invasive aquatic plants. They provided large photos of the 11 invasive plants we were to look for. We provided an on-the-land and an on-the-lake program as well as an adult presence and paddle strength for the campers. It was fun to have so many people from the lake involved in this exercise and everybody had a chance to see what native milfoil looks like as well as learning about other native plants.

The bottom line is that we are doing a great job and we need to continue to train and expand our educated and able-bodied invasive aquatic plant surveyors in order to protect not only Echo Lake and Taylor Pond, but our downstream water bodies as well.

How long can this go on?

Continued from Page 8

will re-generate, but we expect the task will be significantly easier next summer.

Although this approach did not work flawlessly, converting everyone's energy to addressing the problem allowed better than expected success. Diverse agendas were served as were the dual needs for harvesting and prevention.

Those of us battling infestations have no other choice than to seek as many partners as we can and to minimize controversy. My real concern is with the sustainability of these programs. The first generation of volunteers has to be getting tired and reinforcements are needed. The funding for invasive plant control from the state and other sources also needs to be significantly increased, especially for those lake associations that count their plants in acres.

Hopefully, a robust and more broad-based team of partners will lay the foundation for this infusion of resources. When the first milfoil stickers were sold in 2002, only 10 waterbodies were known to be infested with invasive aquatic plants. Now there are 34 infested waters. Courtesy boat inspections have increased from 2,848 in 2001 to 72,428 in 2010.

The effort is increasing, the needs are increasing, but the funding is not. The revenue from the milfoil stickers was slightly more than $1 million in 2002 and it remains slightly more than $1million annually.

It's time to consider the sustainability of efforts to control invasive plant infestations in Maine's waters. Please make plans to join the discussion this winter at the Maine Milfoil Summit.

Collins Pond credits volunteers for another a hard-fought season

By Paula Monaghan
Collins Pond Improvement Association

The cooler weather and shorter days have signaled the end of summer. On one of the last days that we had a crew together for our DASH Boat Operation, it was a rather cool day with a minimum crew of three members (diver, boat captain\milfoil bagger and surface support person). Ideally there should be at least one more crew member on the boat to help with the milfoil bagging operation, but with a strictly volunteer group, sometimes we don't always have a full crew available.

We started our day by moving an underwater benthic barrier frame to a new area. We then travelled to the other side of the lake to start manual milfoil removal.

Rodger Patterson was the captain\milfoil bagger on this day. Rodger also volunteers as a diver and does about a million other tasks associated with the DASH boat operation. Rodger disconnected and moved the Bimini canvas top of the DASH boat to get some warmth from the sun. On warmer days during the summer the Bimini top is used to provide shade.

The boat is lined with bags of milfoil that Rodger removed from the trough, which receives the water and milfoil sent by the diver.

Diver Steve Cantor

Boat Captain/Milfoil Bagger Rodger Patterson

Surface support involves closely watching the diver below the surface as much as possible. It is very helpful when the diver is wearing or using some of the more colorful or fluorescent diver accessories and equipment. The surface support person also monitors the diver's air bubbles as they come to the surface and stays close to the diver in case help is needed. The surface support person also removes any invasive plant fragments, which may break off or float near the water surface as the diver removes the plants by their roots.

We use recycled orange juice containers to help keep the green suction hose afloat as the weight of the flowing water and plants tends to sink the hose.

The diver on this day is Steve Cantor, who like Rodger Patterson and other volunteers in our group, works and volunteers as a boat captain, bagger and surface support and does other jobs necessary to run the DASH boat.

Steve also does many other tasks associated with the DASH boat operation, including repairs; carting equipment back and forth to the boat; running to the hardware store for supplies or repair parts, and cleaning and stocking the boat. Then after working for a good part of the day diving or doing other tasks, there is always the "fun" task of removing all the soaking wet, heavy bags of milfoil from the boat to the shore.

Special thanks to all our volunteers for another hard fought season!

Lovell's efforts gaining support

By Ann K. Williams
Lovell Invasive Plant Prevention Committee

The Lovell Invasive Plant Prevention Committee (LIPPC) has been working very hard this summer. Reformed last fall, this town committee comprised of 18 active members and seven "Friends of LIPPC" has the support of the residents of Lovell and the selectmen. People are realizing just how important this work is to keep invasive aquatic plants out of the waters of Kezar Lake and the ponds within the watershed.

Courtesy boat inspections: An estimated 1500 boats were inspected between May 1 and August 25. During May, inspections were conducted from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday through Sunday. From Memorial Day weekend to the weekend after Labor Day, CBIs were on duty every day from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Volunteers contributed 205 hours.

Most inspections were done at the Narrows boat launch, but there were 65 days of coverage at the North Lovell landing, where far fewer boats enter the lake. As reported in the July Milfoil Update, a Eurasian milfoil plant was found in June on a boat just before it was launched into Kezar Lake at the Narrows; none has been found since.

Three dives for plant investigation and removal were conducted at Cushman Pond, which has had a milfoil infestation since 1996. On the first dive, two plants were found (one old growth, probably missed from the last dive in 2010, and one was a new plant) plus one floating fragment. On the second dive, no plants were found and on the third dive, on Labor Day weekend, one small plant was found. Benthic barriers were placed over areas where plants were discovered.

Education Committee: In collaboration with the Kezar Lake Watershed Association, we created a laminated, spiral-bound booklet *(Eyes on the Water*) using materials from the DEP and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (Vital Signs). With the help of a generous grant, free copies were distributed in town. The goal is that each home and camp has a copy. Copies are also in the libraries and in the town offices.

There were two "Eyes on the Water" outing, one in July at the north end of the lake, and the second in August at the Narrows boat launch. Participants arrived in canoes, kayaks and motorboats to monitor the shoreline for native and potentially invasive aquatic plants. Specimens were sorted by type and identified. There were 28 people at the July outing, and 34 in August. Ten "bucket scopes" were made by Mark Moulton at Lovell Hardware and are available to check out at each library.

Volunteer Coordination Committee: Presentations stressing the importance of the mission to keep invasive aquatic plants out of Kezar Lake and the watershed were made at every road association meeting. *Eyes on the Water* booklets were given to all attendees. Road associations were generous in volunteer commitment and in cash donations for CBI coverage.

Private Boat Launch Survey: A survey to identify all private boat launches around Kezar Lake found 16 potential or active launch sites. Landowners were made aware of the potential for invasive plant introductions from these sites. Signage may be placed where appropriate.

Rapid Response Team: Appropriate steps have been formulated in the event of the discovery of an invasive aquatic plant. This includes the local communication plan and a chain of command up to the VLMP.

Signage: A private individual donated new signs for placement at launch sites throughout the watershed. (See photo above).

A 2011 IAP (Level I) investigation showed no milfoil in Kezar Lake or in other water bodies except Cushman Pond. The goal is that a Level I survey be done at least every three years, with *Eyes on the Water* trained volunteers surveying in between, perhaps using an "'Adopt a Cove" model.

Yes, this has been a very busy year for the Lovell Invasive Plant Prevention Committee (LIPPC).

KLWA News: The Kezar Lake Watershed Association received a grant to install a boat wash station at the Narrows Boat Launch. Town crews installed it according to proper specifications, and it was expected to be complete by September 30.

Grant funds survey and outreach

Members of Estes Lake Association determine a plant is not invasive.
Photo by Fred Frodyma

The York County Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded a grant to carry out the 2011 York County Invasive Aquatic Species Project (YCIASP), a survey and educational outreach project.

The project has a special focus on the Mousam River watershed – though project activities were not limited to that watershed – with an additional focus on assisting groups and individuals to build Invasive Plant Patrol (IPP) teams. Aquatic biologist Laurie Callahan has been coordinating the project with assistance from Melissa Brandt of YCSWCD.

Currently there are eight infested waterbodies in York County and occurrences include four different species of invasive aquatic plants (IAP). Those species are variable milfoil, curly leaf pondweed, hydrilla and European naiad. So far there have been no documented IAP occurrences in the Mousam River watershed, even though lakes in that watershed (such as Mousam Lake) see heavy recreational use throughout the year.

There are a number of active courtesy boat inspection programs in York County, which educate boaters about the threats of IAP to Maine waters and how they can be part of the spread prevention effort. In early August, the second YCIASP symposium was held in Springvale. The symposium topic was "Building Invasive Plant Patrol Teams." Five lake associations and one land trust were represented.

Callahan gave a PowerPoint presentation that summarized elements of several successful Weed Watch programs in New Hampshire or Invasive Plant Patrol teams in New Hampshire and Maine. The gathering provided an opportunity for participants to share their hopes, plans, ideas and concerns about building IPP teams for their respective waterbodies, groups of waterbodies or the region. A follow-up session will be held this fall to review successes or problems experienced during the summer and to develop plans for the 2012 season.

Most of the YCIASP's events were held in August and September, providing opportunities for local stakeholders and organizations to use the VLMP Quick Key, conduct an IAP screening survey and learn about aquatic plants in their waterbodies, mostly through on-the-water aquatic plant survey sessions that included plant identification exercises led by Callahan.

By September's end, invasive aquatic plant surveys (mostly Level 1) had been performed on 15 waterbodies, including Mousam Lake, Square Pond, Goose Pond, Estes Lake, Shaker Pond (all in the Mousam River watershed), Scituate Pond, El Pond, Horn Pond, Moose Pond, Shapleigh Pond, Little Ossipee Lake, Isinglass Pond, Symmes Pond, Lake Arrowhead and a stretch of the Saco River from south of Limington rips to an area above the dams at Bonney Eagle. A site visit was also made from the shore of the Saco River in Biddeford. Callahan led or co-led the survey sessions. Most surveys were done by a team of people from the lake association or lakeside residents of the waterbody surveyed.

To date, only the Saco River in Biddeford was found to have variable milfoil (verified by DNA analysis in August). Milfoil was also found in a few spots along the Saco River from below Limington rips to above the Bonney Eagle dams, but the species of that milfoil could not be determined from the plants' features. Definitive identification will be available soon, probably from DNA analysis.

Variable milfoil has been recorded in the past at the Skelton Dam flowage of the Saco River in Dayton and also in the Little Ossipee River, which flows into the Saco River just below Limington rips.

–Laurie Callahan

Twins get an early start on protecting our lakes

By Maureen Maslak,
Belgrade Lakes Association

Way back in the summer of 2003, Mike Little, then-director of the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance, was asked to address the membership of the Belgrade Lakes Association at their annual meeting held in Loon's Cove on Great Pond. The hot topic of the day was invasive plants, and Mike emphasized the need for every lake dweller, every lake user, every lake property owner– in fact, every lake lover, to become familiar with the aquatic plants present in the areas of the lake that they were most familiar with.

Variable milfoil had been discovered in Lake Messalonskee a couple of years or so before that meeting, and there was great concern that it might spread to Great and/or Long Ponds if we weren't diligent in our efforts to keep it at bay through the use of widespread plant identification and boat inspection. The BLA membership was urged to attend plant identification workshops and courtesy boat inspection training so that they could become volunteers in the fight against invasives.

Two 7-year-old twin girls, Emma and Tess Russell-Grad, attended that meeting with their mother, Jean Russell, and their great aunt, Jean Trueblood, who had given the twins a BLA membership every year for their birthday. As a result, they received all the mailings, newsletters, brochures, and announcements that went out to members, and their mom read them all to the girls until they were old enough to read themselves. They got to come up to Belgrade Lakes from the Bronx in New York every summer from the time they were 3 months old, to vacation at their family camp on Long Pond, which has been in the family since the 1930s, and is now on a conservation easement held by the BRCA. They fell in love with the camp, Maine and their lake, as so many of us have.

A week or two after the meeting, we received a call from Aunt Jean, who asked if she could bring the girls to the office because they had found some plants in the lake that looked very much like the pictures of two of the invasives they had seen in the summer BLA newsletter.

They were our youngest volunteer invasive plant patrollers ever! The good news was that they had found bladderwort and American waterweed, two native plants often mistaken for invasives. The best news was that they were out there in the lake, hunting for invasive plants. We took their picture for our Summer 2003 newsletter, letting our members know how proud we were that we had these two little heroes as BLA members.

Emma Russell-Grad, Jean Russell, Tess Russell-Grad.

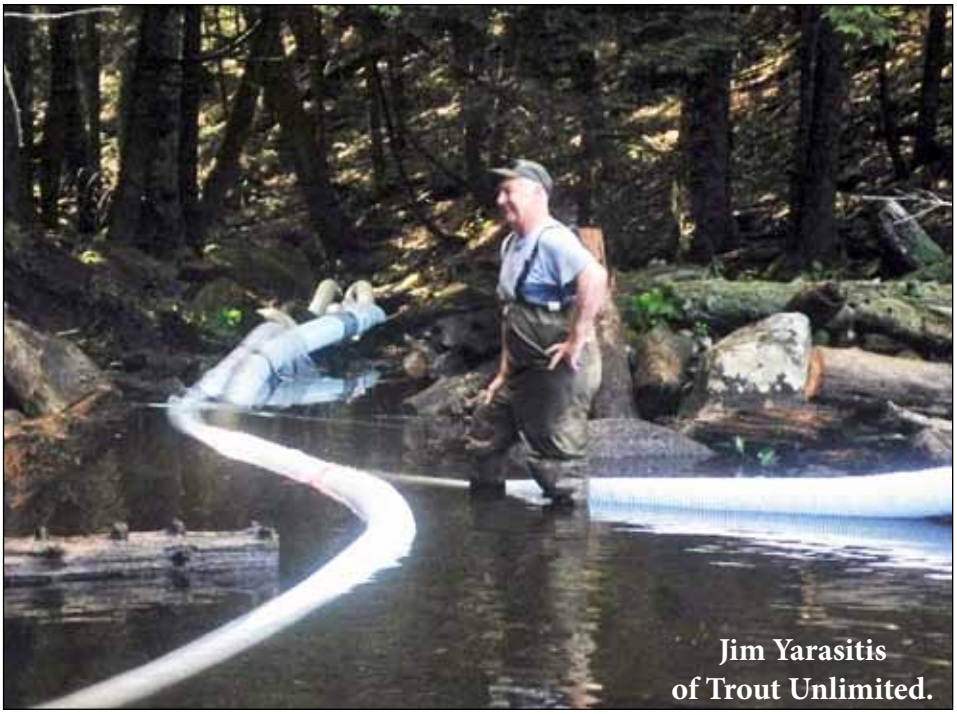
Well, moving the calendar eight years forward, at a BRCA meeting in June we were recruiting volunteers to help pull variable milfoil from Great Meadow Stream in Great Pond, when who should appear but Tess and Emma, now 15 years old, and still totally interested in saving our lakes from invasive plants! They spent a number of days this summer pulling out milfoil, along with their mom, Jean, and other volunteers. They also attended the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program all-day training for plant identification and the invasive plant patrols on Great and Long ponds. They hope to become courtesy boat inspectors next year.

The girls are sophomores in the Bronx High School of Science and were delighted with the opportunity to meet Dr. Whitney King, Chemistry Chair of Colby College at the Maine Lakes Resource Center grand opening recently in Belgrade Lakes. Dr. King has been collaborating with the BRCA and BLA in studies involving the presence of gloeotrichia in our lakes, as well as other water quality studies. It wouldn't come as a surprise if one or both of the girls applied to Colby College for admission and Colby would be the better for it!

Thanks, girls, for your ongoing interest and dedication. You do your Mom and Aunt Jean proud!

Little Concord reclaimed

By Francis Brautigam
Regional Fisheries Biologist
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife


Jim Yarasitis of Trout Unlimited.

On August 25, Little Concord Pond in Woodstock was "reclaimed" to remove invasive fish such as golden shiners, brown bullhead, white suckers, chain pickerel and rainbow smelt that compete with brook trout. The project was challenging, since the pond is in a remote location on top of a mountain.

Little Concord Pond is on a 64-acre tract that was part of an early Land for Maine's Future Project and is now managed by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. The 26-acre pond, largely stream fed, is surrounded by Bald Mountain, Speckled Mountain and Mount Zircon.

The goal of reclamation is to remove invasive fish and establish native fish and plankton communities more representative of natural lake ecosystems. Little Concord will be restocked with brook trout in 2012 and is expected to produce a high quality native trout fishery.

Sebago Lake Region fishery biologists at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) consider reclamation the most worthwhile management practice they can perform to improve brook trout fisheries in southern Maine, where so many competing fish have been introduced to area waters.

Approximately 200 reclamations have been completed in Maine, 46 of them in the Sebago Lake region, including at Overset Pond in Greenwood; Big Speck Pond in Norway, and Broken Bridge Pond, Crocker Pond and Mosquito Pond in Albany.

Little Concord was treated with rotenone, a natural substance produced in the stem and roots of certain tropical plants in the bean family. The application of organic fish toxicants, such as rotenone, to eradicate invasive fish has been a widely accepted management practice throughout the United States since the 1930s. Rotenone, which inhibits the use of oxygen by fish, is non-persistent in the environment, and possesses limited or short-term impacts to non-target species.

Jim Pellerin, Brian Lewis, and Francis Brautigam, Sebago region fisheries, reclaimed Little Concord Pond with the help of IFW colleagues Steve Seeback from Greenville, Scott David, Sidney, and Jason Seiders, Rangeley.

Because of its remote location, the Little Concord project was logistically complicated, requiring specialized equipment and expertise. Success was achieved because of the tremendous coordinated support within state agencies and organizations, including:

- The Maine Department of Conservation, represented by Regional Supervisor Ron Hunt
- IFW's hatcheries, wildlife, fisheries and engineering divisions
- The Sebago Chapter of Trout Unlimited, which provided most of the funding and a lot of support. Dave Haskell led the "5 in 5" effort to fund reclamation of five ponds in the next five years
- The Mollyocket Chapter of Trout Unlimited
- Patriot Renewables LLC
- The Biodiversity Research Institute.

Pike moving rapidly in Penobscot

By Nels Kramer
Regional Fisheries Biologist
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

When Lance Bolduc dropped to his knees on the ice at North Pond in March 1998, all he could say was, "Look at the size of that fish." The Skowhegan ice fisherman hauled in the biggest Northern pike ever caught in Maine. Weighing 31 pounds and 2 ounces, it stretched 44 inches long on the ice. With its razor-sharp teeth, it looked just "like a large alligator" to Mike Remmers, Bolduc's fishing buddy.

Pike can grow so large, so quickly, that they present a nearly irresistible lure to fishermen. State fisheries biologists believe pike were introduced into the Belgrade lakes in the 1970s by "bucket biologists" – anglers trying to improve fishing without regard to the consequences for native fish populations.

Since then pike have spread to 49 waters, including Sebago Lake, where they threaten a legendary salmon fishery, and the Penobscot River, where they could impact a world-class smallmouth bass fishery.

Northern pike are considered an invasive species in Maine and their presence is cause for grave concern for local fishery managers. As pike mature, their rapid growth rate and elusive, predatory nature contribute to generally high rates of survival with few natural predators. As such, their effects on the local fish community can be quite pronounced.

IFW Fishery Technician Josh Kuester with a 17-pound pike, one of 78 netted this spring in the lower Penobscot River watershed

Pike are sometimes compared to sharks in their single-minded pursuit of prey. Their growth is fueled by a staggering amount of food. Pike feed on fish, frogs, crayfish, mice, muskrats, even ducklings. As one fishery text puts it: "Food selection by species is not apparent . . . Pike will eat virtually any living vertebrate available to them within the size range they can engulf."

Pike were first documented within the Penobscot River drainage in 2003, when they were found in Pushaw Lake. Since then biologists have been surprised by how quickly they are moving in the Penobscot, which is New England's second largest river with a watershed that covers about a third of the State of Maine.

This spring, thanks to a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, IFW biologists nearly doubled their efforts to monitor pike in the lower Penobscot River watershed, specifically Pushaw Lake, Pushaw Stream and the Stillwater River, a side channel to the Penobscot.

The additional effort as well as the continuing expansion of the pike population resulted in 78 pike netted, the largest weighing 17 pounds. That compares to 14 pike removed in 2006; 24 in 2007; 5 in 2008; 19 in 2009, and 38 in 2010.

In addition, an angler brought a three-pound, 24-inch pike to IFW's Bangor Office on June 10. He reported catching the pike in the Kenduskeag Stream in Bangor, just below the abutments of the old dam (just above the I-95 bridge). This

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Pike in the Penobscot Watershed

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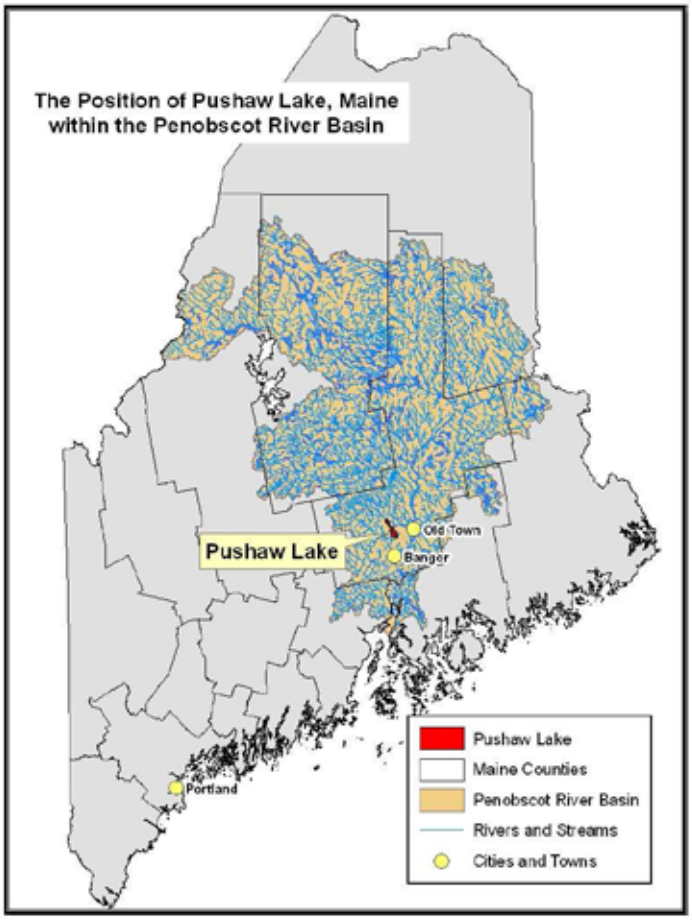
was the first confirmation of a northern pike being captured within the Penobscot River drainage outside of Pushaw Lake or Pushaw Stream.

That was quickly followed by the first confirmation of a northern pike captured in the Penobscot River. On June 30, another angler caught a pike (29¾ inches, 7 pounds) in Orono, behind Ayers Island just downstream of where the Stillwater Branch of the Penobscot River confluences with the mainstem Penobscot River.

Expansion of northern pike in the Penobscot River drainage is also a serious economic concern. In the main-stem Penobscot River, from Bangor north to Medway, approximately 30 guides and outfitters provide services to non-resident smallmouth bass anglers, bringing much needed revenue to an economically depressed region of the state.

In addition, thousands of local anglers look to the Penobscot to provide angling opportunity for them and their families. Smallmouth bass are relatively easy to catch and the river is a favorite place to take young anglers to help develop their interest in the sport.

The pike expansion also could have consequences for other fish. It is estimated that Maine has 97 percent of all of the remaining wild, native populations of brook trout in the United States. A large proportion of those Maine brook trout populations occur within or in close proximity to the Penobscot Drainage. Sea-run Atlantic salmon populations, an endangered species, will be negatively impacted if a northern pike population ever becomes established in the Penobscot Drainage.



Presently, barriers exist at two fishways in dams on the main-stem Penobscot River, at West Enfield and at Howland. These obstructions to pike movements were installed in 2006 as a result of two unconfirmed reports of pike in the Penobscot River. And while they still provide access for other diadromous species, passage efficiency would be improved if these fishway were not modified to exclude pike.

The Howland Dam is slated for decommissioning at some point in the future, and would include a by-pass channel, that if developed as planned, will pass northern pike unimpeded into the entire Piscataquis River Watershed where they will have an impact on existing coldwater fish populations, including endangered Atlantic salmon.

More bass tournaments in compliance

Maine game wardens spent time at bass tournaments this year making sure each tournament was in compliance with regulations requiring boat inspections. Most tournaments were in compliance and the few that were not were issued warnings and told to have inspectors present.

This effort was probably the most significant effort we did this year. We did issue tickets for not displaying a milfoil sticker, but the number of tickets is not yet available. Wardens also checking boats at our boat ramp inspections over the summer.

– Lt. Adam Gormely, Maine Warden Service