



NEWICHAWANNOCK NEWS

GREAT EAST LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION - 74th YEAR, Spring 2006

Editor's Note: *The articles for this edition of the newsletter were written the week before the "Floods of May 2006" hit. Needless to say a lack of water is no longer an issue. Please check the website www.greateastlake.org for the latest conditions.*

President's Column Spring 2006

By Linda Schier

It is spring again at Great East – the loons are back and summer is in the air. I'm sure we are all looking forward to another wonderful summer season at the lake. I, for one, am looking forward to that first dive into the velvet water.

This has been an unusual off-season at Great East Lake. The October storms brought unprecedented high water, moving the Scribner Island to a new location; the lake never solidly froze over causing damage to many shorefronts in January; and due to the lack of snow melt, our spring water level is lower than ever. The global weather pattern may be out of our immediate control but as individuals we can each pay attention to how our own actions have an impact on our local environments.

GELIA members continued to work hard all year to further the goals of our mission to protect and preserve the quality of life on Great East for ourselves and our wildlife neighbors. This includes securing funds for the Lake Host program, rallying the troops for another season of monitoring for invasive weeds, getting our message out to all our present and future members, maintaining the navigational buoys, planning our Annual Meeting and Lake Concert, publishing our newsletters, working with both the towns of Acton and Wakefield to protect the water quality of the lake, updating the Newichawannock Reflections, ordering maps and T-shirts, and planning other activities that enhance our experience on the lake. The installation of our first man-made loon nest was a highlight of the spring activities.

GELIA members' participation in the Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance has led to the establishment of a watershed Youth Conservation Corps dedicated to protection of the watersheds from

the impacts of stormwater runoff which is detailed elsewhere in this newsletter. Please do evaluate your property for any runoff issues and contact AWWA for assistance if you have any concerns.

The articles in this newsletter address many of the issues facing Great East while also highlighting activities to come. Please enjoy the articles within and let us know if you have any ideas, issues or suggestions that will help further the mission of GELIA. Your input is what drives the efforts of the Board so please keep us informed of your thoughts.

See you on the lake!

"A lake carries you into recesses of feeling otherwise impenetrable."

~William Wordsworth

Newichawannock Reflections Update

By Pat Theisen

Thanks to all who have shared reflections, poems and photographs for the second edition of Newichawannock Reflections! Look for the announcement of when the books will be available on the GEL website;

www.greateastlake.org

Great East Lake Maps

Back by popular demand – 18"x24" paper maps suitable for framing.

The updated maps will be available at the Annual Meeting for \$5 each.



**Annual Meeting
Saturday July 1st,
2006**

Details on page 2

ANNUAL MEETING, LAKE CONCERT, FLARE UP

**JULY 1, 2006
WEEKS PARK**

10:00 a.m. Membership table, displays, informational tables and merchandise will be ready by 9:00, so please arrive early as this year as they will not be conducting business during the meeting.

Yard Sale is set up for browsing before and after the meeting. **Please bring items to contribute** (practical or recreational items for use at camp). Proceeds go to the Fish and Wildlife Fund.

Flare and Sticker distribution: Each paid-up member family may pick up one flare for the evening flare-up and their 2006 membership sticker.

GELIA Sweatshirts, T-shirts and Hats will be on sale. Those who wish to make purchases but are unable to attend the meeting may call Joe and Barbara Wadleigh at 603-522-6398.

Laminated Charts & Paper Maps can be purchased for \$10 and \$5 respectively. Charts & maps will also be available by calling Pat Theisen at 207-636-2263.

Beautiful Coffee Table Book "Maine Lakes" will be for sale for \$10 (\$30 off cover price!)

Displays and Informational Materials will abound. Come early to collect safety materials, homeowner information, and invasive species information. See the visual displays of what a Youth Conservation Corps accomplishes, and learn more about local conservation organizations.

Volunteer Sign Up for Weed Watchers, Lake Hosts, Meeters and Greeters – or maybe all three!

Reports: Officers and committee chairpersons will bring you up to date on GELIA's programs and you will have an opportunity to ask questions and express your ideas.

Guest Speakers: Harry Vogel of the Loon Protection Committee will speak to us about the life histories, behaviors and unique characteristics of loons. We will also hear about the efforts of the Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance and other issues relevant to Great East Lake.

Raffle Drawing: Area merchants and residents of GEL contribute restaurant meals, merchandise and services. Each year there is more! Tickets may be purchased before 10:00 a.m.

Food! Our version of the Fenway Frank: the Weeks Wiener. Compliments of GELIA with chips and sodas.

LAKE CONCERT:

Music played from a pontoon boat in the middle of the big part of the lake from **7:00 – 8:00 p.m.** Join the floating boats enjoying the tunes if you can't hear the music from your shore.

FLARE UP: 9:30 p.m. What a sight to see them all lighted at the same time around the lake. Synchronize your watches!

Lake Hosts and Weed Watchers

By Bess Smith

GELIA is maintaining its commitment to battling the threat of an aquatic invasive species infestation with continued participation in the Weed Watcher and Lake Host/Courtesy Boat Inspection programs. We hope that everyone is acting as either an official or an unofficial Weed Watcher by keeping an eye out for unusual plant growth in the Lake. Look for us at the annual July meeting or feel free to contact us for more information on these programs.

GELIA has been awarded \$4000 from NHLA and \$1700 from ME LEA to run the Lake Host program which will run on Fridays from 4pm-7pm, Saturdays from 6am - 7pm and Sundays from 6am - 6pm plus holidays. The paid Lake Hosts will be returning to staff most hours, but once again we will need volunteers to help at the boat launch on weekend mornings 6AM to 10AM for 2 hour shifts. We hope to fill up the volunteer spaces at the Annual Meeting so please bring your calendars. If you would like to attend the very informative training offered by the NH DES please contact Tessa Venell, our Lake Host Captain and schedule coordinator, for more information or talk to her at the meeting. The training dates are as follows:

Wed., May 31, 6 - 9 PM; Sun. June 11, 9 AM - noon; Wed., June 14, 6 - 9 PM; Sun., June 25, 9 AM – noon; Wed, June 28, 6 - 9 PM; Wed., July 12, 6 – 9 PM.

For more info:

Weed Watchers - Bess Smith at bess.smith@techcelerate.com

Lake Host - Tessa Venell at tvenell@brandeis.edu or 207-636-1270.

Did You Know about LAKE FOAM? (This article is reprinted from the NH DES Fact Sheet BB5-2001)

Lakeshore property owners sometimes become concerned about lake foaming. However, most foam observed in lakes and streams is a product of nature; foam is not necessarily an indicator of pollution. Small trout streams, for example, often have naturally occurring pools of foam where fish will hide.

What causes the foaming of surface waters on lakes?

The foaming of surface waters on lakes is not a new phenomenon. It is a natural process that has been going on for a long time. Foam is created when the surface tension of water (attraction of surface molecules for each other) is reduced and the air is mixed in, forming bubbles. Man-made agents can also reduce surface tension.

All lakes contain organic matter, such as algae and plants, and when these decompose they release cellular products (surfactant) into the water, which lessens the surface tension. When the wind blows, the waves on the lake agitate this surface agent, thus transforming it into sudsy white foam. Currents and boats also mix air with the organic compounds present in the lake to produce foam.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, many communities experienced tremendous foam problems in lakes, rivers, sewage treatment plants, and even in drinking water from contaminated wells. This foam was caused by synthetic laundry detergents that were highly resistant to chemical breakdown, and only slowly degradable (broken down by bacteria). By law, the sudsing agent of all detergents now on the market must be biodegradable. This means that they quickly lose their ability to cause foaming and are unable to produce the long-lasting foam found along many shores.

Where is lake foam found and what is it like?

The foam will frequently form parallel streaks in the open water, caused by wind-induced surface currents. It will also collect in large quantities on windward shores, coves, or in eddies. Natural foam has a somewhat earthy fishy aroma and may have an off-white, tan, or brown color. Detergent foam in contrast will have a noticeable perfume smell, and is usually whiter in color.

Something to Think About

By Chuck Hodsdon

Whenever my son returns to New England from Colorado where he now lives, he always remarks that the trees are the thing that he misses most. That of course, and the lake.

It did not occur to me until he had said this several years in succession, how much we take our trees for granted. They are such a pervasive part of the landscape here. Not just the shade but the sounds that they make, the way they smell, not something to be taken for granted. The special atmosphere that they lend to the lake is incomparable. People leave their city homes and travel up here to the North Country on weekends just for the sense of calm and peace that they bring .

What is frightening is how some folks forget about why they come here in the first place, and try to take the trees down so they will have a lawn to mow, or a little clearer view of the lake

I am writing this mostly to just remind people that one of the reasons that we have a pristine lake is that the trees in the watershed disperse the rain as it falls and prevent the water running off the land and washing the soil and sand into the water. This kind of erosion is bad for the land and bad for the lake. In addition the trees and other native plants soak up the nutrients and other chemicals that would otherwise end up in the lake and absorb them and help keep the lake clean. Trees are an integral part of our landscape, do what you can to promote their growth and keep them healthy. Especially near the water. There are actually laws to prevent cutting trees near the water but the best way to preserve them is to use your own conscience and do what is best for the lake and the watershed and help them survive and thrive. It is in your own best interest.

Loon Nesting Raft Anchored Off East Side of Loon Island - By Carol Lafond

We need your cooperation in this endeavor! Loons shy away from human presence and will not choose a site or will abandon a site if there is too much activity in the area. So PLEASE keep your distance, even before they are on the nest, swimming in the area and deciding whether to use it.

The Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) gave GELIA permission to construct and float the raft after four consecutive years of failed nests on Loon Island. The LPC biologists thinks the loons had to abandon their nests on the Island when water levels dropped and they could no longer get to their nest. We hope this floating raft will solve this problem. LPC tells us that only 50% of new rafts get used the first year, 20% more get used the second year, etc., so we are going to continue launching it for several years, even if there is no use this year.

The LPC provided the plans, advice and all of the construction materials for the float, as well as the warning sign. The base is 4 logs formed to create a raft. Then a mesh bottom is stapled on and a variety of natural materials indigenous to the lake covers this mesh. The loons will make it their own nest by adding more materials. A roof is then added that is formed out of chicken wire and then covered with a leafy looking plastic which helps camouflage the nest from flying predators, as well as provide some shade. It was built by Doug Smith and Win Robin, and Doug donned his wetsuit and jumped into the frigid water to get the raft properly anchored. John Cooley from LPC, spent the afternoon helping us select the best site and assisting with the anchor placements. George Szirbik captained the pontoon boat which towed the raft to the site. Acting as sidewalk supervisors and photographers were Win Robin, Bess Smith, Carol and Dave Lafond, and Jon Rouillard and his son JP, who followed in their boat.



REMINDER - 2006 SUMMER YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

By Carol Lafond

The goal of the Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance is to protect the watersheds and preserve or restore the water quality of lakes and streams located in Wakefield and Acton. The biggest source of pollution to lakes and streams in Maine and New Hampshire is the sediment, carrying nutrients and other pollutants that wash into the water from properties in the surrounding watershed.

The Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance is currently looking for property owners with erosion problems who would like to participate in an erosion control project this summer.

If you have property on or around Great East Lake and storm water runoff is causing erosion into the lake, stream or wetlands, we would like to help. You can get a free custom design to help solve your erosion problems, if you are willing to pay for plants and materials to implement the design and allow AWWA to publicize the finished project in order to increase awareness of this program. Selected properties will also receive free labor from the YCC to implement the design.

Please check for erosion problems on your property during heavy rains. It would be helpful if you took some pictures of the problem areas. Perhaps we can help you solve your erosion problems with a beautiful and environmentally friendly solution, at relatively little cost to you. The results of all of our efforts will help ensure a beautiful pristine lake for future generations to enjoy.

If you are interested in learning more, talking with the technical director about your concerns, and/or participating in this project, please email Carol Lafond at webmaster@greateastlake.org or contact Steve Dagley at 207 636-3582 or s1maine@psouth.net. Please include your name, address and phone number. If you are a seasonal resident also include your local address, phone and when you can be reached at your local address.

Shoreline Landscaping Workshop

Saturday, June 24th 9-11

Location in Wakefield to be determined

Have you ever wanted to do some landscaping to your waterfront property, but didn't know what is allowed in the shoreline protection area, which plants are appropriate and how to prevent stormwater from running off into the lake?

AWWA will be holding a free workshop this summer to help you design the best landscaping for your waterfront property. Jeffrey Schloss, Extension Specialist in Water Resources with NH Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension will guide us through the topics of waterfront friendly landscaping, diversion of stormwater runoff, plant and material selection and regulatory considerations.

Please join us for this interesting and informative workshop that will help you beautify your property while protecting the lake. Location will be posted on www.greateastlake.org and on flyers.

For registration or more information please contact

Carol Lafond

603-522-6538 or webmaster@greateastlake.org

HIGH WATER –LOW WATER ???

By Walter Neff

As this is being written (about three weeks after ice out) the water level at the lake is about a foot below what we would expect at this time. Will we receive enough rain this Spring to bring it back to normal? Who knows.

On the other hand our Fall edition of the newsletter related stories of the damage caused by the unusually high water levels and strong winds during that season.

Both of these situations present potential hazards to boating at Great East Lake this Spring and Summer.

Low water levels make underwater objects such as submerged logs, rocks and sandbars a threat in areas of the lake which previously allowed safe passage. The high water situation has brought significant amounts of fresh debris into the lake (including the Scribner Island!) which may be nearly invisible under the surface.

THESE UNDERWATER HAZARDS CAN BE VERY HAZARDOUS TO YOUR BOAT'S HEALTH.

Aside from scouting out beforehand the potential areas for underwater threats the two most important things you can do to avoid damage to your boat and its occupants is to **SLOW DOWN** and be especially **VIGILANT**—the use of passengers as spotters might be a great idea!

A gentle reminder: If you operate a power boat in excess of 25 HP in NH waters you must be certified by the state in 2006 if you were born after Jan. 1, 1963. The schedule of courses for certification by the Dept. of Safety is available on the web at www.nh.gov/safety/ss/links.html. As an option you can take the course on line at www.boat-ed.com/nh, or by obtaining the home study course by calling 1-800-830-2268.

Enjoy a safe, accident free boating season on our wonderful lake!



SCRIBNER ISLAND UPDATE

As of May 21, the Scribner Island has divided in two leaving a channel through the middle that some boats are able to navigate through. The record high water of last week did not dislodge either side of it so it appears that it is lodged in place for now. The NH Department of Environmental Services has jurisdiction over the island so any questions about it should be directed to Dori Wiggin at NH DES at (603) 559-0020 or dwiggin@des.state.nh.us.

GELIA 2006 Membership Drive

By Jon Rouillard

This year we tried a new approach to our spring membership drive. Rather than combine the membership renewal form with the Spring Newsletter, we opted for a focused separate mailing. The Membership Committee wants to personally thank the 200+ lake residents, (roughly one third of all property owners) that have renewed their 2006 membership to date, as well as new members joining us for the first time. That is a great response and we truly appreciate your support!

One of the membership drive objective's this year was to enroll as many renewals before our annual meeting, so meeting attendees can spend more time learning about GELIA, and less time waiting in the membership line. On **July 1** you will learn more and see more about the numerous programs in place to protect water quality such as testing and monitoring. See and hear the results for yourself. There will be experts and GELIA volunteers on hand with educational pamphlets, displays and literature. Learn more about the agents that potentially threaten our lake and what you can do to help. Come meet other lake residents and make new friends, bring your kids and enjoy the free lunch featuring hot dogs, soda and chips. You just might win one the many fabulous raffle prizes.

This brings me back to our membership drive. Our continued success is reliant upon your support. If you have neighbors that are not members yet, please encourage them to join. If you want to do more, visit us at the annual meeting and volunteer for one of programs, or you can contact me at greateastlake@comcast.net or (978)969-2255.

Chuck Hodsdon - Water Monitor Extraordinaire!

Chuck Hodsdon has been the water quality monitor for Great East Lake for 25 years! He started by reporting to the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) , and when UNH started the Lakes Lay Monitoring Program (LLMP) he began working with them. Monitoring is a complicated process that requires going out on the lake to collect water samples, recording real-time data and then returning home to run the samples through a series of tests. He then sends the results and a report to both the VLMP in Maine and the LLMP in New Hampshire.



Chuck's wife, Marcia shared these thoughts –

“Over the years Chuck has dragged dozens of people out onto the lake to help take the data. He always lists anyone who goes out with him on his report so their name appears in the annual report as monitors. Last year on his last trip to the second basin he had to be dragged home by a passerby because his boat wouldn't start! He also always needs a volunteer to help him with one of the tests because it requires a recognition of several subtle color changes and he is colorblind. This has been my main contribution over all these years, although I have also been out sampling more times than I care to count. Our son John actually ended up majoring in Marine and Fresh Water Biology at UNH and he worked one summer for the Lakes Lay Monitoring Program.”

Chuck will be honored at the New England Lakes Conference on June 3rd in Farmington, ME for his countless hours of water quality monitoring and GELIA would like to say “congratulations” and to offer our deepest appreciation for all his devotion and energy towards the preservation and protection of Great East Lake. We are very fortunate to have Chuck in our corner. THANKS CHUCK!!!

Join GELIA today!

Why miss the fun?

If you would like to join GELIA please go online to www.greateastlake.org for the downloadable form or contact Membership Chairman, Jon Rouillard at greateastlake@comcast.net or send a note to GELIA, PO Box 911, Sanbornville, NH 03872. Dues are \$20 per year and help support the many activities that keep the GELIA directors busy all year long such as water testing, invasive weed monitoring, annual meeting planning, lake concert, fish stocking, loon protection, maintenance of navigational markers, boater and homeowner education, and more.

GELIA.
The Newichawannock News is brought to you by the Great East Lake Improvement Association. The Spring edition is mailed to all GELIA members and all non-member property owners. **To receive the Fall and Winter editions you must be a member of**



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