

# Mascoma Lake Association

NEWSLETTER  
SPRING 2012

## Lasers on Mascoma

by Sally Sharp & Kate McMullan

An incredibly mild winter and the earliest ice-out in recent memory set the scene for a circumnavigation of Mascoma Lake on a sunny, warm March 25th by two keen Laser sailors – an amazing start to the sailing season!

Alas, April turned downright chilly, so only the Dartmouth Sailing Team was brave enough to be out there on a regular basis, although the Mascoma Sailing Club (formerly the Shaker Village SC) opened for business April 28. Members are looking forward to a long season of recreational sailing as well as a busy racing program.



Our Annual Spring Laser Regatta will be held on Sunday, June 17, when we expect 20 to 25 sailors from all over New England to converge on our lake to enjoy a day of beautiful northwest winds, 10-15 mph ... at least that's what we've ordered up.

That week will see the start of the summer season's weekly race programs. We're very excited to be teaming up with the Dartmouth Sailing Facility to offer two Laser race series. We'll host regular Sunday afternoon racing up toward our club on Main Street near the new bridge from 2-4 pm.

John Brady, the new club manager at Dartmouth, is organizing a Tuesday evening series with 6 pm starts in the area near the Dartmouth club. All Laser sailors on the lake are most welcome to participate – no club membership required.

As in years past, MSC will host two popular sloop regattas: the Mid-Summer Griesbach Regatta on July 28 (following the MLA Annual Meeting),

## Maintaining & Improving Water Quality in Mascoma Lake

by Jim Martel

Because of budget cuts to the VLAP program, we no longer receive an annual water quality report for Mascoma Lake. We will receive a regional report for the Dartmouth Lake Sunapee region where all lakes in the region are included in one report, only every other year rather than every year. I have not received this report at the time of publication, so, I don't have much information on the result of last year's water quality sampling effort.

I would like to share a presentation entitled "*Healthy Waterfront Property*" by NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) for the Lakes Region Board of Realtors. It points out that boating, swimming, waterfront taxes, fishing, and drinking water contribute \$1.8 billion annually to the New Hampshire economy . . . about the same amount brought into the state by downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and ice fishing combined. Almost 6000 jobs are generated by fishing, boating, and swimming.

As you would expect, water quality

has a major effect on waterfront property values. Realtors report that 76% of buyers asked about water clarity prior to purchase. A reduction of only 3.3 feet in water clarity can reduce property values by up to \$9,800. A 2001 UNH study found a 15.9% decline in property values when a lake becomes infested with milfoil.

Surveys show that tourists will not come to our state if they perceive a reduction in water quality. About 70% of tourists would decrease use if invasive plants, algae blooms, mercury contamination, and crowding worsened.

It's clear that maintaining – and even improving – the water quality in Mascoma Lake, is in our mutual financial interest. We can all do our part by maintaining our septic systems, using zero phosphate fertilizers and detergents, keeping runoff out of the Lake, and watching for milfoil infestations.

A clean lake should not be taken for granted. It takes a little time and effort but it is well worth it. Our sampling dates for this year are: Tuesday 19 June, Tuesday 17 July, and Tuesday 28 August.

## Lasers, continued

and the Labor Day Regatta on September 3.

Both are 'open' events, and all Mascoma sailboats are encouraged to come join the fun. No racing experience is required, as we'll provide ten minutes of all-you-need-to-know-to-race-sailboats instruction!

The MSC offers plenty of activities for cruising sailors too: weekly Thursday evening sloop sailing, and monthly "full moon sails" (Aug 2 and 30, which makes the latter a "Blue Moon sail").

Social events include an Open House & Barbeque on Memorial Day, and a 4th of July BBQ preceding the Mascoma Lake Boat Parade.

For further information on the Sailing Club and its events, please visit [sites.google.com/site/shakersailclub](http://sites.google.com/site/shakersailclub).

We hope to see you on the water soon!

## NEW WEBSITE

We are pleased to announce the arrival of MLA's new website. Peter Swanson has been hard at work using input from our board members and the technical expertise of Rick Hutchins, who developed the Goose Pond Lake Association's website.

You will find an inviting home page and easy-to-access topics including our mission statement, facts about the lake, calendar of events, opportunities to volunteer, water quality and invasive species information and our Lake Host Program. There is also access to our newsletters, membership info and links to groups of interest. We encourage you to send your best photographs, with captions, to include for use at our discretion.

These should be sent to MLA's email address in a JPEG file format. There will also be a message board page for lost-and-found items. This information should also be sent to our email address.

Visit: [www.mascomalakeassociation.org](http://www.mascomalakeassociation.org)  
and let us know what you think.

## Loon Update

by Terri Lynch



The ice went out early and quickly on Lake Mascoma on March 23rd. Within days the first loons were spotted. Their wailing call with its wolf-like tone heralds spring. For adult loons, this is the time to claim territory, find a mate – we hope – and set up a nest.

If successful, two adult loons can produce 1-2 chicks a year. Unlike other waterfowl, this is a very limited opportunity and it is fraught with challenges. Last year the loons that came to Mascoma were able to produce only one chick, despite the attempts of two nesting pairs. This was exciting for those of us who watched “Lola”, as the chick was called, develop and grow. We were awed by the dedication of the two loon parents who spent the next five months nurturing and teaching her how to survive. They overcame the usual hurdles of snapping turtles, raccoons, eagles, boats, water skiers and fisherman. They really share the responsibility equally and are model parents.

Knowing the incredible challenges that this young chick had to overcome, made the discovery in November of a dead loon chick killed by bullets that much sadder. While we can’t positively identify it as Lola, it was the same age. This five-month-old chick was shot with two steel pellets on two separate occasions. The first shot made it unable to fly. The second, which it is estimated happened a couple weeks later and about a week prior to its death, made it unable to eat.

How unbelievably sad and cruel.

The New Hampshire Fish and Game department has undertaken an “investigation,” but no one has been identified. While I would like to think this was accidental, the two separate injuries make this unlikely. It is difficult to believe that anyone could do such a thing.

While the death of a loon chick is very sad, the death of an adult of breeding age is tragic. Loons do not reach reproductive maturity until about four years of age.

Over the past 10 years, the Loon Preservation Committee has been studying loon numbers in NH and performed

## MILFOIL CONTROL: EVERYONE CAN HELP!

Martha Rich & David Kelman

As we look forward to summer, we’re thinking milfoil control – and hope all lakeside residents will join in the effort to combat this invasive aquatic plant.

If it is not controlled, Eurasian Milfoil forms dense stands of vegetation in the water and thick mats at the surface that shade out native plants, reduce oxygen levels as well as disrupt recreational activities. This will be the 15th year of work to keep this from happening to Mascoma Lake.

We (David Kelman and Martha Rich) will be patrolling the water on the MLA barge “S.S. Milfoil”, looking for the distinctive feathery stalks. We’ll drop markers when we find plants, so we can return with divers to dig them up. Local “milfoil watch captains” will also monitor areas near their homes and report when they spot plants. The key activity, of course, will be harvesting. Our team of divers – Bud Lynch, Jim Martel, and Dave and Rusty Michael – will be doing their specialized underwater weeding again this summer. We’ll also have valuable help from retired leaders Roger and Marta Barnes, who continue to provide advice based on their long years of service in this program.

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### LOONS, continued

necropsies on recovered dead loons. Half of the dead adult loons studied have died from lead poisoning.

Although a law banning lead sinkers of a certain size was passed about ten years ago, lead is still a leading cause of death. According to the LPC, lead sinkers and jigs that are currently legal are the culprits.

A proposed bill would extend the ban on lead to give loons and other waterfowl additional protection. This bill passed the New Hampshire senate but was strongly opposed by the bass fishing industry. On May 1, the House Fish and Game and Marine Resources Committee referred the bill to interim study.

Unfortunately this will postpone any changes another year. Please contact your representatives to support this bill. I am hopeful that New Hampshire will set a precedent here and vote to do the environmentally-responsible thing by passing SB224.

MLA is offering a voluntary swap to help get the lead out of our lake. Bring your lead sinkers and jigs to the Annual Meeting and we’ll give you a non-lead alternative in exchange. Help us protect the loons!! Let’s Get the Lead Out!

Although some sections of our lake were free of plants last summer, some areas had persistent infestations – especially the sunken islands off Perkins Cove and the channel where Mascoma River joins the lake. We removed 2,271 plants last year and planned to get more, but harvesting became impossible after Tropical Storm Irene stirred up the silt. We don’t know what effect that storm had on this summer’s growth patterns.

We plan to finish the GPS mapping begun last year, which will create an interactive map that can track patterns of milfoil growth over time. We will post a link on the MLA website when this map is ready: by the end of the summer, we hope.

### So how can you help?

- If you see a milfoil marker (a white wooden rectangle, an orange foam tube, a large yellow buoy) please leave it where it is and avoid motorized boating near the marker.

- If you think you see Eurasian Milfoil, let us know and we’ll follow up on suspected sightings. You don’t have to be an aquatic plant expert, just an alert citizen!

- If you would like to monitor the water near your property on a regular basis as part of the “neighborhood water watch,” let us know. Your commitment as a watch captain would be to cruise your area to a depth of 12-14 feet when the lake is still and the sun is not directly overhead (usually early morning or late afternoon). We ask that you report at least once by July 15 and a second time by the end of August. We particularly need watch captains on the 4A side from the Baited Hook to the head of the lake.

- If you’re a SCUBA diver or want to become one, we’d love to hear from you. It’s easy to learn the techniques of proper milfoil harvesting, and training is available. The average age of our divers is well over 60 years old, and we can’t depend on this small number of valiant people forever.

As we prepare to battle the threat of Eurasian Milfoil in 2012, we welcome whatever support you can provide: whether it’s keeping a lookout when you’re boating or fishing, monitoring your home waters, or getting into diving gear for the digs. Let’s work together to keep milfoil under control!

### For Milfoil Control, contact:

Martha Rich & David Kelman

ssmilfoil@comcast.net

802-233-9964

340 Shaker Blvd., Enfield

# MILFOIL AND MASCOMA: 1999 TO PRESENT

by Karen Hambleton

In 1999, my neighbor, Bill Martin first discovered the invasive aquatic weed Eurasian Milfoil in Mascoma Lake. Bill's professorial curiosity compelled him to investigate a new weed he found growing just off his beach. I distinctly remember Bill visiting me one day and saying – with that twinkle in his eye – "You're a SCUBA diver, aren't you?"

After that, Bill gathered and lead a group of dedicated volunteers to search for, monitor the spread of, and remove milfoil.

How does this group work? First, we search. Milfoil volunteers (weed watchers), interested property owners and others search the edge of the lake for milfoil. It is easiest to spot on a calm morning when the sun can penetrate several feet into the water. Milfoil can grow to be nearly 20 feet tall; however, in Mascoma, most milfoil grows in 6 to 10 feet of water and is removed before it reaches the surface. Depending on the light, milfoil can be spotted 2-4 feet below the surface.

When a weed watcher spots milfoil, a marker is dropped near the plant. Sometimes property owners call the milfoil coordinators with the location of suspicious weed. The coordinators investigate the plant to identify it and mark it if necessary. Weed watchers keep a particularly close eye on areas where milfoil has previously been found.

Next, the milfoil is removed. Usually two to three divers, accompanied by a surface support team of two or three, head out on the modified party barge owned by the Lake Association. After the barge is anchored near the milfoil markers left by the spotters, the divers get into the water.

Sometimes, the one plant spotted from the surface is the only plant growing, but often that is not the case. Usually there are a handful of other milfoil plants, still too small to be seen from the surface, in the area around the marked plant.

On a few occasions, divers have found veritable forests of milfoil. Divers carefully remove each milfoil plant, taking care to keep the root structure and plant intact. Because milfoil is propagated by root, cutting and by seed, the entire plant must be carefully and completely removed to prevent the plant from spreading and re-growing elsewhere. Tiny pieces of milfoil will grow roots as they float through the water column, eventually coming to rest on the bottom and infesting a new area of the lake.

Removing milfoil before it grows to



within 3 feet of the surface is extremely important. If it does reach the surface, the plant will bloom and go to seed. Plants that reach a height close to the surface may be easily chopped into a million pieces by a passing boat and spread in that way.

Once the divers have returned to the boat, they report on what they've seen. Is this an area where milfoil might spread quickly, such as one with a mucky bottom? How many plants were there? Were all the plants removed or should the area be revisited to double check? Divers also record the number of plants removed from the area. Detailed information, including the number of plants removed, is kept on each area where milfoil has been found. This helps determine which areas may be prone to a re-infestation and may need periodic scanning for new milfoil growth.

Are you a diver interested in preserv-

ing the health of Mascoma Lake?

The MLA currently needs experienced volunteer divers who are comfortable in low visibility situations to join its milfoil removal team. You must provide your own equipment, but will be reimbursed for milfoil removal diving expenses.

To find out more about the Mascoma Lake Association's efforts to remove milfoil, to volunteer your time in this effort, or to report a suspicious plant, please contact the Milfoil Coordinators, David Kelman and Martha Rich, at 802-233-9964. We need your help to keep Mascoma healthy!

## ATTENTION FISHERMEN!

Bring your lead jigs and sinkers to the Annual Meeting. We will swap you for a lead-free alternative safer for all waterfowl.

Or, contact Terri Lynch:  
terri.m.lynch@gmail.com

## Don't let sinkers & jigs "sink" our Loons!



**Lead-headed jigs (left) and lead sinkers (right), are fatal to loons. Non-lead alternatives made of steel, tin and tungsten are available and safe for loons.**



## Mascoma Lake Association

P. O. Box 9, Enfield, NH 03748

### *"It's not easy being Green"*



As the immortal Kermit might have said, being green has its challenges. Last year we spent almost \$1,000 dol-

lars to print and mail two newsletters to our membership.

MLA would like to offer to send you your semi-annual newsletter via the Internet. It would be included with your annual dues membership renewal.

Please consider changing to this greener form of communication. Email me at [pjobarr.barr@gmail.com](mailto:pjobarr.barr@gmail.com) and let me know your thoughts.

*Tricia Barr, Membership*

### Mascoma Lake Maps For Sale

Unframed \$15.00

[mla@mascomalakeassociation.org](mailto:mla@mascomalakeassociation.org)

#### MLA Board Officers & Members

President • Terri Lynch  
Vice President • vacant  
Treasurer • Gary Gaudette  
Secretary • Sally Sharp

*Design & layout of this newsletter  
by MLA member Betsey Child  
Lasting Impressions Graphic Studio, Enfield  
[betsey-last-imp@comcast.net](mailto:betsey-last-imp@comcast.net)*

### *Mascoma Lake Boat Parade Wednesday, July 4th 3-5 p.m.*



#### **TWO STARTING POINTS AT 2:45:**

North end: near Baited Hook

South end: near Dartmouth Sailing Club

Air horns will sound from the leading boat with the red, white and blue balloons. The procession will start @ 3pm with both groups heading toward the Shaker Bridge and then on around the lake.

Decorate your boat if you wish.

*Weather is always a factor,  
and may cause this event to be cancelled.*

**SAFETY IS NO. 1**

### **LOON CENSUS 2012**

The statewide Loon Census will take place on Saturday, July 21st, 8-9 a.m. The Loon Preservation Committee coordinates the census statewide. Mascoma Lake will participate under the organization of MLA President Terri Lynch. Please join us, rain or shine, as we enjoy the lake and protect our precious loon population.

Contact Terri via email to participate:  
[terri.m.lynch@gmail.com](mailto:terri.m.lynch@gmail.com)

### *Annual Meeting 2012*

Annual Meeting of the Mascoma Lake Association is Saturday, July 28th. Doors open at 8:30 a.m. for registration and refreshments. Business meeting will start at 9 a.m. Guest speaker is Susie Burbridge, a biologist from the Loon Preservation Committee.

### **MLA SUMMER SOCIAL SUNDAY, AUGUST 26th**

**STONE MILL BUILDING • 3-8 p.m.**

Paper-goods and beverages provided.

Bring a dish to share and BYOB.

Games, Music and Fun

Meet your Lake neighbors and enjoy!