

Mascoma Lake Association

SPRING 2020
NEWSLETTER

For the Love of Loons

by Terri Lynch



The sound of loons returning from their coastal winter homes was especially welcome this spring with so much else unsettling in our world due to Covid 19. The call of the loons was familiar and reassuring. As usual the first loons appeared just after some open water emerged and a week or so before we had "Ice Out". "Ice Out" (for me when no ice is visible from Shaker Bridge) was on April 6. Last year our loons on Mascoma Lake did not fare well. We counted only 3 adults at the time of the census. In 2018 we had 6 adults and in 2017 we had 13. There were two unsuccessful nesting attempts last year. The first was predated and the second one flooded. It was interesting though to see the female that we banded in 2017 was back with a new partner.

2019 was a mixture of highs and lows for the loons across NH according to the LPC (Loon Preservation Committee). There were record numbers of failed nests, unhatched eggs, and dead adult loons found. While this sounds terrible, and certainly is disheartening, there were also record numbers of nesting pairs (313), more volunteers and more nesting rafts used. Additionally, new nesting pairs on 6 additional lakes that have not had loon nesting in at least 44 years. These are some good signs.

So far this Spring I have seen 4 loons at the same time from the Shaker Bridge. In hopes of a couple nests, both of our floating nesting rafts have been launched. To date only one was used in 2017 in Lebanon and a chick did hatch. I remain hopeful that they will choose that option to avoid possible flooding. One pair has been cruising near Wood Island and it looked like a possible nesting, but to date no nest has been established. Observations of any loon activity would be very welcome. A Field Biologist,

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1st LOONS SEEN ON LAKE
March 31

ICE OUT • APRIL 6

BOAT PARADE

Saturday July 4th • 3 pm

Rain date July 5th

*Meet at the Rail Trail rope swing
prior to start*

LOON CENSUS

Saturday, July 18 • 8-9 am

*Yearly statewide loon count organized
by the Loon Preservation Committee.*

*To volunteer you need a boat, ability to
identify loons, a watch, a pair of
binoculars, census form and a pen.*

To participate contact:
terri.m.lynych@gmail.com

ANNUAL MEETING via ZOOM
Saturday, July 25 • 9 am

*Link will be emailed prior to meeting.
Make sure we have your correct contact
info. ZOOM can be accessed by an app
on your phone or computer.*

MLA CLEANUP

August • TBA

Check website for updates

President's Message

by Allison Flint

This year we are together but distant at the Mascoma Lake Association. We've made adjustments to our normal routines so we're taking care of ourselves and each other as well as doing our best for the lake and community. That's really what it's all about anyway.

While we will miss our physical social gatherings like the Annual Meeting at LaSalette (we will meet online instead), and there is no plan for the picnic in the Lakeside Park, we do hope for a cleanup day in August to be organized later in the summer.

Our annual 4th of July Boat Parade, led by Rob Malz and the Enfield Police and Fire personnel, already complies with current social distancing standards – families and households in their own boats, more than 6 feet apart from one another, spectators watching from along the shore.

Spread the word as we build our membership – encourage your family members and adult children to join via our website, shout across the yard to a new neighbor who just moved in welcoming them to join the MLA. Shout out to an old neighbor who just hasn't joined the Association yet and tell them about our 2019 map with their name on it.

Most importantly, good wishes to all in staying healthy and safe during this time of COVID-19.

Lake Host Program Off to a Great Start!

by Tricia Barr

The goal of the NH Lakes Lake Host program is to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive aquatic plants and animals in NH's lakes and ponds through public outreach.

As your new Lake Host coordinator, I am happy to report we are off to a great start at the boat ramps on Mascoma Lake this summer. Our three paid inspectors are doing a wonderful job teaching boaters about aquatic invasive species prevention methods. They help boaters remove potentially invasive plants and animals from boats, trailers and gear. Our inspectors only perform courtesy inspections with the boater's permission and are not "enforcers"



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Mascoma Lakeside Park News

by Meredith Smith



The Mascoma Lakeside Park Committee (MLPC) has been busy throughout the winter, meeting regularly, first in person, and since April, on Zoom. Architect Paul Mirski very generously offered his professional services pro bono for the design of the pavilion and submitted plans to the Mascoma Lakeside Park Committee for approval. The committee unanimously approved Mr. Mirski's design and this spring, the Town of Enfield issued a Request For Proposals (RFP) to build a pavilion at Lakeside Park and associated site work. Two companies have submitted bids and it is anticipated the winning bid will be selected very soon.

The pavilion will be about 1000 square feet of covered space, offering protection from the weather and a beautiful lakeside location for various events. Mr. Mirski's design is in keeping with the nineteenth century architecture of Main Street in a more or less "gazebo type" style. Every effort is being made to make the pavilion and park itself compliant with ADA requirements, ensuring that all will be able to access the park and pavilion. It is anticipated that work will begin on construction of the pavilion over the summer and be completed by late fall.

This is only the first phase of what will be a long-term project. Plans for the future include developing walking trails and paths, lake friendly landscaping in keeping with the goals of NH Lakes "Lake Smart" program, benches and picnic tables, and a possible children's wading area (not a beach or swimming area). Any further improvements at the park will be dependent on fund-raising efforts that do not involve the Town of Enfield. The Mascoma Sailing Club and the Enfield Village Association have pledged funds towards annual maintenance. The MLP Committee will continue to reach out to other organizations and grant funding agencies for funding opportunities.

The MLPC welcomes your suggestions as we move forward in creating a shorefront park for all to enjoy

Loons, *continued from page 1*

Phil Keefe, from the LPC (Loon Preservation Committee) is assigned to the Sunapee Region of which we are a part. He is covering about 100 ponds and lakes, so he is spread rather thinly.



His email address is sunapee@loon.org. You can notify Phil or me if you have any concerns. If you see any nesting activity, any loon in distress, certainly if you see any loon beached or entangled in fishing line, contact me immediately with as much detail on location/time as possible. Sometimes quick and early intervention can save a loon. At all times give loons the space they need (at least 100'), and by all means do not fish near them.

Our loons are dealing with ever increas-

ing threats, many of them man-made. The majority of recovered dead adults are still dying from lead poisoning from old tackle. PLEASE DON'T USE! The buy-back program initiated in 2017 is still in effect. Replace that equipment with non-lead alternatives to help our loons. I will gladly recycle your lead or you can get a voucher to replace it at 6 sites around the state. For details, visit loonsafe.org.

Human activities of boating, fishing, shore line development all challenge the loons but threats of the natural variety do also. Predation from raccoons, crows, eagles, and turtles all pose risk to an egg or chick. The recovery of the bald eagle population poses an increasing threat on Mascoma Lake with a nesting pair of eagles currently raising/feeding at least one chick.

If we can help the loons by removing the human causes of their demise I hope that they will follow the recovery that has been made by the bald eagles.

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Nesting Mascoma Eagles

by Kathie Hillard

This year the eagles at Mascoma lake have succeeded in producing another offspring. New Hampshire's 40th mid-winter Bald Eagle Survey Day was January 11, 2020, and on that day the two adult eagles were seen contemplating nest selections and doing repairs.

February 1st they were seen working on the nest, and by March 14th, an adult was sitting on the nest. Eagles generally lay their eggs in late winter or early spring and sit on them for about 35 cold days. The eagle sat on the nest through March and April. On April 22, it was observed that both adults were now busy tending to the contents of the nest and observations of this behavior continued. On May 10, it was possible to view one small pale grey fuzzy head bobbing above the rim of the nest grasping at food from a parent.

Both adults tend to the nest and continually work as a team to watch, feed and care for their young. They do frequent nest repair and are bringing in new sticks and rearranging sticks to apparently fortify the structure. As of May 30th, the eaglet is believed to be about 5 weeks old. It has gone from a small light grey dinosaur looking bird with a few feathers to a young eagle with many dark grey colored feathers and a grey bill. The young bird is beginning to make squawks.

The adults are able to leave the nest now for longer periods. They keep a careful but distant watch on the nest and return with food as needed and they frequently "hang out" together. Soon the eaglet will be as tall as an adult, then start to fly by 8-10 weeks when the flight feathers are big enough on the wings to allow this.

By caring for our environment and respecting the space of all wildlife, we enable this natural process of life. What a pleasure and privilege we have to help sustain our beautiful Mascoma Lake.



Dartmouth Yacht Club

by John Brady



The Dartmouth Yacht Club will suspend all operations for the entire summer of 2020.

The closing is consistent with the decision that all teaching at Dartmouth will be done remotely during the summer term.

Resumption of on-campus activities, including use of the sailing center as the venue of the Dartmouth varsity sailing team in the fall, will continue to be under review.

Mascoma Sailing Club Log

by

Sally Sharp and Kate McMullan

What happens to a sailing club when there is a pandemic? Adapt or Go Extinct is an old adage...we try to adapt. Covid-19 has dramatically influenced the schedule, planned events, and day-to-day experience of Mascoma Sailing Club and its members. As we all struggle to cope with this strange and ever-evolving situation, we at MSC endeavor to find a safe way to operate (albeit on a limited basis) so we can continue to provide the opportunity for folks to enjoy sailing on Mascoma Lake.



Mascoma Sailing Club is run completely by volunteers. Members join because they love sailing and love our beautiful lake. They are happy to help out with whatever needs doing (moorings, club boat maintenance, pot-lucks). They enjoy helping less experienced sailors as they strive to become seasoned skippers. Several of our members who live on, or close by the lake (Sally, Gary, Reg, Irina, Andre) have been out sailing and wind-surfing the last couple of (pre-Memorial Day) weeks. It is a joy to see them out on the water!

Corona Corollaries: Currently, all MSC social gatherings have been put on hold. No regattas are scheduled. Our popular Wednesday Evening Women Can Sail Program is furloughed, as is our equally popular Thursday Evening Community Sailing Program. Our Youth Sailing Program is cancelled for the year. Tuesday night Laser racing sponsored by Dartmouth is not happening. The VA Disabled Vets Sailing Program is on hold.

Good News: Our Club moorings are almost ready for use, and individually owned boats will be allowed on assigned moorings in early June. In addition, we hope to launch our Club sloops later in June and make them available to MSC members. In the meantime, we continue to deliberate how to move forward while ensuring our members stay safe – how do we provide shared use of our boats (sloops & dinghies) in a safe and responsible manner?

Summer is here. Let's all enjoy the lake and be thankful for the wonderful recreational opportunities Mascoma Lake has to offer in these turbulent times.

Milfoil Control: Uncertain Times

by

Martha Rich and David Kelman

As we begin our 24th year of battling Eurasian milfoil in Mascoma Lake, we're in a new world...and yet some things are unchanged. The coronavirus pandemic has profoundly altered all our lives. Our lake, though, is still here, offering us solace and joy—and requiring our care.

For us as your milfoil control coordinators, that means heading up the effort to keep Eurasian milfoil from spreading. We know we cannot eliminate this invasive aquatic weed, but we believe our persistent efforts have begun to reduce its presence in Mascoma Lake. That's important, because Eurasian milfoil can ruin a body of water if it's not kept in check. It can form thick mats that crowd out other plants, harm fish, and make swimming and boating really unpleasant. It's a wily weed, with lots of strategies for multiplying.

Last year, we reported cautious optimism about our own strategies for reduction: the searching, marking, and harvesting operations that scores of volunteers conduct from mid-June to mid-September. In early summer 2019, the number of plants harvested was unusually low, even in places that had been heavily infested in past years. Then came an epic July rainstorm that washed loads of silt down the river and into the lake; after that, it was hard to see plants, even for our SCUBA divers underwater. We kept looking as the water cleared, but in the end, our total harvest for 2019 was just 49 plants. When you compare that to previous years' totals—from a high of 5,454 plants in 2015, to 2,616 in 2016, 734 in 2017, and 619 in 2018—there is a clear trend.

Given the disruption from silty conditions last year, we're unsure what we'll find now in 2020. Did the murky water prevent plants from getting light enough to grow? Did the silt bury a lot of them as it settled? Will the extra soil now help new milfoil plants flourish? We'll simply have to find out.

This year's season, like everything else in this pandemic time, will require plenty of adaptations. We'll change our harvest protocols to keep divers and their crews safe. We will not organize big groups of snorkelers to swim together searching for plants. We'll do our orientation and our annual meeting reporting virtually rather than in person.

With all these changes, we'll rely more than ever on all the people around the lake to do their part. Every plant that escapes our attention can swiftly become a new colony, so we'll welcome many eyes (if not so many hands) contributing to the control effort.

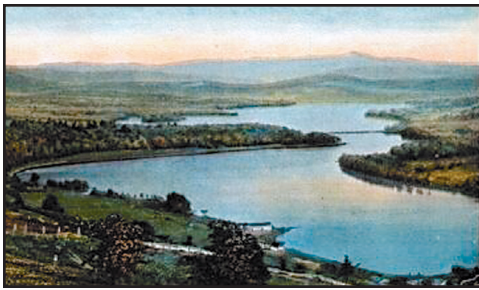


HERE ARE THE WAYS YOU CAN HELP:

- *If you see an orange-yellow foam-noodle milfoil marker, please leave it where it is and avoid motorized boating near the marker.*
- *Do not attempt to remove milfoil yourself. It must be harvested by trained personnel. Improper removal will contribute to its spread. (It's also illegal in New Hampshire to dig up aquatic plants of any kind without a permit. Removing native plants such as bass weed can create more inviting conditions for invasive milfoil to grow.)*
- *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 live on the lake and would like to monitor the water near your property on a regular basis, you can join the "neighborhood weed watch." Your commitment as a watcher would be to cruise your area from the shoreline 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 middle of August. We particularly need weed watchers on the 4A side from the Baited Hook to the head of the lake.*

QUESTIONS OR INTEREST IN VOLUNTEERING?

Contact: David Kelman & Martha Rich • ssmilfoil@comcast.net • 802-233-9964



Mascoma Lake Association

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www.mascomalakeassociation.org

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of local or state ordinances or law.

We are grateful that Connor Thompson and Gabe Rock are returning from last year. Cam Stebbins is new this year and he told me this is his first “real” job. All three are responsible and delightful young men who live locally and attend Mascoma Valley Regional High School. Please say hello to them when you are at the ramp.

Paid hosts work Friday afternoons, all day Saturday and Sunday. We’re looking for volunteer hosts anytime Monday through Friday.

Please contact me if you have any questions or are interested in helping out at: 603-252-6142 or pjobarr.barr@gmail.com.

2020 Water Quality Report • By Jim Martel

I don’t recall any beach closings or cyanobacteria blooms last year. Hopefully this will continue as part of a trend for years to come. Please continue to divert storm water away from the lake and limit the use of fertilizers containing phosphates. This will go a long way toward maintaining the water quality in our lake for future generations.

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue our VLAP water sampling program by practicing social distancing. NHDES has developed operating procedures to minimize our risk of contracting Coronavirus while sampling. We plan to sample on 16 June, 14 July, and 18 August. Mascoma Lake has been part of this program since 1991.

Over the past several years I have noticed an ever increasing amount of leaves that wash up on our beach. One year I removed over six pick-up loads of leaves from our northwest facing Crescent beach. Most of these leaves were probably due to natural causes.

However, last fall I heard a lot of leaf blower activity on properties just upwind from us. Could it be that some of these leaves were blown into the lake from these properties? Not only do these leaves increase the nutrient load to the lake when they break down, but they increase my back load. *Please refrain from doing this in the future for the sake of the lake and my back.*

Mascoma Map Project

by

Sandy Haynes and Kim Potter

The Mascoma Lake map was updated last year and released at the 2019 MLA annual meeting. Map size is 18 X 36 and provides the names of all property owners along the shoreline of the lake as of the spring of 2019. The first publication sold out quickly so we printed another 50 copies to fulfill the demand. There are some copies for those who missed out and would like one at \$25 per map; additional charge for mailing.

Email MLA@mascomalakeassociation.org. Map can be delivered to you if local.

