

Mascoma Lake Association

SPRING 2022
NEWSLETTER

Mascoma Sailing Club

by Sally Sharp & Kate McMullan



Mascoma Lake ice-out was early again this year; by April 7 there was enough open water in the south end for the Dartmouth Sailing Team to launch their sailboats. They were followed very quickly by a local MSC Laser sailor and a MSC windsurfer as well as a couple of loons seen near Lakeside Park!

Mascoma Sailing Club is very much looking forward to a return to a more “normal” sailing season this year. Thus, a number of in-person events and programs are in the planning stages. We open our official season on May 30th (Memorial Day) with an Open House and potluck BBQ followed by an afternoon of sailing. We invite everyone with an interest in sailing or in participating in one of our programs to drop by that day.

This summer MSC will offer two separate weeks of Youth Sailing lessons (sign-up via the Enfield Recreation Department). In addition, we'll bring back our very popular Wednesday evening Women Can Sail program - an opportunity for women interested in sailing to take the helm under the guidance of an experienced woman sailor. We also plan to host our series of Community Sailing evenings which offer an opportunity for individuals and families to try sailing by going out on our Club boats with MSC skippers. Finally, we hope to run some informal weekend races and our annual Griesbach and Labor Day regattas. Events will be announced on the Enfield Listserv; please check the MSC website or Facebook page for details. Hope to see you on the water!

DYC News

The Dartmouth Yacht Club will be open every day from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. starting June 11. Members have unlimited use of 21 boats, a beach with swimming area, grills and picnic tables in a relaxing setting. All are welcome to the evening Laser racing. Lessons for kids and adults are available. See www.dartgo.org/DYC

CALENDAR

ICE OUT

April 7

SUMMER KICK-OFF PARTY

Saturday, June 18 • 10:30-1:30

Lakeside Park

BOAT PARADE

Saturday, July 2 • 3pm

Rain date Sunday, July 3

Meet at Rail Trail rope swing prior to start

LOON CENSUS

Saturday, July 16 • 8-9 am

Yearly Statewide Loon Count

to be organized by the

Loon Preservation Committee.

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

terri.m.lynych@gmail.com

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, July 30 • 9 am

Enfield Community Building + Zoom

MLA CLEANUP

August • TBA

Check website for updates:

www.mascomalakeassociation.org



President's Message

by Martha Jane Rich

Every day that I am on this lake, I am grateful for its beauty and serenity. Even at its liveliest, with motors and music and laughter bouncing across the water, our lake is an essentially peaceful place. It's a world apart from the conflict, chaos, and grief engulfing so many other places around the globe. When sorrow and trouble do come close to us, the lake can help. It can offer us relief and solace. It can lift our spirits. It can fetch beloved memories, and it can create new ones. That's because it's also a perfect place to have fun—something we can use a lot more of these days. For all these reasons, we depend on our lake. In a world of swift and sometimes frightening change, Mascoma Lake feels like a place of safety, stability, and great good fortune.

Lately, though, when I watch a sunset or see a loon dive or admire a water skier leaping a wake, I find myself wondering: How long will this last? I sense the shadow of climate change falling across what I see, darkening my imagination. What will we lose? Is there anything we can do?

In this place, at this point, the threat of climate change does require an act of imagination. It's not dramatic or obvious... except for those few days last summer when our air carried a strange smokey haze from western wildfires. That was real enough, but it didn't last long. For some of us, it may be tempting to dismiss the threat as overblown, or at least far off, nothing to worry about now. Others may be tempted to believe so hard they feel overwhelmed to the point of despair. Both of those extreme reactions end in the same result: inaction. What other responses might there be?

Given the MLA mission to protect Mascoma Lake and its environment, I hope we can all learn more about this challenge. At our annual meeting program on July 30, our topic will be *Keeping Mascoma Lake Clean and Healthy in a Changing Climate*. We'll hear from NH LAKES President, Andrea LaMoreaux, about how New Hampshire's lakes are changing with the climate, and we'll learn what we can do to keep our lake healthy. From there, we may begin to counter the hazy but real threat of climate change—together.

2022 Mascoma Lakeside Park Report

by Terri Lynch & Kate McMullan

The Mascoma Lakeside Park has made great strides since the property was purchased in 2018 from NH-DOT with private donations and grants gifted to the town of Enfield.

Folks are regularly seen enjoying the view, benches and picnic tables, non-motorized boat launch and completed pavilion. Recent work at the park has produced a path from the rail trail and multiple new plantings of bulbs and shrubs. Soon work will begin on replacing the dilapidated retaining wall near the non-motorized boat ramp. The non-motorized boat launch will be temporarily blocked while this work is completed, but we hope for only a few days.

Much more is to come, including plans for walking paths, a bike rack and an improved parking lot with a handicap accessible portable toilet are in the works. Future additions to the park will be made as handicap accessible as possible.

All this has been accomplished with donations and grants and not taxpayer money. The committee is working to keep it that way. We now have commitments from the Sailing Club and Enfield Village Association (EVA) to cover maintenance expenses for the next few years. The MLA has generously donated funds towards the boat ramp and members have gifted three lovely memorial benches. We are currently working to match a grant from LWC and are about \$50,000 from that goal.

You can help! Both donations of money and time (volunteer



hours) are needed and appreciated. Donations may go directly to the Town of Enfield, but should be earmarked for the Mascoma Lakeside Park.

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the extraordinary efforts and volunteer hours that Meredith and Doug Smith have given to this effort. Without their dedication and vision of a lakeside park for everyone, this park would not exist today.

Community and Social Engagement

by Sandy Haynes, Membership & Volunteer Coordinator

Last fall, the MLA Board discussed the evolution of the Association and the fact that we are a growing community with many interests at all ages. The desire to foster a stronger sense of community and provide opportunities for greater social and community engagement gave way to the creation of the Community and Social Engagement committee, also known as CASE.

The mission for the CASE committee is *to identify and implement ways to strengthen the spirit of community and provide forums for education and information for the wider public in support of the MLA mission.*

There are a variety of ways in which CASE hopes to focus on this mission. The initial focus will be on educational programs for kids and social events for all ages.

The first event will be the “Summer Kick-off Party,” open to all, at Lakeside Park on Saturday, June 18 from 10:30-1:30.

Later in the summer we plan to offer an educational program for kids called “Watershed Warriors.” More information coming.



In addition, CASE is looking into how to improve Social Media communications, as well as the feasibility of offering various SWAG items to support our love of the lake and all the enjoyment that it gives to us.

The CASE committee is hoping to enlist the involvement of many people to provide input and ideas. If you have some time and would like to join the CASE committee, you are welcome to email membership at mla@gmail.com.

NH LAKES is pleased to offer the Lake Host Program.

An aquatic invasive species
education and prevention program

IN ITS 21ST YEAR!



Founded in 1992, NH LAKES is a nationwide, member-supported 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the mission to keep New Hampshire’s lakes clean and healthy, now and in the future. NH LAKES works with partners to promote clean water policies, responsible use, and inspires the public to care for lakes. The Lake Host Program is a collaborative effort between NH LAKES, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, and local partners for the prevention of aquatic invasive species spread in New Hampshire’s waterbodies.

Lake Hosts work at boat ramps throughout the state conducting boat and trailer inspections with boaters’ permission and encourage boaters to practice the “Clean, Drain, and Dry” method for preventing the spread of aquatic invasive plants and animals. Inspectors are not enforcers of local or state ordinances, rules, or laws. Each summer, approximately 400 volunteers and 300 employees are trained to work as Lake Host Inspectors.

On Mascoma Lake we staff both boat ramps on Friday afternoon, and all-day Saturday and Sunday with paid Lake Hosts. Come and meet our Lake Hosts at the ramps in their iconic Lake Host uniform—a royal blue t-shirt and a big smile!

We rely on volunteers to staff our ramps during the week. We are always looking for volunteers and appreciate any time you are able to contribute.

For more information or to donate to our Lake Host program please visit the NH Lakes website at: <https://nhlakes.org/>

Clean, Drain, and Dry: <https://nhlakes.org/clean-drain-dry/>

Please contact me if you are interested in becoming a Lake Host this coming summer.

We need your help to keep our lake healthy! Thank you.

Tricia Barr, Mascoma Lake Host Coordinator
pjobarr.barr@gmail.com • 603-252-6142

LOON CENSUS 2022

SATURDAY, JULY 16

8-9 A.M.

by Terri Lynch

Every year the LPC (Loon Preservation Committee) organizes a Loon Count across New Hampshire when they try to gather loon observations from as many New Hampshire lakes as possible during the same hour to create a 'snapshot in time' of our state's loon population.

Last year eight LPC staff and 508 volunteers participated in the annual Loon Census. They documented 495 adult loons, 71 loon chicks and 6 immature loons (loons 1-2 years old that don't have the black and white breeding plumage). Mascoma Lake Census results for 2021 were 7 adults and 1 chick.

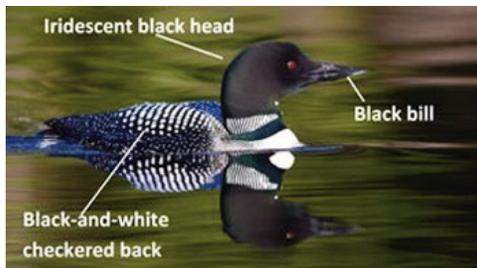
I will organize Mascoma Lake's participation in this event again this year. The Census will be held on Saturday July 16th from 8-9 am. About 12 boats (motorized are preferred but all are welcome) are needed to cover the 1,158 acres of our lake.

We have been extremely lucky to have had great weather in the past but this is a 'rain or shine' event. In addition to a boat, volunteers need to be able to identify loons (adult and juvenile), have a watch, a pair of binoculars, a census form and a pen.

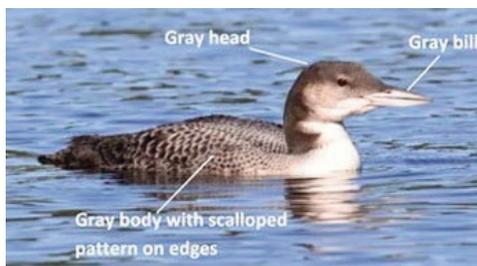
Volunteers will need to be at their assigned section (I will make up assignments) on the lake for the full hour recording all loon activity seen and then reporting findings back to me. I will review reports and submit results to the LPC.

If you would like to participate please contact me at terri.m.lynch@gmail.com

Images with permission from
Loon Preservation Committee Website
<https://loon.org/>



Adult Common Loon/male or female



Juvenile Common Loon (male or female)

MASCOMA LOONS

by
Terri Lynch

Our 2021 Mascoma Lake loon story was certainly a sad and dramatic one. It started off well. We had a nesting pair on Wood Island who laid two eggs. One of those eggs hatched and all looked fine initially. The LPC (Loon Preservation Committee) came to band the adults which



can be done most easily when there is a chick present. Banding helps with monitoring the loons and establishing baseline labs.

Blood samples were taken from both adults. The male loon's labs showed toxic levels of lead. The LPC returned to Mascoma the next day to recapture the male and get him treatment in hopes of saving his life. He was taken to a rehab center where they successfully flushed out the lead fishing jig and started chelation therapy to lower the blood lead levels. While he was away being treated the female and chick were left without his protection and an invading loon killed the chick in a territorial battle. The male was returned to Mascoma with successfully lowered lead levels but died the next day. The lead poisoning was too much for him to recover from. One illegal lead fishing jig caused the death of the male and indirectly the death of his chick.

In November it was reported that a loon was trapped in closing ice (remember they need a big stretch of open water to take flight) and an elaborate rescue was made by the LPC and supported by many volunteers around the lake. That loon was examined and found to have a deadly viral lung infection and was euthanized. We were able to identify her by the bands on her legs; she was the female of the same family. In a few short months we lost three loons on Mascoma – one entire family was gone!

As summer 2022 approaches, the floating nesting rafts will get put out and the signs and ropes dusted off in hopes of having a nesting pair or two. I am also hoping that we have no need for rescues this year. It is so frustrating that we still see loons dying each year from lead fishing tackle that has been illegal to sell or use since 2016. If you do one thing to help the loons, it should be to pull those lead sinkers and jigs out of your tackle boxes. I am happy to dispose of them for you (do not put them in your trash) or you could take advantage of the Buy Back Program where you can drop off lead sinkers and jigs weighing one ounce or less and get a \$10 voucher.

<https://loonsafe.org/lpc-2022-lead-tackle-buyback/>

You just may save the life of a loon.

While we are enjoying the lake you can help the loons if you:

Do not use lead fishing weights or jigs

Steer your boat away from any loons (a chick may be nearby and will be nearly invisible in the water and unable to get out of your way)

Give loons some space, a distance of 150' is optimal.

Use binoculars to enjoy them.

Stay clear of any loon nests.

Retrieve fishing line, entanglement has caused many loon deaths.

Report any loon that is beached or appears in distress to 603-476-LOON (5666) and to my cell phone 802-558-0082

Learn more about loons at <https://loon.org/>

LOON FACTS

Did you know?

Loons can live 30 or more years.

Loons do not mate for life.

Loons stay in water unless flying or nesting ... beaching indicates illness or injury.

Loons can swim fast underwater – 20 mph has been recorded.

They can dive and stay under for up to 5 minutes.

They can dive up to 200'.

They have been clocked at flying speeds of 70 mph.

A loon's eye is red in summer, a dull grey in winter.

They cannot walk well on land as their legs are positioned way back of their body.

They need a long stretch of open water to take flight. They can not take flight from land.

Lake Cleanup

Article & Photos by Bud Lynch

Lake cleanup has been a long term effort to improve Lake Mascoma's appearance and water quality. The lake has responded to the cessation of dumping dye and waste products in the lake. The return of the loons about two decades ago is one of the clear indicators of water improvement. In addition, the MLA has supported water quality testing.

Each year in mid-August we try to do a volunteer lake cleanup in an organized fashion and will use the SS Milfoil to pull tires, furniture, glass, bottles, and cans.



Trash from August 2020

Volunteers will also police the shore in common areas such as the Lakeside Park, boat launches, and Beaver Point. I will let you know the date we choose and suggest how you can help. I am also happy to place markers to help us locate trash on that day as we do for milfoil.



Trash "harvest" from 4A side July 2021

Two Things You Can Do to Promote Health and Safety for Yourself and the Lake

from the
New Hampshire Department of
Environmental Services

Check your septic system:

Your septic system is a highly efficient biological system that can effectively digest and disperse your household sewage and other organic wastes. Properly designed, installed, and maintained, it should give you many years of trouble-free service, but only if it is properly maintained. The key to the life and service of any septic system is proper maintenance.

Your tank should be pumped at least every two to three years. Remember not to flush grease or toxic materials (paint thinner, gasoline, pesticides, chlorine, drain cleaners and other caustic or toxic substances) into your system.

For more useful information, we recommend the DES Fact Sheet "You and Your Septic System."

Visit the NHDES website, go to the "Home and Recreation" tab, and select "Septic Systems."

<https://www.des.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/2020-01/ssb-13.pdf>

Test your well water:

The Department of Environmental Services advises that "unhealthy levels of contaminants are common in many private wells in New Hampshire. Most have no smell, taste, or color. It is important to periodically test well water to ensure it is safe to drink."

For information about testing your well water, treatment options, or accredited laboratories in New Hampshire, visit the NHDES website, go to the "Home and Recreation" tab, and select "Drinking Water" then "Private Wells."

<https://www.des.nh.gov/water/drinking-water/private-wells>

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

by Jim Martel

The Mascoma River Local Advisory Committee has invited the Mascoma Lake Association to participate in developing a management plan for the Mascoma River watershed, including Mascoma Lake. We agree, and look forward to participation.

Fortunately, they are only in the beginning stages. We plan to meet with them in early May to draft an outline. Austin Flint, Bill Martin, and I (Jim Martel) conducted a tributary study several years ago, which will provide valuable background information for this study.

Watershed Management is a term used to describe the process of implementing land use practices and water management practices to protect and improve the quality of the water and other natural resources within the watershed by managing the use of those lands and water resources in a comprehensive manner.

The primary factor that impacts the water quality in rivers and lakes is runoff from the land into the water. Within every watershed, water runs to the lowest point on that landscape – a stream, river, lake, estuary or ocean. On its way, the water picks up pollutants as it travels across farm fields, forestland, parking lots, highways, city streets and backyards.

Watershed management incorporates monitoring this runoff, public participation, planning and restoration.

Once it is complete, the plan will be a very useful guide to identifying the steps necessary to protect lake water quality. We should know more about the study when we meet with the local advisory committee next month.



PROGRESS IN MILFOIL CONTROL

by Martha Rich and David Kelman

It's been 26 years since Eurasian milfoil was first identified in Mascoma Lake—and a group of volunteers first began battling this invasive plant. We're grateful to those weed control pioneers, because milfoil can ruin a body of water if it's not kept in check. It can form thick mats that crowd out other plants, choke off oxygen to fish, and make swimming and boating difficult. Like other invasive species, it's tenacious and aggressive, with many strategies for multiplying.

Many lakes across New Hampshire and Vermont have lost control, and are applying herbicides, hiring professional dive teams, or draining the water, all at great expense. Here, we have a different strategy: a local all-volunteer control program. Each summer dozens of weed watchers look for milfoil plants from boats, paddleboards, and shorelines around the lake. We organize "synchronized swims" with snorkelers searching underwater. When someone finds milfoil, they mark the plants and report the marker locations to us as coordinators. Then we take our trained, certified SCUBA divers and boat crews out to harvest; divers dig each plant out carefully by hand. It's a labor-intensive program that depends entirely on donated time, skills, and resources.

It also appears to be an effective approach for this lake. Over



by Martha Rich
and David Kelman

Mascoma's quarter-century of annual milfoil control efforts, there's been genuine progress; the annual harvest has dropped steadily and dramatically. The highest total was 5,454 plants in 2015 (the year we introduced new underwater search methods). By 2020 the harvest was down to 104 plants. Last year, our total dropped again. Even with diligent searching, we found just 46 plants.

This is clearly a positive trend. It doesn't mean we stand down. If a boat brings even a fragment of fresh milfoil to our water, the infestation can begin anew. Every plant that escapes our attention can swiftly become a new colony. We can never expect to eradicate Eurasian milfoil; we can only learn to live with it and control it.

Given that reality, we will continue to rely on all our volunteers. None of this success would be possible without the many weed watchers, boat captains and crews, divers, Lake Hosts, and donors who dedicate gifts for this program.

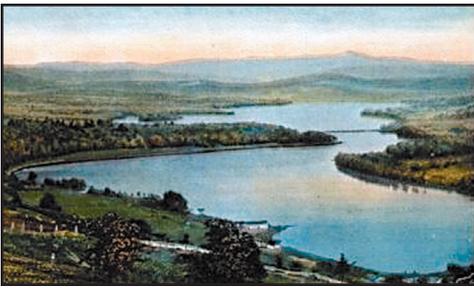
We're also grateful to Tom Bonardi, who manages fueling, maintenance, and repairs for our working pontoon boat, the *S.S. Milfoil*, and to Peter Gray for his attention to the boat during winter storage.

In the ongoing effort to keep Eurasian milfoil to a minimum in Mascoma Lake, every single one of us has a role to play.

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.
- If you see the red-and-white "diver down" flag, slow down and steer clear. It means there are people under the water!
- 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 and even increase cyanobacteria risk.)
- 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're a SCUBA diver, we welcome new certified divers. With the state-approved training, it takes one day to learn the techniques of proper milfoil harvesting. (We were not able to host training last year, because we did not have enough milfoil at one time to allow harvesting practice.)
- If you're a swimmer, you could join our "synchronized swims." You need to be able to swim with a mask and snorkel for up to two hours (with breaks when you'll tread water for a few minutes). You'll need a wetsuit for flotation and staying warm.
- 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

P. O. Box 9, Enfield, NH 03748

www.mascomalakeassociation.org

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A REAL FISH STORY • by Kim Potter

When my eldest son caught his first fish off the dock of the family cottage on Mascoma Lake at two years old, then his first good bass at three, we knew he'd be a life-long fisherman. We weren't wrong. Mascoma Lake started his fishing journey and he's still on it. His daughters now fish off our dock, from canoes and through the ice.

Fishing is such a wonderful, democratic pastime. The fish don't care who you are. You can fish from land, ice or a boat and that boat doesn't have to be a snazzy, sparkly bass boat. Mascoma Lake is very popular with day fishermen who are able to launch boats from either of the public boat launches. To all who launch their boats into Mascoma Lake, please be cognizant of the need to drain and clean your boat between different bodies of water to prevent the spread of invasive species. Once launched people cruise peacefully through the lake pursuing those elusive bass or trout or any other species in the lake. (There is a species guide to Mascoma on our website.) Some cast lures, some cast flies, and some troll. The summer morning mist often echoes with disembodied voices and quiet motors.

Sometimes things are not quite so quiet. When we hear zooming boats at 8:01 am on

a summer Saturday, we think, "Must be a fishing tournament." You can check online at wildlife.state.nh.us and get a schedule of the fishing tournaments. The clubs have names like NH Last Cast Club or Upper Valley Weekend Warriors. I don't know whether the tournament participants keep the fish they catch but obviously they have to be weighed and judged.

There was a time, about 30 years ago, when we kept and ate the fish we caught out of the lake. It quickly became clear, however, that none of us really liked the fish out of the lake so we have moved to completely "catch and release" for that reason as well as nature conservancy. Some people will still enjoy an old-fashioned fish fry. The factor which makes consuming fresh water fish potentially unhealthy is the concentration of heavy metals in their bodies. These come mostly from air pollution and concentrate in the flesh of the fish as they go up the food chain, growing older and larger, especially in fish who eat other fish. The recommendations from the NH DES concerning the consump-



tion of fresh water may be found at www.des.nh.gov

We are all so lucky to have Mascoma Lake. Let us please make an effort to be considerate of all of the users of the lake. If you see someone fishing, please give them some space. If you see a boat going slowly up the center of the lake, they may be trolling so please do not cut too close to their stern.

Fishermen (*fisherwomen? fisherpeople?* – no, *that's just wrong*) please be aware of the loons on the lake. If you see them, give them a wide berth especially early in the summer when they may have chicks.

PLEASE safely dispose of any old lead sinkers which kill loons every year. Take your trash home.

Happy fishing and good luck to all.