

Newsletter

Lake Meddybemps Association

Fall/Winter 2012



Annual Meeting Recap

The LMA Annual Meeting was held Sunday, August 5th, 2012 in the basement of the Meddybemps Community Center.

Guest Speaker

The guest speaker was Karen Holmes, an owl expert and regular contributor to the Quoddy Times and the Northwoods Journal. She also serves on neighboring Cathance Lake Association and stayed to observe the business portion of the meeting.

Karen educated members in attendance on the function and anatomy of owls and played tape of several owls common to the Lake Meddybemps area including the Saw-whet, Barred and Great Horned Owl.

Regular Business

The rest of the meeting was dedicated to regular business including updates on annual water quality observations and monitoring, the Loon Count, and invasive species monitoring. Last year's meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

A report by the treasurer indicated the organization to be in good fiscal health,



A Northern Saw-whet Owl

Photo courtesy of:
pispbirdbanding.blogspot.com

and with 39 dues paying members for the 2011-2012 calendar year. For those wishing to renew their membership for the 2012-2013 season, a form is available in the back of this newsletter and can be returned with dues to the treasurer.

The LMA continues to pursue a grant from the umbrella organization of lake associations in Maine: COLA, to fund a Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) program. The program is to be run by volunteers and staffed by trained and paid boat inspectors. More information about scheduling and volunteer needs will be announced in the Spring.

Donations to five local fire departments, a Haiti water filtration project, COLA and the lake monitoring program were approved by the membership totaling \$650, an increase of \$100 over last year.

The slate of new directors, treasurer and secretary was approved without contest. Former vice president, Liz Bloomhardt ascended to the presidency, while Pete Trouant, outgoing president will remain in the role of Vice President for the coming year.

Water Quality

Dear Members,

Lake Meddybemps is no doubt a special place for all of us involved in the Lake Meddybemps Association. Central to the traditions and memories that make this true is the water itself, and it is the health of this resource to which we dedicate the bulk of our attention as an organization. We are not only direct beneficiaries of the wise management and care we advocate and hopefully measure, we are also stewards of this quality for future generations and those, man and beast, who are dependent on the impacts of our collective actions.

I have dedicated the bulk of this newsletter to the issues and activities we support and pursue to these ends, most of which also support the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program. These tests include water clarity, phosphorus, invasive species monitoring, and the full chemical testing undertaken every five years.

The 2011 Maine Lakes Report, published by the VLMP continues to indicate above average health of our lake compared to other lakes in Maine. The tests this report relies on require financial support, but more importantly, they are accomplished through the dedicated time and energy of volunteers. Our own Ed Ketchen, with 27 years of service, is among the longest serving volunteers in the state. Only 22 have served longer. More than data, the working knowledge of those who have dedicated themselves to the efforts of citizen science is invaluable.

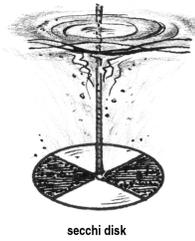
As we approach an expansion of our activities in this regard, I am fully aware of the commensurate increase in effort that will be required. I am equally optimistic that our community will be strengthened, and the lake will reap the benefit of our efforts.

I hope this newsletter finds you all well, and I'll see you on the Lake!

Warmly,

Liz Bloomhardt Doran
LMA President, 2012-14

Water Clarity



Water Clarity is measured by lowering a Secchi disk (shown left) in to the water and measuring when it disappears. The test is a measure of how much sunlight can penetrate the water column. Sunlight is required for aquatic growth, so when combined with color observation, is a low tech indicator of lake health. The test is relatively accurate and is one of the backbones of the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program. Factors affecting depth readings include weather, algae and suspended sediment in the water column. The water in Lake Meddybemps is tea colored due to the presence of tannins which leach from the bogs along the tributary streams.

Water Clarity was measured twice a month during the 2012 season by Ed Ketchen and Pete Trouant except in October when the water clarity was only measured once. The depths measured ranged from 4.5 - 6.2 meters (14.7 - 20.2 feet). The average depth measured on the lake and reported in the 2011 Maine Lakes Report was 5.5 meters (18 feet), which was roughly average for lakes in Maine. This year's readings appear normal for the lake.

Invasive Species

Invasive aquatic species continue to be one of the primary threats to the quality and health of Maine lakes. In 2003, after several legislative actions in the years leading up, the VLMP established the Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants (CIAP) as the "front-line" defense for citizen monitoring. The CIAP provides educational materials, training and plant identification services.

Also in 2003, members of the LMA moved to pursue its first plant survey of the lake after the guest presentation at the LMA annual meeting was given on the topic. After a slow start, the LMA now counts among its members three certified Invasive Plant Patrollers: Pete and Liz Trouant, and Carolyn Slack and the VLMP has recorded plant surveys on the lake in 2007, and 2009-12.

To date, no invasive species have been observed in Lake Meddybemps and we'd like to keep it that way!



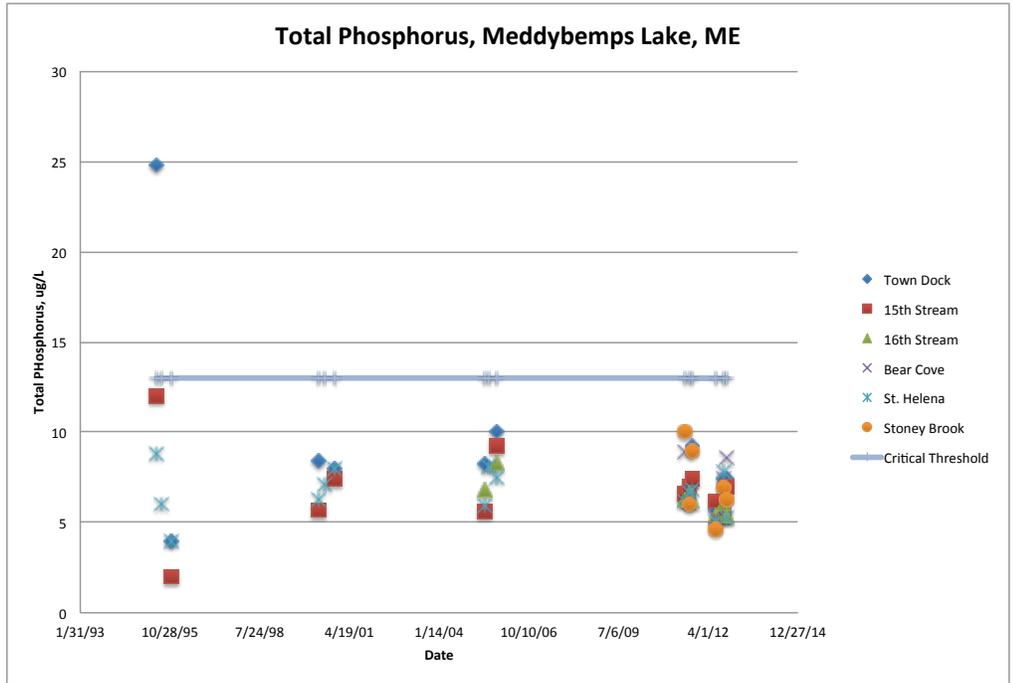
It is currently illegal to sell, propagate, or introduce to Maine waters 11 invasive aquatic plants. One of them, Hydrilla (shown left) has been found in two Maine lakes and is a pernicious invader!

Continued monitoring by trained volunteers is not only a State priority, it will be an essential component of our strategy. The LMA is pursuing a grant to support a Courtesy Boat Inspection program at the town dock. These programs have been effective on other lakes in identifying invasive material on boats before they entered lakes, preventing new infestations from occurring. Volunteers will be needed to help make this program a success in the coming years.

Phosphorus Testing

Phosphorus is a limiting nutrient in Maine lakes. Even small changes in availability can result in dramatic changes in biological activity. Excessive levels can lead to algae blooms. The bacteria that then help decompose the algae also use up the oxygen available in the water causing harm to fish and other species. The result is a decline in the water quality and resilience of the ecosystem.

For the last two years, we have been collecting and testing water samples for Total Phosphorus three times a year, once each in the spring, late summer and fall at six locations around the lake. Shown at right are all Total Phosphorus results from the last two years and previous five-year baseline tests. The gray line indicates the critical threshold for eutrophication. One sample at the town dock was above the threshold in 1995, and one sample from Bear Cove (318 ug/L, not shown) was also above the threshold in 2011 and is hopefully an outlier. All other results are consistently below the threshold and therefore normal. No discernible trend is present.



At the annual meeting in August, the membership approved the expense for purchase of a phosphorus and dissolved oxygen meter that can be used to make coordinated measurements in real time. Since every lake is different, the added oxygen testing should help us interpret new results and detect trends. This data will also be invaluable in any outreach and education activity we might choose to pursue in the future to address the problem.

Lake Level

The management of the dam at the outflow of the lake is a perennially contentious issue and also part of the colorful and storied history of the lake.

The dam is currently managed with preference to the migrating and spawning species in the Dennys River. As President of the LMA, I have been in touch with our contact at the State. Together, with Pete Trouant, we will continue our open dialogue and partnership of observation and management.

The State continues to use the Dennys River Instream Flow Study, prepared by consultants for the Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission in 2002, as the guiding document for dam management. This report is available on the LMA website along with the 2012 report of

management provided by State officials. Both reports are excerpted here.

The target flow in the river is 80 CFS, with a minimum of 40 CFS, at the USGS Dennys River gauge 14 miles downstream of the lake.

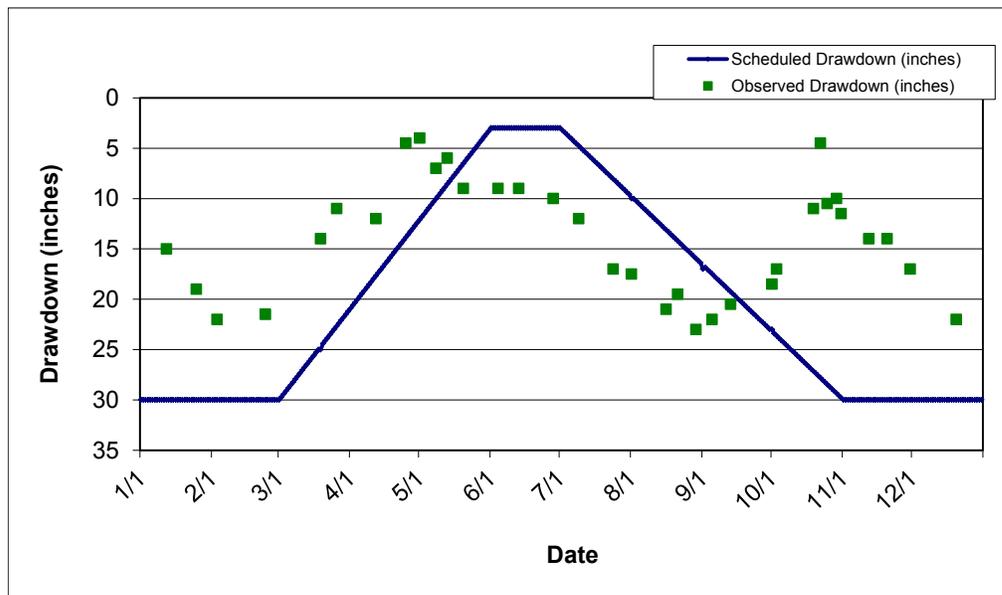
The drainage area above the Meddybemps dam accounts for 48% of the Dennys River watershed. Due to the lake's retention capacity, flow through the dam contributes significantly to stream flow, especially in the summer months.

The figure at left indicates the rule curve (solid line) for the lake level throughout the year. The green dots indicate 2012 observed drawdown levels.

Measurements are made from the chamfer on the concrete abutment above the dam.

Pete reports that DOT work planned downstream of the dam to remove the power plant stalled and has not been completed. DEP completed their work, and Marine Resources completed a late season canoe down the river to count fish after which they opened the dam. This, along with heavy rain late in the fall led to the late season high lake level.

The lake froze at 22 inches below full late in 2012. The dam is open two inches over the winter.



In Brief

Annual Pancake Breakfast

The third annual Lake Meddybemps Association Blueberry Pancake Breakfast was held on August 4th. It was a great success, and a lot of fun. It was a great team effort by many volunteers, and of course, the Bloomhardt's Vermont maple syrup is always a hit! I would venture to say we are the only pancake breakfast around with real maple syrup!

Meg Teele Rothberg was instrumental in organizing the tea cup auction, and selling merchandise. We made a total of \$928, which included the breakfast, auction, and merchandise sold. The money will go toward water testing. The breakfast is a great way to bring the whole community together, as well as celebrating Maine wild blueberries!

Contributed by Diane James

Cell Service on the Lake

Cell service on the lake is much improved since Labor Day with a signal boost from Woodland. The improved signal works for U.S. Cellular,

Verizon and Track phones, but not AT&T.

Contributed by Pete Trouant

New Charlotte/Meddybemps Search and Rescue Boat

There is a new Search and Rescue boat jointly owned by the Charlotte and Meddybemps Fire Departments. The boat was available for viewing at the LMA Annual Meeting however a dramatic mid-meeting emergency call forced the early departure of Pete Trouant and Jeff Orchard with the boat to a rescue on Round Pond. All were found safe.

Superfund Site in Transition

In early November an open house was held at the Eastern Surplus Superfund Site to officially transition control from U.S. EPA to ME DEP. The transition event focused on the Indian heritage and archaeological education. Visitors are encouraged to explore the site improvements and educational plaques that have been installed on the site.

Contributed by Pete Trouant

Annual Loon Count Report

This year's Loon Count recorded a total of 23 loons including two chicks. Ed Ketchen is the coordinator. He received help from Lance and Sherry Bagley, Cary James and Pete Trouant in completing this year's count. For more information about Loon Counts around Maine, visit: maineaudubon.org.

Calais Hospital Wins Award

Calais Regional Hospital was recognized this fall as one of the nation's top 13 rural hospitals by the Leapfrog Group.

Website

The LMA continues to post contact information on our website, which is managed and hosted by Beth Teele-Haidinger. It can be found at: meddybemplake.com

Contributions Welcome

If you would like to contribute articles, news items in brief, pictures or have suggestions for future news letters, please email LMA President, Liz Bloomhardt Doran at liz.bloomhardt@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Elizabeth Bloomhardt Doran — President, 2012-2014

Pete Trouant — Vice President, 2012-2013

Liz Trouant — Treasurer

Katie Hews — Secretary

2012-14 Directors

Sherry Bagley

Frank Putnam

Amy Salamon

Roland Tomasch

2011-13 Directors

Glenn Ball

Cary James

Beth Teele-Haidinger

Rolf Towe



Indian heritage and archaeological education plaques and site improvements at Eastern Surplus Superfund Site.

Renew your Membership for 2012-2013

The LMA is a membership driven organization. You can save time at the Annual meeting, and enable better financial planning with early renewal of your annual membership. It's easy! Complete the form below and return by mail to our Treasurer with your dues.

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email address: _____

Number of Memberships: _____ (One per Individual, \$15/yr)

Dues Included: \$ _____

Detach and return this form to the LMA Treasurer:

LMA Membership
c/o Liz Trouant, Treasurer
120 Conant Hill Rd.
Meddybemps, ME 04657