



KEY DATES:

- Friday, July 29: Lakefest 2011. Food and entertainment fundraising event for NH Lakes Association, Meredith. 5-8 PM. Info @ www.nhlakes.org.
- Friday, July 29 – Sunday, August 7: Annual Freedom Old Home Week. Info @ www.freedomoldhomeweek.com.
- Tuesday, August 9: State of the Lake Forum, co-sponsored by Green Mountain Conservation Group and Ossipee Lake Alliance. Ossipee Town Hall. 4-6:30 PM.

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OSS�PEE LAKE REPORT

Volume 10, Issue 3 • July - September 2011

NEW HAMPSHIRE PAYS LITTLE FOR MILFOIL CONTROL, ALLIANCE STUDY FINDS

FREEDOM — Funding for milfoil control by New Hampshire lake municipalities and private donors increased dramatically in 2009 and 2010 at the same time that the state's contribution declined from 24 percent of the total cost to just 12 percent.

That is the main finding of a survey commissioned by Ossipee Lake Alliance to establish trends in milfoil control funding that could be useful in making recommendations on the state's policies and strategies.

The survey, conducted by Concord-based Bianco Professional Association, showed that close to \$250,000 was spent on milfoil control in 2009, of which the state contributed approximately \$60,000.

In 2010, total costs for milfoil control in New Hampshire increased to \$745,000. During that year, the state increased its spending from \$60,000 to \$90,000 but its contribution as a percentage of the total cost declined to just 12 percent.

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State Representatives Chris Christensen, Mark McConkey, Harry Merrow and Dave Babson are flanked by Jim McElroy of Freedom Conservation Commission (left) and Bob Reynolds of Ossipee Lake Alliance (right) at the Alliance's Lake Representatives Forum in June. *Alliance Photo*

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS: BERRY BAY GROUP MATURES OVER 25 YEARS

By Larissa Mulkern

[Editor's Note: This is the first in a series about the lake property owner associations of the Ossipee Lake area].

FREEDOM — "United we stand, divided we fall," so goes the saying attributed to Aesop, the Greek slave and fable author more than 2,500 years ago.

The saying rings true not only for nations and armies, but for grassroots community groups who unify for a particular purpose.

One such group is the Berry Bay Association, which formed in the mid-1980s in Freedom to voice concerns over a proposed 64-unit condominium development on an unspoiled parcel of Berry Bay.

"Originally the association was formed to see if we could do anything to stop the condos," said Freedom Selectman Scott Cunningham, whose mother, Mary Cunningham, organized the bay's property owners and formed the association.

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BERRY BAY ASSOCIATION KEEPS RESIDENTS FOCUSED ON PRESERVATION



The gentle slopes of Green Mountain are reflected in the morning mist on placid Berry Bay, where residents have socialized and worked together on environmental issues since the mid-1980s. Photo: Susan Marks

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Berry Bay landowners tried unsuccessfully to buy the land in question. Back then, the town of Freedom had no zoning ordinance, and the association's members were worried that the development would have an environmental impact and increase boat traffic.

As Cunningham explains, ultimately the development turned out well.

"I must say to be fair the development has been very well-run and is extremely well-kept," he said.

The association faced another challenge when a 1,400-home development was proposed near the town's pine barrens.

"That's what tipped the scale towards adopting a zoning ordinance," Cunningham said.

The development never materialized, but the lake group stayed together anyway.

"We discovered we had other concerns, so we continued.

Membership and Activities

The membership has ranged from a high of about 90 members to a current range of between 30 and 50, depending on the season.

Berry Bay Association Co-Founder and President Paul Clausen and Treasurer/Secretary Deb Stark run the association's affairs, which include an annual meeting, an annual newsletter, and a summer-time lobster bake.

According to Clausen, members of other lake associations and the Ossipee Lake Alliance

usually attend the annual meeting and update members on issues such as milfoil control or the mean high water mark, an issue that was recently resolved in the state legislature.

"The function of the association right now is largely connected to environmental concerns," added Clausen.

Association members volunteer as testers for a University of New Hampshire water quality monitoring program; work to protect and watch out for loon nesting sites; and donate funds and time to milfoil control efforts.

Back when the association first started, Mrs. Cunningham, who preferred not to speak to large groups, asked co-founder Clausen to help out in that respect. Clausen said at the time he worked as vice president of operations for the Appalachian Mountain Club and was accustomed to speaking to large groups.

Safety and Preservation

Looking to the future, Clausen said public safety is a growing concern, with boat traffic and parties congregating in greater number on the bay, yet with less enforcement from N.H. Marine Patrol due to state budget cuts.

"Overall, things worked out with the Freedom Condominiums and we've taken on other issues like public safety and boaters. We have a lot of day boaters and sometimes as many as 30 pontoon boats gather," he said.

Since Freedom passed a fireworks ordinance

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STATE'S SHARE OF MILFOIL CONTROL COSTS CONTINUES TO DECLINE

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In another startling finding, the survey revealed that only half of the state's milfoil-infested waters appear to have received any kind of milfoil control treatment in either year.

Only 25 of the 49 lakes in the survey reported having an active milfoil control effort in place during 2009, and 26 lakes reported such a control program in effect during 2010.

The survey, conducted in April and May, combined telephone and e-mail interviews with online research. It targeted 63 lakes, of which 49 participated in the survey for a 78% response rate.

Ten of the state's 73 milfoil-infested bodies of water were excluded from the study because they have no known local point of contact for milfoil control other than DES. The primary survey results were supplemented with additional information obtained through town records, news articles and lake association websites.

The survey results were presented on June 11 at Ossipee Lake Alliance's Lake Representatives Forum, a biennial event that brings state and local officials together with members of Ossipee Lake's businesses and property owner

associations. Calumet Conference Center hosted the event, which was also attended by officials and members of lake associations from Madison and Wolfeboro.

"The state owns the lakes, but the state has not been able to come forward and fully and effectively manage the milfoil infestation problem we have on our lakes and rivers," said Ossipee Lake Alliance Director Bob Reynolds, who was quoted in a news story by the N.H. Union Leader.

"There's some variation in numbers, but 73 lakes and rivers have become infested with milfoil. The New Hampshire DES has a very good program to focus on education and prevention, but the state has only been able to fund 10 to 20 percent of the cost we're spending to control and eradicate it. Somehow that doesn't seem quite right," said Reynolds.

Information provided by a DES representative at the meeting estimated a comprehensive five-year milfoil control plan would cost \$7.2 million, including \$2.6 million for herbicide treatments, nearly \$3.4 million for contracted diver-assisted suction harvesting; \$500,000 for staffing full-time seasonal divers; and \$114,000 for equipment, materials and supplies.

REYNOLDS NAMED TO STATE COMMITTEE

CONCORD — Ossipee Lake Alliance Director Bob Reynolds has been appointed to be a public member of the New Hampshire Exotic Aquatic Weeds and Species Committee. The appointment was made on June 6 by State Senate President Peter Bragdon and was announced at the Alliance's Lake Representatives Forum on June 11.

The Exotic Aquatic Weeds and Species Committee, known in state government as the Weeds Committee, was established in 2004 by RSA 487:30 to study the spread of exotic aquatic species in state waters and to advise the N.H. Department of Environmental Services (DES) on control and eradication methods.

Reynolds has spent more than 30 years in the environmental industry as a specialist in the remediation of hazardous waste sites. His consulting company, Spectrum Management Associates, advises companies on government contracts in the environmental and construction markets and has offices in New Hampshire, Florida and Ohio.

Named to Ossipee Lake Alliance's Board of Directors in 2008, Reynolds last year chaired two

local forums on the lake's natural mean high water benchmark – the so-called '410 Rule' – that led to legislation reducing the benchmark from 410' to 407.25'.

Outgoing Exotic Aquatic Weeds and Species Committee Chairman Dick Drisko said he met Reynolds at last year's State Milfoil Summit. After legislation passed to increase the public's representation on the Committee, Drisko nominated Reynolds.

"I was impressed by his professional credentials and the scope of his knowledge about the state's milfoil challenges," Drisko said. "He is going to be a wonderful addition to the Committee."

The Exotic Aquatic Weeds and Species Committee is comprised of five members of the House of Representatives, one member of the Senate and three members of the public.

This month, State Senator Jeb Bradley, who represents the Ossipee Lake area, became the Senate's member of the Committee, and Merrimack State Representative Chris Christensen replaced Drisko as the Committee's Chairman.

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FREEDOM COMMITTEE MEMBERS INSTALL LOON NESTING RAFT AT TROUT POND

By Larissa Mulkern

FREEDOM — With an eye toward attracting loons back to a remote pond, a team of local volunteers with the Freedom Forest Advisory Committee have installed a man-made loon nesting raft on Trout Pond.

A loon nesting raft is an artificial platform set in the water near a shoreline that helps buffer against fluctuating water levels, explained Loon Preservation Committee Senior Biologist John Cooley.

Loons are adapted to swim, but don't adapt well to land. Rafts have been used for decades with success in the Northwest, adds Cooley.

The nests are built to mimic the natural nesting area loons prefer, and are usually built with a log or wooden platform with flotation material, and shrubbery and soil for the nesting space.

Cooley, who provided technical expertise to the Freedom Forest Advisory Committee members for the Trout Pond nest, said the rafts can "make a big difference in nesting success" since they isolate the eggs from shoreline predators, like foxes and raccoons.

Independent Project

The Loon Preservation Committee has installed between 60 and 70 nests in lakes and ponds across the state. The Trout Pond nesting site, however, is an independent project taken on by the town's Forest Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the Freedom Conservation Commission, headed by Rob Hatch with members Chuck Depew, Janet Johnson, Janet Myers, Dave Charette and Ron Newbury.

The Forest Advisory Committee takes care of the town forest and the remote 21-acre Trout Pond, located about a 45-minute walk into the forest, said member Chuck Depew.

The nest project grew out of a desire to provide varied animal habitats in the town forest. For instance, the committee used grant funds to clean up the forest and get rid of junk trees to open up spaces for wildlife feeding and browsing.

"Different animals like different habitats," said Depew. "So one of the habitats is Trout Pond. There's really no opening to the lake... it's a very isolated lake stocked with trout," he said.

"With that in mind, we set out to see if we could attract a pair of nesting loons," he said.

The Building Process

Committee Chair Rob Hatch, a carpenter, built the six-foot by six-foot wooden platform with Styrofoam flotation underneath.

A wire mesh 'roof' over the top protects against Eagles and crows swooping down to destroy the eggs and attack the sitting loons. The wire is bent so that the loons can get in and out, with a 26-inch high opening.

"Rob is a carpenter so we got it nailed together and put up – we did everything but have a bottle of champagne for launching," Depew added.

Depew said the nest is so well camouflaged, one wouldn't know it was there.

"If you went and looked for it, you might not see it. It blends right into the shore," he said.

The nest was installed in early June, a little late in the nesting season, added Depew, explaining the incubation period for a loon egg is about 29 days.

Past and Present Nesting Sites

While reports of the loons utilizing the nest are unconfirmed thus far, Depew said loons were known to live at the pond in the 1920s.

Loon nesting sites have been successful in other parts of Ossipee Lake, however. Cooley said there is a loon nesting site in Leavitt Bay.

"We have been managing that site to avoid human disturbance," said Cooley. "Once we found a flip flop in the nest."

Two chicks hatched last season and loons are nesting again this year. Loons are also nesting on Broad Bay at a site that is being protected by the Loon Preservation Committee.

Cooley said it's a positive sign that loons have been seen on marginal habitat.

"As the population has recovered, they select the best habitat first," then start populating smaller ponds or less remote locations.

"It's an exciting indicator that the loon population is still recovering and getting back to what it was historically," Cooley said.

The Loon Preservation Committee, based in Moultonborough, has been protecting the state's loons for more than 35 years. Their website is at www.loon.org.

The Town of Freedom Forest Advisory Committee meets at 7 PM on the first Wednesday of each month at the Freedom Town Hall.

GRACEFUL IN FLIGHT, GREAT BLUE HERONS ARE IMPRESSIVE LAKE AREA RESIDENTS

By David Eastman

The following article originally appeared in the Conway Daily Sun and is reprinted with the kind permission of author and publisher.

TAMWORTH — Great blue herons are those large wading birds seen flying overhead with the seven-foot wingspread of a bald eagle. They are quite graceful in flight drawing slow and measured wingbeats, with those long legs stretched out behind.

Heron necks are seen drawn back in a stately “S” curve when they fly. The long, stout, yellowish bill leads the bird with its dusky blue plumage and somehow sets off a regal, aristocratic appearance for those of us watching. The white about the forehead with a blackish streak through the eyes, and crowning with a single dark plume finishes off this majestic effect.

Though usually seen flying over, and often at a considerable height, this remarkable bird can bank and land in the most unconventional places for its size.

It pirouettes down like a parachuting sky-diver and wheels in for a landing in the smallest of woodland swamps. All it needs is a glimmering patch of open water, and a possibility of small fish and frogs down there below the trees. And then, it capably flies up and back to its nest with this prey.

The location of a nesting colony, or rookery, depends on the availability not only of that nesting site, but on an ample food supply to feed the growing young. This means shallow water and wetlands very nearby.

Beaver ponds are the usual choice for heron nesting sites, with their associated supply of tall, dead trees created by the impounding. These are typically old white pine snags that remain erect after the hardwoods have all topped over.

Most heron nests are flimsy platforms constructed of sticks and often more than fifty feet above this watery ground in those limby treetops. Although the nests are skimpy when first built, they become substantially larger as they are revisited year after year. They do look very unkempt, standing aloft when viewed at a distance across a bog or swamp. Some nests are 100 feet off the terrain below.

Both sexes share in the feeding of the young, which have hatched from three to seven laid eggs. Food is regurgitated directly into the mouths of these chicks, which instinctively grab the parent’s bill to beg for its food therein.

When the chicks get older, they eventually learn to pick up whole food that is left at the nest. These young birds can remain in the nest for up to three months, pestering the returning parent birds upon their return for food. Taking short flights, they hop about the nest’s branches.

Wildlife managers have learned that inaccessible sites for their rookeries are demanded by the great blue herons. If human activity is detected after they have established themselves, the birds are likely to abandon these nest sites.

It has also been found that recreation around the vicinity of a nesting colony during the breeding season may lead to low productivity or even abandonment. One should give them a wide berth.

Hérons are impressive fishers. These slender looking, attractive birds can be usually seen standing motionless at the water’s edge, waiting for prey to approach. If they

wade, it is with great stealth, lifting one foot at a time catlike, and then the other, as they search below the water’s surface with silent concentration.

This graceful great bird almost seems as if it can’t be distracted while peering acutely into the shallows. It remains frozen in grand dignity, as it invites its unwitting prey to approach.

Once a heron spots a small fish, frog, aquatic insect, or mice, or bugs, it spears quickly with its dagger-like bill, straightforwardly thrusting its serpentine neck in full extension.

It may occasionally toss the small fish it has caught into the air for realignment, swallowing it down head first. It resembles a dog flipping a dead rat when it does this. Sometimes the great blue heron spears the larger fishes with its bill. Then, like a hunter with a fish skewered on a lance point, it walks ashore to break it apart and eat it.



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ENVIRONMENT AND BOATER SAFETY ARE KEY TOPICS FOR BERRY BAY RESIDENTS

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that stipulates a nine-day period in which they can be used, there's less snap crackle and pop on the quiet bay.

Clausen said this year the association will work to beef up its membership.

"I have a personal goal of having everybody be a member. We're running about 60 percent [of Berry Bay property owners]," he said, add-

ing that some of the homes are used by multiple family members.

"I'd like to get all those members involved," he said, adding that the association is a good way to get your voice heard.

"There's strength in numbers," he said.

Interested Berry Bay property owners who are not yet members of the Berry Bay Association should contact Clausen at pcram@verizon.net.

NEW INVASIVE MILFOIL FOUND IN LAKE

Two new patches of invasive milfoil have been found in Ossipee Lake, and a third has been discovered in the Ossipee River, just below the dam complex. The weeds were reported to DES and Ossipee Lake Alliance, and were confirmed to be exotic variable milfoil by Jim McElroy, a member of the Freedom Conservation Commission's Aquatic Invasive Species Committee.

Near Marjorie Point on Broad Bay, an alert property owner contacted the Alliance after noticing suspicious weeds growing off the end of his dock in a small cove southwest of Camp Huckins. Days later, another Broad Bay property owner contacted the state to report suspicious weeds washed up on shore in Sunset Cove, in the Ridge Road area of Ossipee. That too was confirmed to be invasive milfoil by Jim McElroy, and the Ossipee Conservation Commission was contacted so that they can address the new find.

The discoveries of new infestations come on the heels of successful aquatic herbicide treatments of the exotic non-native weed last month in a number of locations around the lake, in-

cluding Danforth Pond, Danforth Brook (Ossipee Lake Marina), Causeway Cove, and Phillips Brook. At the same time, a small patch of milfoil was hand-pulled from Huckins Pond, a small body of water favored by fishermen and canoeists directly north of Danforth Pond.

In an e-mail to the Alliance, DES Exotic Species Program Coordinator Amy Smagula said weeds found in the Ossipee River south of the dam have been confirmed as variable milfoil. Above the dam, a patch found and treated last year has returned and is being addressed by the Freedom and Effingham Conservation Commissions.

Alliance Director Susan Marks thanked the volunteers who reported the latest infestations and asked all lake residents and visitors to remove floating milfoil fragments from the lake and dispose of them in a trash bag. Removal of growing plants is not allowed unless one is licensed by the state. Suspicious weeds should be reported to smmarks@ossipeelake.org or amy.smagula@des.nh.gov. Contact can also be made with the Conservation Commissions of the towns of Effingham, Freedom, or Ossipee.

LAKE AREA'S GREAT BLUE HERONS

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I have witnessed great blue herons doing odd, funny things. One banked into a friend's backyard, in three wheelies, to devour the goggle-eyed goldfish just stocked in his small, water garden pond.

The neoprene rubber-lined pond was doing just fine with these pet store fish, but the heron was about to finish that business! The homeowner ran out, waving his arms frantically and the big wading bird departed.

Another time, I saw a motionless heron standing on the ledges of the Bearcamp River. He remained immobile until a female common merganser swam by, with her head just below

water, looking for the same wild fish he was. As she got to where his feet were planted, he savagely speared down and let her know it was his spot and no other fisherman's! She fled!

Editor's Note: In addition to the Bearcamp River, Great Blue Herons may occasionally be seen in the Route 25 swamplands near the "Quaking Bog" national natural landmark.

In addition to writing for the Conway Daily Sun, Dave Eastman broadcasts "Country Ecology" four times weekly on WMWV, 93.5 FM. For consultation, additional information, and to purchase his writings, visit his website at www.countryecology.com.

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