



KEY DATES:

- Saturday, April 10: Training for RIVERS Program volunteers; GMCG, Effingham. Info @ 603-539-1859.
- Friday, June 25: NH Lakes Congress; Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, Holderness. Info at 603-226-0299.
- Thursday, July 8: NH Lakes Lakefest; Church Landing, Meredith. Info @ 603-226-0299.
- Saturday, July 24: Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival; Calumet. Info from GMCG at 603-539-1859.

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AND CHANNELS, DANFORTH POND,
LOON LAKE AND ROUND POND

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Fine, Barre Hellquist, Bob Reynolds

OSSIPEE LAKE REPORT

Volume 9, Issue 2 • April – June 2010

TRI-TOWN MILFOIL COMMITTEE FORMED

OSSIPEE – Ossipee Lake Alliance has joined with the conservation commissions of Freedom, Ossipee and Effingham to form the Tri-Town Milfoil Committee, a group that will coordinate and manage efforts to control infestations of invasive species in the lake and other local waters.

Alliance board member Bob Reynolds was named Chairman of the group, and Alliance co-founder and director Susan Marks was named Co-Chair.

Conservation commission members Elizabeth Gillette of Ossipee, R. A. Oram of Freedom and Kamal Nath of Effingham were named by their respective commissions to serve on the Committee.

Each conservation commission also nomi-

nated a second member to the group. Jim Fitzpatrick of Pickerel Cove will serve on behalf of Ossipee, and Jim McElroy of Danforth Pond will represent Freedom. Effingham will announce its second member this spring.

Ossipee Lake Alliance has sought better coordination of lake programs between the three towns since it was formed in 2002.

It was last year's State Milfoil Summit that provided the opportunity to take a major step forward, according to Alliance board member Bob Reynolds, who will head the tri-town group.

The Summit brought together state legislators, agency department heads and lake organizations for three days of listening, learn-

Continued on page 3



Two vehicles and several snowmobiles went into the lake this season. No one was injured, but the incidents are a reminder of how unpredictable the lake ice can be in winter. Photo: Jean Hansen

GROUNDHOG DAY AND THE DONALD LEE CASE

Editorial

OSSIPEE — Is there anyone in Concord who can explain why the Donald Lee environmental case is still unresolved after 22 years?

The federal government has settled product liability lawsuits faster; and there have been so many phases to the Lee proceedings that chapter headings now seem appropriate.

Some of the original participants have died, and others have sold their property after giving up hope that Bradford Cove will

ever be restored to the condition it was in before shorefront property owner Donald Lee changed the course of the Lovell River by constructing retaining walls.

Then there's the \$232,000 bill. That's how much lake residents spent to take Lee to court after waiting 18 years for state officials to hold him accountable - a wait that continues.

On September 27, 2006 a judge found Lee responsible for causing major environmental damage to Ossipee Lake, and he ordered

Continued on page 2

GROUNDHOG DAY AND THE DONALD LEE CASE

Continued from page 1

him to "forthwith" remediate the damage and pay for it.

But the court victory was illusory.

More than three years later there is still no remediation plan, and lake residents have had to spend thousands more to keep Lee's lack of compliance on the court's radar screen.

Progress in the case has become hypothetical. In January, for example, Superior Court Judge O'Neill issued a new ruling that essentially reiterated his September 27, 2006 ruling.

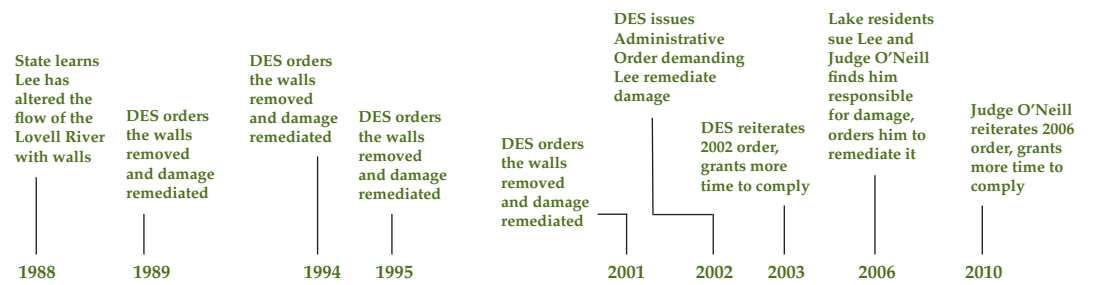
Plus he gave Lee six more months to comply - one of a string of extensions, continuances and

delays that have characterized the court's handling of the case.

The absurdity of the Donald Lee matter reminds us of the movie "Groundhog Day."

In the popular comedy, Bill Murray plays a TV weatherman forced to relive the same day repeatedly. Each morning the clock radio clicks on and it's Groundhog Day all over again.

On Ossipee Lake, the calendar is stuck on September 27, 2006. Each morning is a new day but it's still Groundhog Day; and our punishment is a court order with no bite and state officials with no bark.



\$232,000

Amount lake residents have spent to seek enforcement of state laws

\$0

Total amount of fines the state has assessed Lee for his violations

13

Number of years DES waited before issuing an Administrative Order regarding Lee's violations

18

Number of years the court found Lee knowingly violated state laws

4

Number of years since the court ordered Lee to "forthwith" remediate his damage to Ossipee Lake

22

Number of years in the Lee case without closure

The Donald Lee Case in Numbers

OSSIPEE LAKE REPORT:

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TRI-TOWN MILFOIL COMMITTEE FORMED



Members of area conservation commissions joined lake residents and Alliance officials at Samantha's Restaurant in Tamworth to launch a new offensive against invasive variable milfoil. *Alliance Photo*

Continued from page 1

ing and brainstorming on how to establish more effective ways of addressing the serious threat variable milfoil poses to recreation, real estate values and the local economy.

One of the 'best practices' discussed at the Summit was establishing a milfoil coordinating committee, and Reynolds came away from the meetings convinced such a structure was essential for Ossipee Lake.

"Each of our towns has been operating independently in funding and managing milfoil control," he said. "To achieve a higher level of success, we need to start thinking of the lake as a shared resource."

Reynolds said a single milfoil fragment can migrate from Freedom to Ossipee, from Ossipee to Freedom, or from either town to Effingham and create a new infestation.

"Milfoil doesn't recognize town boundaries when it comes to creating new infestations, and we need to think the same way when it comes to keeping milfoil under control."

Reynolds briefed conservation commission members on his recommendations in December, and town officials quickly agreed to the three-town approach. In February, the Committee got down to work by setting four key goals for the first year.

Get Organized. In addition to forming the Committee, members will establish subcommittees

and action groups focused on state and local funding, community education and maintaining relations with state agencies.

Become Milfoil Experts. Another goal of the group is for members to become primary community resources for factual information on milfoil and other invasive species, including treatment costs and methods.

Start Managing Infestations. DES requires management plans for all infestations, but only Danforth Pond's plan has been completed. The Committee will reach out for state and local resources needed to complete plans for the other six locations in the lake system – Danforth Brook, Pickerel Cove, Portsmouth Cove, Phillips Brook and adjacent western Leavitt Bay, and the Ossipee River at Effingham Falls.

Work with Selectmen. Members will represent the Committee with local Select Boards on all issues, from management plans to funding to public education.

"We are faced with a complicated set of rules under which we must wage a difficult and time consuming battle against an incredibly persistent and destructive invasive plant," Reynolds summed up at the Committee's first meeting.

The Committee will meet monthly in its first year, and meetings will be open to the public. Dates and times will be posted on the Ossipee Lake Alliance website.

WEED CONTROL CERTIFICATION AVAILABLE

CONCORD — If you're a certified open water diver, you can become a certified Weed Control Diver this spring and become part of the state's effort to identify and safely remove damaging exotic plants.

In New Hampshire, divers must be certified and have DES approval to remove exotic aquatic weeds from state lakes.

The course is \$149 for certified divers, and non-diving volunteers - those who operate the boats and help remove weeds from the lake after divers have hand-pulled them - can be certified for no cost.

For course dates and to register, contact Ted Aldrich at (603) 446-3375 or weedcontroldiver@gmail.com.

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COURTING CONTROVERSY WITH A NEW VIEW ON EXOTIC SPECIES



Editor's Note: Not all biologists believe invasive species are inherently bad. Some hold the position that they can be valuable and useful. This provocative article is reprinted courtesy of the publication Yale Environment 360 (www.e360.yale.edu/).

By Greg Breining

NEW HAVEN, CT — When biologist Mark A. Davis talks about exotic species, he eventually comes to LTL, his shorthand for Learn to Love them.

Flying in the face of the conventional wisdom among biologists that exotic species are harmful to native ecosystems, Davis and a small cohort of biologists espouse a heretical viewpoint: Exotic species are here to stay, so get used to them, and forget about ripping out the fast-spreading shrub, buckthorn, on a large scale or throwing Asian carp on the bank to die.

If the newcomers are only changing the ecosystem but “not causing significant harm,” then “altering one’s perspective is certainly much less costly than any other sort of management program,” Davis writes in his recently published book, “Invasion Biology.”

“It’s amazing how extensive the indoctrination has been: ‘Non-native species are bad — we’ve got to get rid of them,’” says Davis, chairman of the biology department at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

“Boy, if you want nature to stop, you’re going to be miserable.”

Davis and his like-minded colleagues contend that the rigid attitudes, and militaristic metaphors, that characterize the debate about exotic species make for poor science and policy-making.

Assuming that exotic species are inherently bad, that ecosystem “integrity” can be measured by the number of alien species, or even that newly arrived species are functionally different from longtime residents, simply isn’t supported by science, says Davis.

Many introduced species, he notes, have proven valuable and useful, including crops (from apples to wheat), horticultural plants (hostas and Norway maples), and game species (ring-necked pheasants and brown trout).

He holds firm to that position, even while conceding that some newcomers, such as kudzu

(“the vine that ate the South”) can be terribly destructive.

“I’m very careful to say that lots of invasive species are causing great problems,” says Davis, who says he supports control programs where damage is great and controls stand a chance of success.

One highly destructive exotic species causing great economic harm, and for which Davis supports eradication programs, is the emerald ash borer, a beetle — recently introduced into the U.S.’ upper Midwest from Asia — that has already killed 2 million ash trees in Michigan and nearby states.

“All I’ve been arguing for is a more nuanced characterization of what’s been happening,” says Davis. And he claims that he’s finding traction for his ideas: “People are thinking more carefully about the words they are using, the assumptions they might be bringing in.”

An Evolutionary Process

Davis’ work is in the tradition of some scientists — including the late evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould — who have argued that the movement of species around the globe should be viewed as part of the tumultuous evolutionary process, and therefore not necessarily a destructive force.

Gould wrote in 1998 that the discussion about native plants “encompasses a remarkable mixture of sound biology, invalid ideas, false extensions, ethical implications, and political usages.”

“But we will not achieve clarity on this issue,” Gould continued in the journal *Arnoldia*, “if we advocate a knee-jerk equation of ‘native’ with morally best, and fail to recognize the ethical power of a contrary view, supporting a sensitive cultivation of all plants, whatever their geographic origin, that can enhance nature and bring both delight and utility to humans.”

Today, Americans continue to wage a war on alien species that have taken root by accident or design. Zebra mussels, Dutch elm disease, cheat grass, purple loosestrife, Eurasian water milfoil, spiny water fleas, gypsy moths — the United States is beset by exotics invading native forests, spreading across prairies, and clogging streams and lakes.

But Dov F. Sax, assistant professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at Brown University, says a growing number of scientists are listening to iconoclasts like Davis.

James Brown, professor of biology at the

“The rigid attitudes that characterize the debate about exotic species make for poor science and policy-making.”

Continued on next page

A CONTRARIAN VIEW OF INVASIVES

University of New Mexico, says he generally agrees with Davis's view of alien species but acknowledges that "almost certainly most ecologists and conservation biologists would not agree with either one of us."

One of those scientists, Dan Simberloff – a professor of ecology at the University of Tennessee, the director of the Institute for Biological Invasions, and one of the most prominent voices in the field – called "Invasion Biology" "a really good book."

He added, however, "I'm going to say it has a number of peculiar aspects to it. They almost all revolve around Davis's odd views that invasions aren't really so problematic and there's something xenophobic about people who worry about them."

Among the widely accepted precepts that Davis challenges are the following: Because native species evolved in a specific ecosystem and exotics didn't, natives are better suited to their niche.

In fact, says Davis, a scientist who didn't know the history of individual organisms would have difficulty distinguishing natives from non-natives.

A Galapagos Example

The Galapagos Islands – a World Heritage site of biodiversity and the scene of Darwin's important discoveries leading to the theory of evolution – provided just such an example.

For years conservationists had fretted over invasive weeds overrunning the islands. Because the weeds were out of control, conservationists assumed they were non-natives, recently introduced by human traffic.

Research showed, however, that the plants were native. They belonged. In fact, they had been present since prehistoric times.

Diverse communities of native species resist invasions by alien species. While carefully controlled experiments on small plots have confirmed this age-old belief, studies in the tumult of natural forests and grasslands show quite the opposite, says Davis.

Natural disturbances, such as disease or fire, and fluctuations in resources in diverse communities offer plenty of footholds for invaders. Pristine ecosystems are highly evolved and well-ordered. Again, ecologists have little evidence for this, Davis says. Ragtag assemblages of exotics and natives quickly adapt and perform about as well.

"If you view [nature] as a continually changing tumult, the introduction of new species isn't necessarily looked at as a huge threat."

He cites the example of regeneration of forests in Puerto Rico, where non-native species are facilitating the re-establishment of native species. Which brings up the dire warning of orthodox conservation biologists: The spread of exotic species threatens to drive natives extinct.

Rarely happens, Davis says, except on islands, in lakes, or in other insular environments. Usually it's the opposite — the appearance of exotics increases species richness, he maintains. Throughout the United States, local ecosystems have perhaps 20 percent more plant species than they once did because of the addition for foreign species.

"How many species of plants in the U.S. have gone extinct because of the thousands of non-native plants that have been introduced?" asks Davis. "Zero!"

Finally, exotics signify a "degraded" ecosystem. "There isn't such a thing as a healthy ecosystem or a sick ecosystem," Davis says.

"Ecosystems are just out there. There's no particular goal or purpose. They're just the species and the physical and chemical processes taking place."

Other ecologists beg to differ. Dan Simberloff counters that invasions of exotic species do threaten native species with extinction. The chestnut blight, caused by an introduced fungus, swept across the eastern U.S. a century ago, virtually exterminating the native chestnut tree. In addition, Simberloff says,

"We know it caused total global extinction of at least seven species of moths that were host-specific only on American chestnuts."

Transformative Effects

Even if exotics don't drive native species to extinction they can completely transform ecosystems, many biologists argue.

"There are some biotic communities that have entirely disappeared from the U.S. because of invasive species," says Simberloff. "There are many others that have drastically changed over large areas."

For example, he notes that Eurasian cheat grass now dominates millions of acres of Western range, displacing native bunch grasses and reducing the value of the range for livestock.

Asks Simberloff, "If thousands of people work to deal with the impact of these, even aside from any moral or aesthetic issue, is Mark [Davis] saying they're all nuts?"

James Carlton, professor of Marine Sciences at Williams College and a Pew Fellow in Marine Conservation, attacks Davis's assertion that bi-

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A CONTRARIAN VIEW OF INVASIVES

Continued from page 5

ologists can't distinguish natives from exotics. "We can easily distinguish natives from many (not all!) non-natives many times in many ways, based very much on how they function in an ecosystem. Native species are often finely tuned physiologically to the environment, whereas non-native species may possess a repertoire of adaptations that clearly do not match the environment."

Still, a sizable minority of biologists are more sanguine about the impact of exotic species. Dov Sax says he began to question exotic species orthodoxy as an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley. A professor leading a field trip described the Bay Area's abandoned plantations of Australian eucalyptus trees as a "biological desert."

Says Sax, "There was all kinds of stuff growing in there. I found there were really a similar number of species in both [native oak and eucalyptus] woodland types. Exotics weren't always doing the awful things people seemed to think they were doing."

Sax says that land managers can't begin to control the thousands of exotics that reach our ecosystems through globalized trade and travel.

"A lot of conservation biology in the past has been built around the idea of preventing change," says Sax. "That old mantra is going to get thrown out because it's going to be impossible to prevent change."

The future landscape will be home to "novel ecosystems," never-before-seen agglomera-

tions of species, of which exotics will be a key, and valued, component, Sax and others say.

"If we lump them into this category of all being evil or awful in some way," he says, "we may blind ourselves to those situations where they're actually providing a benefit either for humans or for biological conservation."

For example, a recent study of two nonnative wetland plants, phragmites and hydrilla, suggests they provide waterfowl habitat, biomass production, and nitrogen retention that equals that of native species.

Overselling the threat exotic species pose is bound to lose credibility as exotics make up ever more of the biota around us, says Davis. And it will lead to misguided spending on projects as fruitless as ripping out buckthorn from thousands of acres of parks, when we should focus instead on disease organisms, agricultural pests, and other more pressing threats, Davis believes.

"It's very important," he says, "to distinguish harm from change."

Greg Breining is a journalist and author whose articles and essays about travel, science, and nature have appeared in The New York Times, Audubon, National Geographic Traveler, and many other publications.



AVAST, YE MATEYS

FREEDOM — Add a new event to this year's Freedom Old Home Week. The planning committee has announced there will be a "Cardboard Boat" race on Saturday, July 31, following the annual Old Home Week parade.

A cardboard boat race?

It's an event in which participants - young and old - design and build a boat made entirely out of cardboard and then race it on a defined course.

A Google search reveals dozens of pictures of cardboard watercraft from around the country, including designs and construction tips.

Cardboard boats can be single, double or multi-person craft and are decorated colorfully, and quite often flamboyantly!



The committee is encouraging entrants from lake organizations, camps and year-round and summer residents alike - and they promise it will be a memorably fun event.

Ready to enter?

Rules and entry information are on the Freedom Old Home Week website (www.freedomoldhomeweek.org). Or you can call (603) 539-2637 for more information.

"What's a cardboard boat race? A Google search reveals dozens of examples from around the country."

TAKING STOCK OF THE LOONS ON OSSIPEE LAKE



Photo: Daniel Poleschook & Virginia Gumm

By John Cooley

MOULTONBOROUGH — Midwinter is the time for loon biologists to take stock, analyzing the data and events of the previous year and laying plans for the coming summer.

A phone call from Effingham just this week was therefore timely, and coincidentally provided a neat summary of the recent history of loons on Ossipee Lake.

The caller's immediate concern was the loons on Leavitt Bay, where a mated pair has tried valiantly to nest successfully over the last several years. But the attention of local loon fans and the deployment of signs and rope lines to protect the nest has not been enough.

For three seasons in a row various problems have prevented a successful hatch, from high boat wakes to picnickers exploring the island, their curious dogs, and perhaps other human and natural disturbances.

The string of rainy summers has also been a problem, since loons must nest close to the waterline where there nests are vulnerable to flooding.

A Child's Memory

As the Effingham caller and I discussed the Leavitt Bay nest and what might be done to help, a deeper backstory emerged, as she recalled her first encounter with loons.

This dated to the 1950s when she first came to Ossipee Lake as a child. Loons were rare enough then, she explained, that when she and her friends heard one they were mystified and had to describe the lonesome wail to her mother, who at once identified the source.

This anecdote is satisfying for loon biologist

and enthusiasts alike, since the call of a loon is now so much more familiar throughout New Hampshire than it was at the population's low point in the last century.

Fifty years after her first encounter on Ossipee, the Effingham caller and her neighbors now have a local pair of nesting loons to look after. Happily, some of the novelty, if not the mystery, has worn off.

Loon Preservation Committee

The Loon Preservation Committee has surveyed Ossipee Lake and its bays for loons since the early 1980s. Loon breeding activity has been sporadic in that time, but more consistent in the last decade, with regular nesting attempts on the main lake and at Leavitt Bay.

Although the extensive shallow littoral zones throughout the lake and bays make for good small fish habitat and loon foraging, there are relatively few islands and deep coves, the usual configuration preferred by loons to establish good nest sites and defend territories.

So Ossipee supports good but limited breeding territories with lots of lake area left for non-breeding loons.

It's not uncommon to hear or see stray loons visiting the lake or larger congregations of loons gathering there in the latter half of the breeding season and in the fall before migration.

The rapid rise in water level during precipitation events, or 'flashiness,' that Ossipee is prone to adds another challenge for nesting loons. Even where nest sites take advantage of floating bog mats, flooded nests have been a regular occurrence.

Continued on page 9



Susan Marks
Development Director

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Ossipee Lake Alliance is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit New Hampshire corporation.



Hello Susan,

Thank you for your thank you note for our contribution. I have had an Ossipee Lake connection since I was about five years old. We lived in Massachusetts and spent every weekend and every summer on Green Mountain road where my aunt lives today. We spent every day either swimming, boating or fishing on the lake.

I now live in New Jersey but travel often to the lake where I have rented

the same home for more than thirty years. My children have all grown up vacationing both summer and winter. We are on the no wake area between Broad and Leavitt Bay. Now that my

children have grown and we have grandchildren we all travel back to the lake each June for several weeks together. My wife and I can be seen riding around the lake area in our microcar, a blue 1960 Isetta.



I wish we were closer to the lake. We have come close to buying on the lake several times, but having several businesses it is hard to own a home anywhere but here in New Jersey. I am very happy though to know that there is an organization that is dedicated to preserving the lake so that my children and now their children can enjoy what Ossipee Lake has offered to me and to the generations before me.

Again, thank you for your note. It would be nice to meet some of the people who are involved in this group at some point.

Jim Dietterich



PROTECTING THE LOONS OF OSSIPEE LAKE

Continued from page 7

On the main lake, LPC and volunteers have provided a nest raft near the natural site since 2008 to offset the impact of floods; the loons have declined the offer thus far.

But loons have evolved to try and try again. The same individual adult loon can survive and return to the same territory for decades, taking advantage of accumulated knowledge about the best nest sites and brooding areas and weathering out poor seasons. So there is reason to be hopeful.

Humans are perhaps the biggest question mark for loons on Ossipee Lake and its bays.

Human recreation and shoreline development can have unfortunate consequences for loons, jeopardizing nesting success and the survival of adults and chicks.

For example, an adult loon mortality on Broad Bay in 2006 was caused by lead poisoning from fishing tackle, and the Leavitt Island nest failures due to human disturbance were described above.

There are some easy ways to accommodate loons and prevent the lion's share of human impacts.

First, please respect nest site warning signs and steer clear of any unmarked nests you may discover. Disturbed loons may flush from the nest, exposing eggs to chilly temperatures,

predators, and eventual abandonment by the adult loons.

Second, watch loons from a distance. In their role as top predators in the aquatic food web, loons are curious animals and may approach a boat at close quarters.

But prolonged contact that changes their foraging behavior, defense of their territory, or attention to a nest is likely to have a cumulative impact.

Giving loons the freedom to use the lake naturally will help avoid this impact.

Lastly, be sure to 'get the lead out' and convert your tackle box to the non-lead sinkers and jigs that are

now commonly available for sale and as free samples from LPC.

The Loon Preservation Committee depends on the enthusiasm and support of Ossipee Lake residents and visitors to admire and safeguard loons as they continue to re-establish their presence on the lakes.

For more information and to help, please contact LPC online at www.loon.org, or by phone at (603) 476-LOON.

You may also volunteer to help by contacting LPC through Ossipee Lake Alliance via email at info@ossipeelake.org.

John Cooley is Senior Staff Biologist of the Loon Preservation Committee in Moultonborough. He can be contacted at jcooley@loon.org.



Photo: Phil Brown, NH Audubon

FREEDOM VOTERS WARY OF NEW DEBT

FREEDOM — For the second year in a row, Freedom voters slowed down the process of upgrading its municipal facilities.

On a vote of 126 to 106 at the March 9 Town Meeting, voters rejected a warrant article to spend \$2.7 million for a new building to consolidate the fire and police departments on Village Road, site of the current fire house.

Voters then rejected a second warrant article that would have resolved the debate over whether to restore the current Town Office building or construct a new one.

Town officials said the cost of the building upgrades would be more than \$3 million no matter where the Town Office is located; and in the end, voters essentially sent officials back to the drawing board to get the price down.

Last year Freedom voters rejected a warrant article to purchase land on Ossipee Lake Road to consolidate the town's municipal services in

a single building, even though they had previously approved funds for that purpose.

Voters at that meeting objected to purchasing land before knowing how much the building would cost. Others argued that moving the Town Office outside the village was inconsistent with the town's ongoing village revitalization efforts.

Freedom Town Meeting voters also opted for new leadership on its Select Board by electing businessman Scott Cunningham over incumbent Jim Brown.

Cunningham had stressed "unity rather than partisanship" in his campaign interviews, and he promised to represent long-term residents and newcomers equally.

In a very tight race in Ossipee, incumbent selectman Kathleen Maloney won approval for a second term by edging out former Ossipee Police Chief Rick Morgan 254 to 250.



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- Tri-Town Milfoil Committee Formed
- Groundhog Day and the Lee Case
- A Contrarian View of Invasives
- The Loons of Ossipee Lake
- Freedom's Cardboard Boat Race

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