



KEY DATES:

- Saturday, July 18: "Wolves and Coyotes in New England." Calumet Conference Center, Freedom. Dinner and presentation, \$15. Info from GMCG @ 603-539-1859.
- Saturday, August 8: "Haunted Hikes of New Hampshire" with author Marianne O'Connor. An Alliance Tales of Ossipee Lake presentation for Freedom Old Home Week. Under the tent at Calumet Conference Center, Freedom. 8 PM. Free. Info @ 914-588-3280.

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OSSIPEE LAKE REPORT

Volume 8, Issue 3 • July - September 2009

NEW ERA FOR OSS�PEE LAKE NATURAL AREA

By David Smith

FREEDOM — It was the Age of Aquarius when land developers sold 400 acres of Ossipee Lake forest and swamp to the State in 1969. "Hair" was a hit on Broadway and Jimi Hendrix played at Woodstock. The Apollo 11 astronauts landed on the moon.

To boaters on the lake, and I was one, the change in ownership passed unnoticed. Before and after the sale, Long Sands, as it was called, was a vacant lot with shallow water and pure white sand ideal for swimming, sunbathing and hanging out.

It was a quiet, isolated place that seemed far removed from the rest of the lake - and it was mysterious.

Rivulets of colored water seeped from the ground and ran across the sand. Floating peat mats undulated along the shore and stretched far into the lake in spots.

If you knew where to look, you could wiggle your feet into pockets of what seemed like quicksand and sink almost to your knees. Rumor had it that there was real quicksand in the interior, but who could tell? Just beyond the shoreline was an impenetrable

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Boaters, conservationists and State officials joined forces to clean up the public access portion of Ossipee Lake Natural Area in advance of the management plan's launch. Photo: Cindy Davis

THE MAKING OF A LAKE COALITION

By Don Kent

CONCORD — The Ossipee Lake Natural Area (OLNA) is one of the few remaining undeveloped public areas on Ossipee Lake. Shoals and a sandy shore are ideally suited to boating, swimming and shore activities.

In addition, the OLNA is the site of important natural and historical resources. The shoreline constitutes New Hampshire's best remaining sandy pondshore system, which includes four exemplary natural communities and two remaining rare plant species. Nonrenewable, fragile and rare prehis-

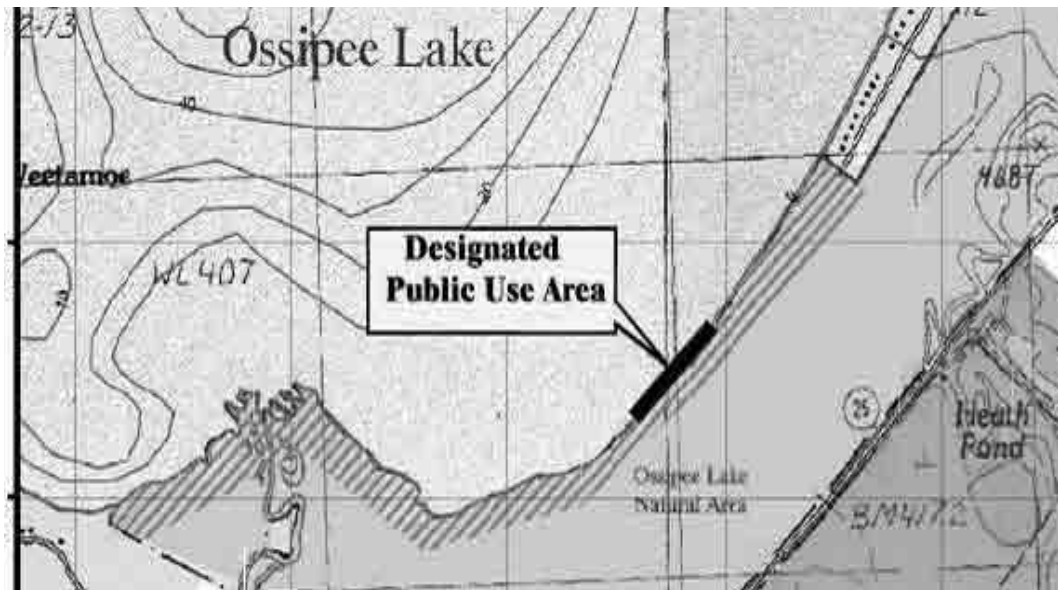
toric artifacts 500 to 11,000 years old occur throughout the OLNA.

The OLNA is not a State-developed recreation area. There are no lifeguards to ensure swimmer safety, no concessions for food or water, no bathrooms and no one to educate the public about critically important natural and historical resources.

Unmanaged recreation has contributed to the loss of at least two rare plant species and caused a significant reduction of the remaining plants and communities.

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THE MAKING OF A LAKE COALITION



State map shows the portion of the Natural Area shoreline that is open for low impact recreation. The remainder of the shoreline and the interior are closed for restoration and preservation. Map: DRED

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The Division of Historical Resources fears damage to historical resources. Boaters and neighboring communities express concerns about water quality, fires and loud and unreasonable noise.

The Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) initiated a deliberate and inclusive process for defining OLN A management to resolve impacts on resource protection, health and safety.

The centerpiece of the process is the OLN A Working Group – a commitment by State agencies, the Lakes Management Advisory Committee, the boating community, towns around the lake and non-governmental organizations to work together toward balancing protection of natural and historical resources, health and safety with provision of public recreation.

The purpose of the OLN A Working Group is to facilitate communication among stakeholders, to make recommendations to the State about managing the OLN A and near-shore waters and to identify opportunities to collaborate with the State.

The 17 members of the Working Group convened on four occasions between November 2008 and April 2009, culminating in "Managing the Ossipee Lake Natural Area."

The goals of this management plan are to sustain threatened and endangered plants and exemplary natural communities, preserve historical resources and provide a clean, safe environment for recreation.

The OLN A Working Group will convene again in the fall of 2009 to assess the short-term success of the management plan, and to develop additional mechanisms as necessary to ensure effective management of the area.

The OLN A Working Group collaborated on several key management issues. A designated public use area, open sunrise to sunset, optimizes recreation while protecting natural and historical resources.

Boat-based marine toilets are a short-term solution to public sanitation; the Working Group will continue to work with the Department of Environmental Services to evaluate a floating bathroom alternative.

In May, the Working Group began a water quality sampling program to monitor *E. coli* bacteria through the summer. (See p. 7).

The OLN A Working Group, and by extension the public, have been presented with a unique opportunity to collaborate with the State to achieve balanced use of a sensitive property.

Communication is the key, and the Working Group has instituted a vigorous communication strategy encompassing signs, brochures, media coverage and personal appearances.

On behalf of DRED, thanks to members of the Working Group and to everyone who attended a meeting or provided comments on the plan. Have a safe and happy summer.

Don Kent is the Administrator of DRED's Natural Heritage Bureau.

OSSIPEE LAKE REPORT:

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NEW START FOR LAKE'S NATURAL AREA

Continued from page 1

bog - a no-man's land of thick brush and brambles.

While State officials, in no hurry, considered what to do with the parcel, researchers began exploring. Barre Hellquist knew Long Sands as a boater and fisherman; and as a graduate school biologist in 1971 he became the first to document the site's rare plants and natural communities.

Others followed, including archeologists from the N.H. Division of Historical Resources who declared Long Sands to be the home of the area's first human settlers, making it and its prehistoric artifacts historically significant.

As evidence of the property's unique value increased, so too did recreation. Without realizing it, crowds of boaters contributed to the loss of rare plants and the diminishment of natural communities at the site, which by then was called Ossipee Lake Natural Area.

Three years ago, our Board of Directors and our Lake Representatives advisory group voted to make saving the Natural Area the

Alliance's primary focus.

At the start, the process was adversarial. But timing is everything, as the saying goes, and the return of George Bald as DRED's commissioner and the arrival of Don Kent as head of the Natural Heritage Bureau offered an opportunity for a fresh start.

We're proud of our role in bringing the Natural Area issue to a head with the State. But credit is due to Don Kent and Commissioner Bald for bringing all parties to the table as a Working Group to share ideas and write a management plan to balance recreation and preservation.

In this special edition of our newsletter you'll hear from some of the people who participated in that Working Group - all of whom will continue to be involved when the management plan's first season is evaluated this fall.

As we mark the 40th anniversary of the State's purchase of Ossipee Lake Natural Area, the Age of Aquarius is a dim memory. But it's a new age on the lake nonetheless.

David Smith is the co-founder and Executive Director of Ossipee Lake Alliance.

BOATERS WILL COMMUNICATE FOR SUCCESS

By John Panagiotakos, Richard Lover and Alan McKenney

OSSIPEE — DRED and the OLNA Working Group have provided the boating community with an exceptional opportunity to continue to recreate at the Natural Area while also gaining a full appreciation for the need to preserve this habitat.

We have identified boaters' knowledge and education as a critical path toward a successful implementation and a long-term sustainable solution, and the challenge this summer will be to communicate the new rules and regulations effectively.

What we hope to do is simply go to the lake as we always have and speak with boaters and beachgoers to explain what we accomplished over the winter in the Working Group, ask for their suggestions and listen to their ideas and concerns.

As part of the management plan, we suggested networking through the various lake organizations, submitting press releases to media outlets, and designing, posting and distributing flyers with the rules, regulations and a brief tutorial on the importance of the area itself.

We plan to support self-policing at the area by respectfully communicating the rules to those boaters who may not be informed.

It's incumbent upon the boating community to continue to be active participants in the OLNA Working Group to ensure we are contributing to the long term success of this plan.

We hope that educating people in a positive manner will be a big part of the solution to maintaining the boating public's right to use this part of the lake for many years to come.

John Panagiotakos, Alan McKenney and Richard Lover are long-time Ossipee Lake boaters who volunteered to serve on the OLNA Working Group.

INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE

CONCORD — Additional information about Ossipee Lake Natural Area can be found online. DRED's main web page for OLNA is at www.nhdf.org/new-hampshire-state-lands/state-owned-reservations/ossipee-lake-natural-area.aspx, from which you can access a copy of the management plan and a list of rules

and regulations (also see p. 5 of this issue). Ossipee Lake Alliance maintains similar information on its website at www.ossipeelake.org.

DRED's new pamphlet on the Natural Area is available at marinas, boat ramps and through lake associations, including Ossipee Lake Alliance.

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INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF OSSIPPEE LAKE

Water-skiing in the bays? Kayaking the Ossipee River? Maybe it's fishing on Round Pond or paddling a canoe on the big lake at sunset.

Whether you're a property owner, a renter or a regular weekend visitor, the memories you make in the Ossipee Lake area will stay with you forever.

Help us keep Ossipee Lake the place where your memories are made, year after year after year.

Susan Marks

Development Director

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FOR THE
MEMORIES

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



NEW STATE RULES BALANCE ALL INTERESTS

By Kevin Donovan

CONCORD — The opening of a portion of Ossipee Lake Natural Area (OLNA) to public use for recreational purposes is dependent on the ability of all user groups to work together.

It is essential for all stakeholders to understand and accept the compromises that are necessary in the delicate balance of ecosystem management, historical integrity and recreational interest.

As one would imagine, rules must exist and need to be adhered to for any coalition such as this to be successful.

Most of the OLNA property is closed to public access completely to protect the rare plants, exemplary natural communities and historical resources that exist within. This includes all of the posted area of the lake shoreline and the entire fen bog area away from the water that makes up the majority of the property.

A designated public use section of approximately 1,000' of sandy shoreline is open for public access and recreational purposes from April 1 until November 30. While the shoreline of this area is open, users will see that the fen bog that abuts this area to the rear is fenced-off and is closed to public use.

Within the public use section, DRED intends to provide a safe and clean environment for recreation, while at the same time protecting the integrity of the OLNA and its natural and historical resources.

Because of its unique topography, the only access route to the public use area of the OLNA is by water. Motorboats may anchor offshore anywhere along the shoreline, including the 1,000' area of designated public use shoreline.

While anchored, however, watercraft must be completely afloat. Motorboats may not be pulled up to the shore anywhere at OLNA, and no tie-off lines will be permitted from boat to shore.

Boaters seeking access to the public use section of shoreline must anchor their boat and swim or wade ashore. Canoes and kayaks may land on the shoreline, but only in the designated landing area at the west end of the public access area.

While the public use section of the OLNA shoreline is considered a place for swimming, sunbathing and outdoor activities, the property is classified as a Natural Area by DRED, and the Commissioner has implemented an updated set of rules specifically for the OLNA.

Some are common to all State day-use properties, and some are unique to the location. The following rules will apply to all public users

of the OLNA: (a) The OLNA is closed to all public use from sunset to sunrise; (b) a carry-in/carry-out policy is in effect: all food, trash, garbage, refuse, etc. must be carried out by all users when leaving.

In addition, (c) The disposal of any refuse, debris, or waste material is prohibited; (d) pets must be under the complete control of their owner at all times; (e) animal and human waste, such as diapers and hygiene products, must be carried out - never buried onshore or disposed of in the lake.

Also, (f) Camp fires, grills or cooking fires of any type are prohibited; (g) boat traffic among swimmers is extremely dangerous and is strictly prohibited; all watercraft must maintain headway speed within 150' of swimmers or the shoreline.

(h) digging on the sandy shoreline is restricted to a depth of 12 inches, and all holes must be filled by sunset with the same material that was removed.

Further, (i) All plant specimens must be left undisturbed; (j) any historical artifacts found in the OLNA must be turned over promptly to DRED's Natural Heritage Bureau; and (k) loud or unreasonable noise will not be tolerated.

Special events and other non-usual activities to be held in the designated public use area at the OLNA are subject to the Special Use Permit Requirements cited in the DRED Administrative Rules.

Generally speaking, any activity that does not fall within the normal range of daily operations at a DRED property is subject to this requirement and will require a permit.

An application to hold the event or activity, accompanied by a one hundred dollar application fee, must be filed with the NH Division of Parks at least thirty days in advance of the event.

Each event is reviewed on an individual basis for approval by the Commissioner. If conditional approval is given, often additional fees, along with a certificate of liability with pre-determined amounts of coverage, will be requested before final approval is granted.

All of the above items, along with any violations of DRED Administrative Rules, are considered misdemeanor offenses subject to prosecution.

Any specific questions can be answered by calling the N.H. Division of Forests and Lands in Concord at (603) 271-2411.

Kevin Donovan is a Regional Supervisor for the New Hampshire Division of Parks.

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OSSIPEE LAKE'S RARE PLANTS AND NATURAL COMMUNITIES

By Melissa Coppola

CONCORD — The white sandy shoreline along the south shore of Ossipee Lake is familiar as a favorite spot to enjoy the beauty of New Hampshire. Yet many may not realize the shoreline is home to rare plant species and natural communities that collectively occur nowhere else in New Hampshire.

Recent discussions on managing the Natural Area (OLNA) have drawn attention to its ecological significance, but its importance has been recognized for decades. The shoreline was cited in the 1972 New England Natural Area Project for its regionally rare sandy/peaty shoreline habitat and rare plants, and was noted as the best example of a strand community in the State. Similarly, a 1994 Natural Heritage Bureau report on pondshore habitats in NH noted Ossipee

Lake as having the highest species richness of any coastal plain pondshore sampled, having numerous unique species and a broader diversity of habitats than other sites.

The unique features of the OLNA shoreline are best described in ecological terms that may be unfamiliar. **Natural communities** are recurring assemblages of plants and animals found in particular physical environments. Communities that occur together on the landscape and linked by a common set of driving forces (such as landforms, soil attributes, and natural disturbance) are referred to as a **natural community systems**.

The OLNA shoreline is a **sandy pondshore system**, characterized by widely fluctuating water levels, regular wave action, and ice scouring, with species and natural communities that have adapted to such stressful conditions. The communities grow in narrow, linear patches parallel to the shoreline, and plants in each community patch are different in response to both the elevation above the lake and the degree of wave and ice disturbance.

The OLNA sandy pondshore system consists of four natural communities: water lobelia aquatic sandy pondshore, bulblet umbrella-sege open sandy pondshore, twig-rush sandy

turf pondshore, and hudsonia inland beach strand. All four are rare and imperiled in New Hampshire. In addition, the hudsonia inland beach strand and the twig-rush sandy turf pondshore community are globally rare community types. Ossipee Lake is the only site in which the hudsonia inland beach strand community is found in the State.

The earliest records of rare plants at Ossipee Lake date to 1962. Herbarium specimens identify slender bog clubmoss (*Lycopodiella appressa*) and hairy hudsonia (*Hudsonia tomentosa* var. *intermedia*) from the "long sands" area of the OLNA. Botanists also identified two other rare plants: mermaidweed (*Proserpinaca pectinata*)

and grassleaf goldenrod (*Euthamia caroliniana*). Mermaidweed and slender bog clubmoss have not been observed at the OLNA since 1982 and are presumed to be lost. Populations of hairy hudsonia and grassleaf goldenrod have declined as well, but both persist at the site.

Several surveys conducted between 1969 and 2007 indicate significant declines in natural communities and rare plant populations at the OLNA. In 2002, the Natural Heritage Bureau determined 95 percent of the twig-rush sandy turf pondshore community, the primary habitat for the grassleaf goldenrod, was lost or degraded since 1993. Similarly, the hudsonia inland beach strand community had diminished, and the largest hudsonia population, near the famous "lone pine," had decreased in size by 20 percent due to trampling.

Further declines in natural communities and rare plants were documented in 2007. For example, the hairy hudsonia patch near the lone pine was reduced from 40 sq. ft. in 2002 to less than 1 sq. ft. in 2007.

Though much has been lost, the OLNA still contains remnants of all four rare natural community types and populations of hairy hudsonia and grassleaf goldenrod. The areas closed to public use offer the best chance for their successful preservation and restoration.

Melissa Coppola is an Environmental Information Specialist for the N.H. Natural Heritage Bureau.



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MARINE PATROL WILL MONITOR SHORELINE FOR COMPLIANCE

By Joshua Dirth

CONCORD — The New Hampshire Marine Patrol's presence on Ossipee Lake during the 2009 boating season is adding another element to their daily patrol functions: the monitoring and enforcement of trespassing at the Ossipee Lake Natural Area (OLNA).

The general public wishing to take advantage of this pristine area will notice "NO TRESPASSING" signs posted (RSA 635:4) along the perimeter of the property as well as a designated public use area delineated by signs and fencing.

Any person found violating the "NO TRESPASSING" order will be removed from the property and will face the likelihood of a citation and/or arrest (Criminal Trespass, RSA 635:2).

The Marine Patrol reminds everyone that headway speed (6 MPH or the slowest speed

necessary to maintain steerage) must be adhered to at all times when within 150' of the OLNA shoreline, boats anchored or moored in the vicinity and any swimmers in the water.

Marine Patrol has participated with the Ossipee Lake Natural Area Working Group to allow use of this area while protecting precious natural resources.

Although self-monitoring will dictate the majority of success, the resources will be in place to provide guidance for the public to ensure that all parties have a safe and mutually enjoyable summer season.

Citizens with general questions governing the OLNA should contact the N.H. Department of Resources and Economic Development at (603) 271-2411.

Joshua Dirth is a Sergeant with the Marine Patrol Bureau of the N.H. Department of Safety.

ANNUAL WATER TESTING IS PART OF THE PLAN

By John Shipman, Jacquie Colburn and Bud Berry

CONCORD — In the Lakes Management and Protection Program statute (RSA 483-A), the State identifies lakes as one of our most important natural resources and recommends that management plans be developed to protect these waters, their shorelands and their outstanding characteristics for the enjoyment of the citizens of New Hampshire now and in the future.

The release of the State's plan to manage Ossipee Lake Natural Area is a significant milestone, but one that will require the cooperation and commitment of all parties and all users of the site. Significantly, the plan includes water quality monitoring - specifically, sampling for bacteria (E. coli) and turbidity as well as visual

inspections for cyanobacteria. Bacteria sampling will indicate the degree, if any, of risk to the public from high use of the site.

Turbidity is essentially a measure of the level of suspended particulate matter in the water column, which affects people's perception of how clean a water body is. Cyanobacteria blooms are aesthetically displeasing in sight, odor and taste, and are potentially toxic to domestic animals, waterfowl and humans.

Testing results will be assessed by the Working Group to determine whether additional water quality parameters should be examined.

John Shipman represents the Town of Freedom on the Working Group; Jacquie Colburn and Bud Berry represent the Lakes Management and Protection Program and the Lakes Management Advisory

A NEW NORM FOR COOPERATION

By Ted Kramer

CONCORD — The Working Group for the Ossipee Lake Natural Area may have established a new norm for how local citizens and homeowners, town officials, businesses, environmentalists and recreational boaters collaborate and compromise effectively with State agencies such as Safety, Fish & Game and the Dept. of Resources & Economic Development

At least that is the result of this summer's premiere of the "managed" Ossipee Lake Natural Area for the responsible use by all.

The N.H. Lakes Association applauds this effort to preserve this prized property for the multiple use by most interested parties.

Some of us have fond memories of enjoying this spectacular area, and it appears that possibility will be preserved for generations to come.

The rules are straightforward. The signage is clear. The purpose is intact. Congratulations on this effort and the result.

Ted Kramer is Board Chair of the New Hampshire Lakes Association.

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INSIDE:

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- The Making of a Lake Coalition
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- State Rules Balance all Interests
- The Plan for Water Testing

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