

OSSIPEE LAKE REPORT

COMMUNITY INITIATIVE WILL TAKE AIM AT MILFOIL

Key Dates:

- **Saturday, May, 29:** Public meeting to launch Ossipee Lake Weed Watchers. Learn how to identify and report invasive lake weeds. Freedom Town Hall, 10 AM–Noon. Info @ 914-588-3280.
- **Sunday, May 30:** Annual spring meeting of members, Berry Bay Association, 10 AM, Dickie residence. Info @ 914-725-3342.
- **Saturday, June 19:** Lakes Congress of the New Hampshire Lakes Association, St. Paul's School, Concord. Public invited. Info @ 603-226-0299.

In its most ambitious effort to date, Ossipee Lake Alliance will launch a two-year community-based initiative to prevent the spread of the destructive weed milfoil, which has infested Broad Bay, Leavitt Bay, and Danforth Pond in four locations.

The Ossipee Lake Exotic Species Program, or ESP for short, will begin on Saturday, May 29th, with the launch of a volunteer Weed Watchers program. In a two-hour session at Freedom Town Hall, interested individuals will learn how to spot invasive weeds and how to send a sample to the state for testing.

Then in the fall, a much larger effort will take shape with the formation of a multi-community task force consisting of elected officials, members of environmental and conservation groups, and individual volunteers from Freedom, Ossipee, and Effingham.



Winter on the lake, with deep-freeze temperatures and deep-blue skies, will soon give way to a new season of water sports. *Alliance Photo*

The goal of the task force will be to implement lake-wide boater education and voluntary, self-monitored boat inspections by seeking the involvement and participation of the owners of the lake's private boat ramps, including marinas, con-

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VOTERS APPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL FUNDS, REJECT ZONING CHANGE

March is Town Meeting month, and when the residents of Freedom and Ossipee took to their town halls this year they considered and voted on a number of issues of significant importance to Ossipee Lake.

In Freedom, a large turn-out of voters approved a \$2,500 contingency fund that the Selectmen can use to control and treat milfoil.

The Alliance sponsored the warrant article, the first of its kind for Ossipee Lake, noting that state funds for such efforts continue to be limited.

In another Freedom vote, amendments to the zoning ordinance proposed by the Planning Board that would have permitted much larger buildings in protected areas, including shorelines and the

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COMMUNITY MILFOIL PROGRAM SET TO LAUNCH IN MAY

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dominium developments, beach clubs, and campgrounds. It is estimated that there are more than 20 boat access ramps on the lake, all but two of them privately-owned.

Milfoil and the even more destructive weed hydrilla, which has taken hold in near-by Limerick, Maine, pose a substantial threat to the state's lakes. In addition to their potential to harm fishing, boating, and water sports, invasive species can diminish waterfront property values, according to a 2002 University of New Hampshire study.

Tax Revenue Cited

The financial stakes for Freedom and Ossipee are high. In addition to the potential equity loss to individual property owners, diminished shorefront real estate values would reduce tax revenues. It is estimated that payments by non-resident taxpayers, including shorefront property owners, comprise 50%-60% of the tax base.

That fact alone makes protecting the lake from milfoil a community issue. Resident voters in Ossipee and Freedom appeared to agree when they approved the creation of contingency funds for milfoil prevention and control at their town meetings in March. The Alliance sponsored the warrant articles for the funds with the support of the Selectmen.

Previous efforts to prevent milfoil from entering or leaving Ossipee Lake have focused on boater education and voluntary inspections conducted through the Lake Host program at the public boat ramp on Pine River in Center Ossipee. The Alliance has co-sponsored that program for two years with Green Mountain Conservation Group. While it has been a success, the ESP initiative will go well beyond that effort accord-



Ossipee Selectman Harry Merrow and Conservation Commission chairman Tim Nolin view the Philips Brook milfoil with Susan Marks. *Alliance Photo*

ing to the program's director, Susan Marks.

"The milfoil that was discovered in Phillips Brook last summer showed the extent of the challenge we face," she says, referring to the Leavitt Bay infestation, which is the largest and densest to date and is scheduled to be treated by the state in late spring.

"A prevention program at one ramp when there are more than 20 other places for boats to enter the lake is not going to stop another occurrence like Phillips Brook. We need to work with the owners of all of the lake's ramps and offer them the same tools we've successfully used at Pine River."

Weed Watchers Planned

In the meantime, Marks is planning Ossipee Lake's first lake-wide Weed Watchers program, a successful volunteer initiative developed by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services.

The program is fun and it works, according to Marks. Volunteers attend a two-hour information session on how to identify invasive weeds and send suspicious weeds to the state for analysis. "Anyone can participate, adults and children alike."

Ossipee Lake Weed Watchers is open to all and will launch on Saturday, May 29th at Freedom Town Hall from 10 AM-Noon.



TO OUR READERS

- **Ossipee Lake Report** is available in color on the web at: www.ossipeelake.org.
- **Ossipee Lake e-News** delivers up to the minute information about the lake by e-mail, as events warrant. Contact: suscribe@ossipeelake.org.
- Report mail address changes to: info@ossipeelake.org or send to P.O. Box 173, Freedom, NH 03836.
- Funding for the **Ossipee Lake Report** is provided in part by a grant from the **New England Grassroots Environment Fund**.

 **New England Grassroots Environment Fund**



The Alliance is a member of the New Hampshire Lakes Association.

PRICE NIXES SUPREME COURT APPEAL AND CASE ENDS

On March 9th, Kevin Price, the principal owner of Ossipee Lake Marina, dropped his appeal to the New Hampshire Supreme Court to overturn the town of Freedom's limits on the expansion of his business, which is in the residential district on Broad Bay.

Price's withdrawal effectively ends more than six years of often heated public debate and lets stand the January Superior Court ruling that upheld the town's denial of additional boat storage buildings on the marina property.

The marina case hinged on a 1997 special exception the town granted to Price and his Ossipee Realty Corporation to construct two boat storage buildings, provided there would be no more than 225 boats on the property. Price built the two buildings but then constructed a third without town approval.

After the extra building collapsed in a snowstorm he applied to the zoning board of adjustment (ZBA) to re-build it as part of a major business expansion plan. The plan was turned down for being adverse to the character of the area and for being an impermissible expansion of a non-conforming use.

Superior Court Appeals

In an appeal of the town's ruling to the state, Price's attorney, Randall Cooper, argued that the 1997 special exception implied town approval for the construction of an unlimited number of new buildings to accommodate up to 225 boats. The court sided with town attorney Peter Malia in rejecting that contention, however, sustaining the town's determination that the ZBA had approved just two buildings, not an unlimited number of buildings.

In another aspect of the case, Judge O'Neill let stand the ZBA's 2002 "after the fact" approval of special exceptions for bathrooms and parking lots that Price illegally constructed between 1998 and 2000 on adjacent residential property purchased from Constantino "Gus" DiPrizio, land that became known as Lot 42.

In that matter, two groups of Broad Bay property owners argued that the town's approvals violated state law and local zoning because the ZBA had rejected identical special exception uses just a few weeks earlier.

The court rejected that argument and the property owners did not appeal.

Lake Community Frustrations

When the Ossipee Lake Marina case was first publicized it became a lightning rod for pent-up frustrations among lake property owners who felt that state and local officials were not aggressively enforcing regulations to protect the lake's character and environment. Organizing as Broad Bay Alliance, they presented town officials with pictures and a list of the Marina's zoning violations during a three-year period during which new buildings were constructed, expanded, and remodeled without required town approvals and permits.

After Price purchased adjacent residential property and built public access roads, parking lots, and bathrooms without acquiring approvals, the group launched an Internet website and took its case to the public.

In the meantime, the state's response to violations was equally as sluggish, with the Department of Environmental Services taking three years to confirm the Freedom Conservation Commission's 1998 report that the Marina had filled wetlands on Lot 42. The wetlands were restored at Price's expense under state supervision in the autumn of 2002.

The Marina issues came to a head after the town instructed Price to apply to the ZBA for "after the fact" approvals of his zoning violations and he submitted a business expansion plan that was so sweeping that more than 200 Freedom property owners – some seasonal residents driving from distant states – turned out to oppose it at a public hearing that took place during an ice storm. The ZBA's decisions on that application eventually led to January's court ruling.

In the spring of 2003 Broad Bay Alliance became the Ossipee Lake Alliance with a goal of preserving and protecting the lake through research, education programs, and advocacy.

Since that time the Alliance and Freedom's Selectmen have worked closely to establish better communication between the town and the lake's property owners, a majority of whom are seasonal residents.

"The withdrawal of the appeal of the Superior Court ruling effectively ends more than six years of often heated public debate on the matter."

STATE PROMISES “MORE FOR LESS” IN WATER TESTING

These are tough times requiring tough decisions. That was the essence of the message that Department of Environmental Services Commissioner Michael Nolin delivered to members of the state’s Legislative Fiscal Committee who convened a special meeting on January 21st to discuss the \$2.2 million in budget cuts and 16 staff layoffs that Nolin had announced two weeks earlier without seeking the legislators’ approval.

Among Nolin’s cuts was one that created an angry outcry from New Hampshire’s lake community – the termination of Andrea LaMoureaux, the popular head of the Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP) who was responsible for coordinating more than 500 volunteers annually to conduct water-sampling and testing on 150 state lakes.

LaMoureaux, whose annual salary was \$31,000, reportedly was given a week’s notice that her position and the program that she had run for the past three years were being eliminated.

Not so, said Commissioner Nolin to the legislators. While LaMoureaux would be leaving the agency, VLAP would continue by spreading the workload around. “There’s no reason you can’t do more with less,” he said.

An Emotional Issue

VLAP generates a substantial body of actionable water quality data and helps keep the state in compliance with federal regulations. Noting the abnormally high volume of phone calls and letters that legislators had received about the layoffs, Representative Bob Odell asked Nolin why people were skeptical about his cuts.

Nolin responded by calling the situation “an emotional issue” and explaining that LaMoureaux would be replaced by someone with more seniority who has been working on lake studies. That person’s work would, in turn, be divided among 15 other employees, and so on.



VLAP-based water testing on Ossipee Lake included deep-water sampling last year. Rebecca Hanson and Moselle Spiller are shown braving a heavy downpour. *Alliance Photo*

Nolin’s cuts stem from the Legislature’s mandate to reduce state spending by replacing general fund money with federal funds. A budget was set last summer and the agency was authorized to make additional cuts provided that the cuts would not affect services. How Nolin intends to make good on his promise to maintain current services with fewer employees is the subject of much speculation.

Staff Vacancies Noted

For *Concord Monitor* fishing and outdoor life columnist John W. Corrigan the state’s promises ring hollow. In his January 25th “Angler’s Journal” column he pointedly asked: “Does anyone who casts a line in New Hampshire believe the state spends too much money on environmental protection?”

Noting that the elimination of three watershed bureau scientists leaves four vacant positions in that department, Corrigan sees an agency “that is losing its capacity to protect the environment.” His concerns were echoed by Senator Lou D’Allesandro who tallied 74 unfilled positions in an agency that usually employs 530, a 14% vacancy rate.

Commenting on the vacancies in the watershed bureau, Nolin seemingly contradicted his “more for less” mantra by saying “We’ll suck that up to the degree that we can...but that’s clearly a reduction in staff that will result in a reduction in our ability to do work on studies, and outreach and education.”

HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME, WISH YOU WERE HERE

It was a vintage postcard of Cassie Cove that got us hooked. A surprise find in a box of items purchased at a tag sale, it neatly encapsulated the spirit of the long ago summer of 1962 in the form of two beaming teenagers – Bill and Patty, according to the caption – water-skiing in a part of the lake where crowding has now made headway speed the law.

For as long as Ossipee Lake has been a vacation destination there have been postcards to promote it. As a body of work, these cards are the closest we have to a pictorial history of the lake in its various stages of development – and they are a fascination.

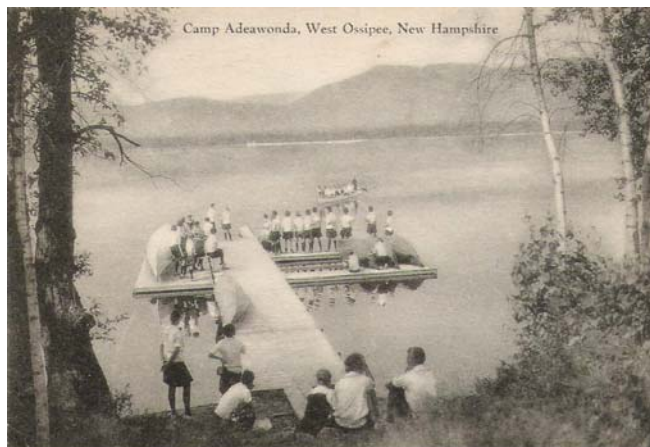
Just ask Jan Rockwell, manager of Lakewood Station Antiques on Route 16 in Ossipee. As an antiques dealer, Rockwell has seen dozens of postcards of Ossipee Lake and its surroundings and usually has a selection available for sale.

Since postcards were created to be promotional items, the most common Ossipee Lake cards show water sports, wildlife, and sunsets - the kind of scenes you might expect to see on a vacation, Rockwell says. The most collectible cards, however, show places on the lake that have dramatically changed or no longer exist.

Over the years Rockwell has bought and sold postcards showing such long-vanished landmarks as Camp Adeawonda and Deer Cove Lodge on the big lake, and Tice's General Store and the Mount Whittier gondolas in West Ossipee.

The Rarest Cards

Among the cards in this category of collectibles are some that are quite rare. For example, while Rockwell has seen all six of the known postcards of Sunny Villa Restaurant, including several from the 1930s, she has only seen one showing the inside of the restaurant. "I acquired that card and then sold it to a collector a number of years ago and I haven't seen another one since."



Postcards showing Ossipee Lake scenes, like this one of campers and counselors at long-vanished Camp Adeawonda, are fascinating guides to the lake's past. *Jan Rockwell Collection.*

Although the rarest cards can fetch \$100 or more, most collectible cards can be found for well under \$20 and good sleuthing can turn up excellent vintage cards for \$5 or less.

As for what to collect among contemporary postcards, Rockwell says it's impossible to predict which ones might one day be valuable. "I recommend that people collect cards that have some personal value, such as a scene showing a part of the lake you like. Or simply collect cards that have a picture or design you find attractive."

Preserving the Past

While the lake's postcard history is being preserved by collectors, local historians are concerned about the potential loss of another archive of lake memorabilia: family photo albums. When lake properties change hands, family photos and lake memorabilia move on as well.

That has Carol Foord of the Freedom Historical Society wondering how to preserve such collections. "In addition to photos showing the lake environment in times past, some collections may show notable individuals, activities, or events that are worth preserving." Local memorabilia, such as old restaurant menus, signs, and movie posters, may also disappear. "There is quite likely a treasure trove of memorabilia on the lake that is in danger of passing out of our area forever."



Vintage postcards show cottages at The Bluffs, top, and Tice's Store in West Ossipee, below. *Jan Rockwell Collection*

CONTROLLED BURNS NEEDED TO PRESERVE PINE BARRENS

Article reprinted by courtesy of The Nature Conservancy.

Rare moths and other species in the Ossipee Pine Barrens will benefit from additional land protection, continued monitoring and carefully controlled burns, according to two recent studies.

Jon Kart, a University of Vermont graduate student, spent last summer doing field research in the Ossipee Pine Barrens for his master's thesis.

He collected more than 2,500 moths, comprising 246 separate species, including six rare species. Stewardship ecologist

Jeffrey Lougee this spring collected an additional six rare moth species, some of which haven't been seen in nearly 20 years.

Pine barrens natural communities provide refuge to an unusual diversity of moths, and the Ossipee Pine Barrens is the last viable pitch pine-scrub oak barrens in New Hampshire and one of the best remaining in the Northeast.

In addition to rare moths, the Barrens is home to several species of shrubland birds whose populations are in sharp decline, such as Brown Thrasher and Eastern Towhee. Two other birds, Common Nighthawk and Whip-poor-will, may have the highest densities in the state here.

A companion study by Claire Dacey of the University of Vermont helps the Nature Conservancy make sense of the unusual vegetation at Ossipee. Dacey used a systematic approach to classify the vegetation there into eight distinct types. Her work will help the Conservancy determine how to manage for a variety of structural stages and habitat types to benefit the uncommon wildlife species found in the Ossipee barrens.

Fire's Role In the Barrens

Though fire has long been a part of this ecosystem, fire has been heavily suppressed here for the past 50 years because of nearby homes and businesses. Some areas haven't seen a sig-



Rare moths and other species in the Ossipee Pine Barrens will benefit from additional land protection, continued monitoring, and carefully controlled burns, according to two recent studies. *Photo: Jeff Lougee*

nificant fire since the turn of the last century.

The studies point out the problems of doing nothing at Ossipee. Eventually, white pines and maples will overtake the scrub oak-pitch pine barrens, replacing the rare natural community and its biodiversity with a more common pine-maple forest.

Among Kart's recommendations is to continue protecting land here; initiate additional monitoring of moths and other wildlife; and conduct a careful regimen of controlled burns to restore the area's natural relationship with fire.

The New Hampshire chapter of The Nature Conservancy owns and oversees the Ossipee Pine Barrens. Its Internet website is at

BROCHURE WILL FOCUS ON LAKE'S SPECIAL PLACES

The Ossipee Pine Barrens is one of four special places on Ossipee Lake to be featured in a brochure Ossipee Lake Alliance will publish in May with support from Northeast Utilities and its Public Service Company of New Hampshire subsidiary.

The brochure will be distributed by mail to all lake property owners, town officials, and environmental groups. Look for your copy in May.



Jon Kart conducts field research in the Ossipee Pine Barrens. *Photo: TNC*

RESIDENTS VOICE OPINIONS AND VOTE AT TOWN MEETINGS

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town's village district, were rejected by a large margin, 56% to 44%.

Opposition to the amendments began to form after a Berry Bay property owner, who is a professional town planner, wrote in the *Independent* and *Conway Sun* that the proposed change would significantly relax current restrictions, something that the wording of the amendments did not make clear.

The Alliance subsequently opposed the amendments after Planning Board members declined to discuss them and explain why they were in the town's best interest. In covering the story, the *Independent* reported that it too was unable to reach a board member to discuss the amendments.

Freedom voters also unanimously approved establishing a 2,600 acre town forest in the Trout Pond parcel. It will be purchased by

the Friends of Trout Pond and the Trust For Public Lands in a \$2 million agreement with the current owner, a Nevada holding company called Republic Financial Corporation. Once the purchase has been completed the forest will be managed by the Freedom Conservation Commission.

Also funded by voters was continued local water testing by Green Mountain Conservation Group, which is conducting a multi-year initiative in the Ossipee watershed.

In Ossipee, voters approved a \$5,000 contingency fund for milfoil prevention and control. The warrant article was sponsored by the Alliance and is a first for the town.

In the Selectmen's races, former Freedom ZBA chairman James Breslin edged out town building inspector Paul Dorian to replace Eric Bossidy, who is the new town treasurer. In Ossipee, Selectman Harry Merrow was re-elected.

It's New Hampshire's best north country lake for fishing, boating, and swimming. Home of the state's finest remaining examples of unique environmental habitats. The location of one of your most important real estate investments. It's Ossipee Lake, and there's only one organization dedicated to preserving and protecting it: Ossipee Lake Alliance. Please invest today in the future of your lake by joining us.

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