



Photo by Buddy Potts

# Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society Newsletter

Autumn 2013

[www.tacomalakes.org](http://www.tacomalakes.org)

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## Annual Meeting

The Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society held our annual breakfast and meeting on Saturday, July 13, 2013 at the Sportsmen's Club in Litchfield. The breakfast started at 8:30 AM and ended at 9:30 AM. A Total of 48 breakfasts were served. The breakfast was followed by a brief business meeting then excellent speaker presentations by Tamara Whitmore, Brian Kent and Rayna Leibowitz. Full minutes from the meeting are posted on the Society's website.

*"If you are lucky enough to live by a lake, you are lucky enough!"*

## Treasurer's Report

The Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society has enjoyed another successful financial year in 2013. Membership as of October 1 is 218, just short of last year's total of 221. Donations have been amazing again this year totaling \$2,814.00 so far. We hope to exceed last year's membership total and donations before the end of the year.

Expenses are up from last year along with our total income. This is the result of the tee shirts and reusable bags we are selling as a fund raiser. Otherwise revenue and expenses are about the same. Our largest expense is the inspectors at the Woodbury boat launch. We have not received the final billing from the Friends of Cobbossee Watershed yet, but the total will be over \$4,000.00 again this year.

Our grant from the State of Maine was reduced by \$200.00 this year to \$1,800.00. This was not the result of a lack of effort by your Society. The amount of money available each year is about the same. More lake associations apply for a grant than ever before, so the pie gets sliced a little thinner. We are very grateful that Litchfield and Monmouth continued the same level of support to TLIS at \$1,000.00 and \$500.00 respectively.

We continue to invest our surplus safely in a government insured checking account and two CD's. The interest rates are very low but our money is safe.

A complete financial statement is available at any time to member only. Please send your request to [memberservice@tacomalakes.org](mailto:memberservice@tacomalakes.org) or call me at 860-614-6321.

Thank you,

Buddy Potts  
Treasurer



## President's Letter

Dear Members:

As another summer season ends, it's important to reflect on what we have accomplished during 2013. As president, I had set a very ambitious agenda for this year and although TLIS did not accomplish all that we proposed we certainly made substantial progress!

First and foremost I want to thank all of you for continuing to maintain your membership in our society. This year membership continued to be strong. I and the other directors can't thank you enough for not only your membership, but the considerable extra donations made this year. Every last penny is used for TLIS activities and no directors or officers receive any compensation other than the satisfaction of knowing our efforts to maintain the Tacoma watershed will not only allow all of us, but hopefully our descendants, to enjoy the pleasures of our lake system.

The annual spring breakfast/meeting was again a huge success and, despite having a slightly lower attendance than in past years, was well received by those attending. The dessert silent auction had an abundance of delicious treats and has proven to be very popular with members and an excellent fund raising method. My thanks go out to all the members and others who made desserts or donated other items to this fund raiser!

TLIS and the Town of Litchfield continue to seek solutions to the issue of providing proper maintenance at the Purgatory dam. TLIS officers solicited bids for repair work, but instead were simply provided quotes to inform us what needs to be done and not to perform the actual work. It is important to note that the dam is in good condition and the mechanical gate was tested this year and found to be in working condition. Dam keeper Terry Averill continues to do an outstanding job monitoring and maintaining water levels in the lake chain. I would ask that any members, who know of individuals who professionally do concrete work, let those individuals know of our need for those services. Many large firms I have spoken with simply do not desire to take on what they consider to be a small job with not enough profit. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with others about what is needed at the dam site and obtain estimates for that work to submit to the town.

This year, with the support and assistance of the Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed, 50 mats were placed in Purgatory stream in a continued effort to control the milfoil infestation there. During the recent removal of those mats I had the opportunity to speak with John Blouin, Executive Director, and Tamara Whitmore, Program Director, about what may be a more cost and time effective method to destroy this milfoil. Breaching the lower dam by what may have been a release gate in the old dam would drain the portion of the stream that holds the milfoil and effectively destroy all of it very quickly. I will be exploring this option with both of them and local officials over the fall and winter to determine if this is a viable option.

TLIS funds again provided for a full season of boat inspections at the Purgatory boat launch, the only access point motorized boaters have to the Tacoma lake chain. This effort is a result of close collaboration with the Friends of Cobbossee Watershed, who provide and schedule the staffing at the launch site. As in past years, this launch area continues to have one of the highest boat inspection rates in the entire watershed. My thanks go out to the members of the bass clubs, who conduct regularly scheduled tournaments on our lake. These tournaments are well run and provide their own inspectors to ensure that invasive plants are not transferred from other lakes to ours.

The beaver infestation in Jimmy stream continues and will be an ongoing yearly effort. Unfortunately and despite the removal of beaver over the past two years, the beavers continue to rebuild the dam after every attempt to remove it. TLIS members were diligent this year in removing debris to allow boat access in the stream, but with the lowering of the water in October, beavers will have an excellent opportunity to strengthen what is already there. I will again solicit a trapper this winter to attempt to decrease the beaver population so that when next spring comes, access to the stream will be manageable.

I, personally, took many phone calls and emails over the summer from members or others who had questions related to our lakes. I also met many individuals from out-of-state that were enjoying our lakes and they remarked how lucky we must be to live in such a wonderful area. Sometimes it is comments like those that make me realize that we have opportunities here that many individuals simply do not have on a regular basis, and that is why it is so important that TLIS continues to do the work that it does.

I would encourage you to utilize the services of the businesses that have so generously supported us not only in the past but continue to do so. They are for the most part local businesses owned by local people, who depend on your support to stay in business!

We are sending out regular updates through much of the year by email. It is too time consuming and expensive to send the updates by regular mail. If you have an email address and have not provided it to us please send it to us at [memberservice@tacomalakes.org](mailto:memberservice@tacomalakes.org). We will be happy to add you to the email list so long as you are a current member.

Lastly, I encourage you to ask your lakefront neighbors, particularly if they are new, if they are members of TLIS. If they are not members please encourage them to join. Suggest they check out our website, which is loaded with information. It's only through strength in numbers that we can be the influence we hope to be on what happens in our watershed! We would be glad to send the newsletter and an application to individuals you might suggest. Keeping our mailing list up to date is at times a herculean task!

Sincerely

Bruce Doyle, President

*TLIS BOARD OF DIRECTORS*

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Bruce Doyle  
207-312-3698  
[bdoyles@roadrunner.com](mailto:bdoyles@roadrunner.com)

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Joline Bell *Tacoma ~*  
978-761-0346  
[jolinebell@gmail.com](mailto:jolinebell@gmail.com)

**TREASURER**

Harold F Potts Jr (Buddy)  
860-614-6321  
[memberservice@tacomalakes.org](mailto:memberservice@tacomalakes.org)

**SECRETARY**

Joni Smith  
207-268-4638  
[nubble363@aol.com](mailto:nubble363@aol.com)

**DIRECTORS**

Kurt Bechtel  
207-268-4638  
[apache1958@live.com](mailto:apache1958@live.com)

Diane Clay  
207-268-3247  
[c1i2a3y4@gmail.com](mailto:c1i2a3y4@gmail.com)

Bill Gartley  
207-268-4641  
[taco1@roadrunner.com](mailto:taco1@roadrunner.com)

Charlie Manchester  
207-557-4087  
[charliemanchester@fairpoint.net](mailto:charliemanchester@fairpoint.net)

Pat Soboleski  
207-268-4237  
[psobo@roadrunner.com](mailto:psobo@roadrunner.com)

Dian White  
207-268-4843  
[figowhite1940@gmail.com](mailto:figowhite1940@gmail.com)

**DAM KEEPER**

Terry Averill  
207-446-3385  
[TBAverill@aol.com](mailto:TBAverill@aol.com)

**2013 Membership Dues Now Overdue**

Your 2013 membership dues are \$15.00. A membership application is included in the newsletter. Your board of directors would appreciate you mailing the application and dues payment as soon as possible. **If you have paid your 2013 dues, please do not pay them again.** We prefer not to receive dues for future years as our accounting system is designed for one year at a time. Thank you.

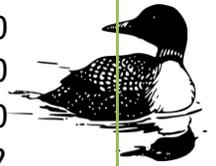
**Bottle Donation**

TLIS continues to welcome your bottle donations that are being left in the blue barrels at the town recycling center. This remains one of our most important fund raisers. If you could bag the bottles in plastic bags prior to putting them in the barrels it would be greatly appreciated otherwise it can be somewhat of a messy job fishing them out and bagging them. Thank you!

**Loon Count**

The Maine Audubon Society through the use of volunteer observers, maintain a data base of loon populations on Maine Lakes. These surveys are conducted once per year in a half hour period on the third Saturday in July. The latest information available is from 2012.

Lake	Adult Loons	Loon Chicks
Buker Pond	3	0
Jimmy Pond	0	0
Little Purgatory	0	0
Sand Pond	7	0
Woodbury Pond	13	2



<http://maineaudubon.org/wildlife-habitat/the-maine-loon-project>

**THANK YOU DONORS!**

Please note that membership dues only provide about 1/3 of our annual expenses. Our dues do not even cover our largest expense, the inspectors at the boat launch. Your board of directors would like to thank the members who have made donations in addition to your dues. These donations are an essential part of our ability to help protect our lakes. All donors are acknowledged on our website, which is updated regularly.

*Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society is dedicated to the education of lake users and the environmental protection of our lakes.*



<http://www.mainevolunteerlakemonitors.org>

## Loony Construction

By Diane Clay



In March 2013 a group of builders and bird lovers gathered at the Waterman's farm in Sabattus to make sure that the *loons on Tacoma Lakes have proper homes*. One older loon nesting island was restored and a new one constructed in plenty of time for nesting. Thanks to the Litchfield Conservation Commission for donating the materials. (See photos)

Peter Waterman and his daughter, Kristin, have placed a nesting island in their cove for several years and have had viable nests most years. Jim Waterman has been placing one in the southern end of Woodbury Pond for the last few years and finally encouraged the loons to use the covered island instead of the large, open rock.

### **History Fact:**

*Did you know **Purgatory Ponds** was the original name of what are now Buker, Sand, and Woodbury Ponds*

Billy and Robin Bonn on Buker Pond have placed a nesting island first in Buker and later in Sand Pond. The loons that hang out in that area have rarely had a chick in the last few years. We were excited first about an egg that was on the nesting island and later by spotting a loon nesting on the shore of the natural island, but neither location proved successful.

A new nesting island went into Jimmy Stream this year monitored by Bruce and Rainy Doyle. Ironically, the loons in that area did nest for the first time in many years, selecting an old muskrat home for their eggs. The chick did not survive, but maybe next year they'll choose the artificial island and have better luck!

## Invasive Plant Patrol

By Diane Clay

On a sunny Tuesday morning in August Buffy Dematteis, Suzy Wilding-Hartford, and Diane Clay set out to up-date the invasive plant status of the Woodbury boat launch. They were joined by Buffy's friend, Lorice, who generously offered to paddle one of the boats. Buffy, Suzie, and Diane have previously done extensive surveys at the boat launch identifying the native species that are typical of that area. Since then they have tried to return every few years to make sure that the only plants they find are natives. The good news is that there were no invasive plants to be found this year. (See pictures)

Earlier in the summer the three plant patrollers held a fun, yet informative party to get the word out about invasive plants and the importance of folks continuing to keep an eye on their own and surrounding properties for things that appear suspicious. Fourteen people expressed an interest in learning more about it. Buffy later hosted a plant paddle to give some of those interested a closer look. To date we have approximately ten people who are willing to accompany us when they can and check their own properties as well. Our goal is to get enough interest that sections of our lakes can be checked yearly. TLIS generously purchased identity cards and books for those who have shown some dedication to this project. For further information contact Diane Clay - 268-3247 or C1L2A3Y4@gmail.com



## For Your Information

### Arsenic in the Wells

Using data from more than 11,000 wells in 530 Maine municipalities, a landmark U.S. Geological Survey study released in 2010 showed three high-arsenic clusters: the southern coast, Down East and Greater Augusta.

Columbia University followed up those results and estimated 31 percent of private wells in Greater Augusta contain arsenic above the federal standard. Arsenic found in some private wells sampled by Columbia researchers exceeded the standard by 10 to more than 100 times.

Using various analytical methods, Columbia researchers say 12,293 to 15,561 Kennebec County residents are drinking from private wells that have toxic levels of arsenic, which has been linked to increased risk of skin, lung and bladder cancer; developmental problems in children; diabetes; and undesirable effects on the immune system.

The problem — naturally occurring from underlying rock — is particularly prevalent in Readfield and Manchester, and in a band along the western edge of the county from Winthrop and Monmouth south through Hallowell and Litchfield.

Wells in homes along the Tacoma Lakes have tested positive for arsenic. Long term exposure to this mineral can be dangerous. If you have not had your well tested we encourage you to do so as soon as possible.

### Lake Level Lowering

This year's lowering of the lake was to start on Monday, October 15, 2013. according the dam keeper Terry Averill. Please make sure you have removed any boats, docks, etc. prior to the lake lowering or this could cause you additional difficulties.

### Ice Safety

*General Ice Thickness Guidelines - For New, Clear Ice Only:*

2" or less - **STAY OFF**

4" May allow Ice fishing or other activities on foot

5" often allows for Snowmobile or ATV travel

8" - 12" of good ice which supports most cars or small pickups

12" - 15" will likely hold a Medium sized truck.

Remember that these thicknesses are merely guidelines for new, clear, solid ice. Many factors other than thickness can cause ice to be unsafe.

[http://www.maine.gov/ifw/warden\\_service/safety](http://www.maine.gov/ifw/warden_service/safety)

### We Need Your Help

We need your help to maintain our email address list up to date. Almost every time we send email we receive notice of bad email addresses. As we have no way of knowing when members change their email address we have no choice but to remove the bad addresses from our list. Anytime you change your email address please send your new address to [memberservice@tacomalakes.org](mailto:memberservice@tacomalakes.org). We are happy to update our list so you can always receive the latest information from your Society!

## SAVE THE DATE



For Tickets: <http://friendscomedy.eventbrite.com/>

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