



NEWSLETTER SPRING 2015

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Tacoma Lakes Property Values Nose Dive as Milfoil is Discovered in the Lake Chain!

Do I have your attention now? The above statement could very well be a reality in the near future if lakefront owners and others don't pay serious attention to what is happening in our lake system. The facts are:

- The Tacoma Lake chain is surrounded by ponds, lakes and streams which are already infested with invasive species. Your Society and the Friends of Cobbossee Watershed have worked diligently over the past three years to remove the milfoil infestation which is present in the stream below the dam. This has been expensive in money and time.
- Boat inspectors, funded by TLIS, can only be at the Woodbury launch weekends, holidays and Fridays during the summer. We lack the funds to provide full time coverage.
- Approximately 50% of lake front owners, despite owning both year round and seasonal properties on the Tacoma Lake chain, fail to join TLIS and contribute the modest \$15 membership fee that is essential to fund inspections. At this point I need to thank sincerely those land owners who "get it" and join and contribute to the efforts of TLIS by both volunteering and making financial donations.
- The Woodbury dam in Litchfield, which allows all of us to have lake frontage, is in serious need of maintenance. The dam has been neglected since the town took it over from the Society many years ago. A breach of that dam would result in the entire lake chain reverting to a stream, as it once was. The majority of camps and homes would have no waterfront, resulting in serious property devaluations and subsequently a crippling tax blow to the town.
- Our Facebook page has 142 likes. It is active and has provided a variety of important information and resources to our community. Once again only about half of the people who have liked the page are members. This is another example of the Society providing resources for the community while not being supported in return by the community by paying our very modest dues.
- Out of control fireworks are polluting our water, terrorizing our wildlife and affecting the quality of life for every human living on our lakes. There was no progress this winter in the legislature to give small towns without police departments, like Litchfield, relief. Your Society has made a major effort over the last few years to educate the community why fireworks should not be used near our lakes. While the legislature won't help, why can't neighbors educate each other and ask their neighbors to consider the damage they cause and not use them on the lakes? The fact that they are legal is a ridiculous excuse for using them on our lakes. This is a matter of common sense and common decency. Instead they just get worse every year. Long time owners tell me they are considering selling their camps because they have had enough. The more property for sale the lower the property values. This is another issue which affects all of us, but there seems to be no effort by the community to step up and help to end this scourge.

Do I sound irritated? I am. I've lived in this town since 1961 and actively enjoyed the Tacoma Lakes even prior to that as my family at one time owned the largest island in the chain. I have served on the Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society as both a director and officer and am currently in my fourth term as President. Personally, I put in hundreds of unpaid hours each year performing duties necessary to keep our lake system as pristine as possible so not only my family, but others in the future, can enjoy what we all currently have. I'm not alone in this task, and couldn't do it without the help of our treasurer, Buddy Potts, our board of directors, and an active volunteer plant paddle patrol.



However, as TLIS approaches its 75th anniversary next year, I wonder if the constant battle is really worth it when so few others seem to take any interest.

- Despite numerous pleas, no citizen, local or otherwise, will volunteer to serve on the Litchfield Woodbury Dam Committee. The time commitment may be all of a few hours a month in the summer.
- I receive calls on occasions from lake front owners wanting me to address lake related issues such as the beaver dam on Jimmy stream; yet these individuals won't even bother to join TLIS.
- Litchfield town officials have known about the Woodbury dam issues since the last dam inspection and have shown little or no interest in addressing the work needed.
- TLIS has always welcomed individuals willing to serve as directors, yet it is a constant battle to keep a full board of directors. We have not had anyone volunteer to serve as a board member from Monmouth for as long as anyone can remember, despite about 20% of our waterfront being located in Monmouth.
- As mentioned earlier, many lake front owners fail to comprehend how fragile the lake system is and feel a
- \$15 membership is not worth paying in order to help protect an investment in the future. Last year our net gain in membership was only 2. We lost almost as many members as we gained new ones. A significant number who chose not to renew their membership were long term-members who still own their property. Failing to pay our modest dues is impossible to understand.

TLIS is at a crossroads. We have had many accomplishments over the last 6 years, but two people have done too much of the work. The time is here for others to step forward and carry TLIS into the future. We need a vibrant and hardworking board who share the work load. We need everyone with an interest in the Tacoma's to pay their dues every year. My leadership obviously has not been successful in overcoming all the obstacles TLIS has faced, and that, coupled with a lack of interest from others to take over my role, have brought us to this crossroads. **Everyone receiving this newsletter: please pay your dues today.** It is time for the many talented people who live on our lakes to step forward and help.

Lastly, I would encourage you all to read an article on the web by Congwen Zhang and Kevin Boyle, titled "The Effect of an aquatic invasive species (Eurasian watermilfoil) on lakefront property values" published by the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, Virginia Tech. Here is a link to the article, or you can Google it: <http://bit.ly/1HSwNOy>

In summary it states: "Invasive species are one of the major threats to ecosystems. One of these 'invaders', Eurasian watermilfoil, can crowd out important native aquatic plants, decrease habitat and diversity of native species in a lake, and interfere with water-based recreation. This study uses a hedonic property-value method to estimate the effect of Eurasian watermilfoil on lakefront property values at selected Vermont lakes. Results indicate that as the primary component of total aquatic macrophyte growth in a lake Eurasian watermilfoil significantly and substantially affects lakefront property values. As Eurasian watermilfoil infests a lake, adding to the total macrophyte growth, property values can diminish by < 1% to 16% for incremental increases in the infestation level. Hence, policies that successfully prevent infestations have significant economic benefits to owners of lakefront properties and local communities."

Isn't that benefit worth \$15.00 a year? Isn't that benefit worth stepping forward and volunteering some of your time? My contact information is included in this newsletter.

Wishing you a pleasant summer season.
Bruce Doyle, President

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society enjoyed another successful financial year in 2014. Major programs were funded including an increased number of Boat Launch inspections from previous years, plant paddle surveys, a greatly improved newsletter and a professional website update. Our annual meeting attendance more than doubled from the previous year. A handful of volunteers set up, cooked and cleaned up after feeding 100 people!

Board member Ari Wile did an amazing job with the fall newsletter and was directly involved in the revitalization of our webpage. Thank you Ari for sharing your talents with TLIS! Our Facebook page was also very active during 2014. Membership reached the highest level in over a decade at 232. We still have much work to do to grow our membership as it remains too low, particularly considering the hard work done by the Society each year.

Your membership dues are the number one source of funding for the Society. In 2014 dues totaled \$3,480.00. 2014 Donations totaled \$3,459.80, up an impressive \$615.80 from 2013. We continue to slowly grow our surplus as a safety net for future issues we may face.

Once again in 2014 we applied for a state grant to help support our boat inspection program. We were awarded a \$1,900.00 grant, a \$100.00 increase over 2013. This is great news as the demand for this money continues to exceed the amount of money available. We are very grateful for this grant. We also thank our two towns. We received a \$1,000.00 grant from the Town of Litchfield and a \$500.00 grant from the Town of Monmouth.

Support from business sponsors is an important part of our financial support. Please be sure to support these wonderful local businesses by purchasing their products and services. You will find their ads in this newsletter and on our website. Let them know you are a TLIS member and thank them for supporting your Society!

We continue to invest our surplus safely in government insured checking account and two CD's. The interest rates are very low but your money is safe. Our audit committee will be reviewing all of our 2014 financial records soon. A full report from the committee will be made at the Annual Meeting.

That is the good news. Unfortunately not all of the news is good. Please carefully read and consider Bruce Doyle's President's letter. I share his frustration. While I don't spend as much time as Bruce, I do spend hundreds of hours a year on TLIS business. Bruce has been an outstanding leader and has done much more for TLIS than he has made public. The work all of us do as volunteers would cost thousands of dollars a year if professionals were paid to do it, something we cannot afford. Our members have been very generous with your financial donations, which we greatly appreciate. The main issue now is too few doing too much of the work we need done to keep TLIS relevant now and in the future.

The reality is no volunteer can keep the pace Bruce and I have over the last several years. Please consider both his plea for help and the discouraging continued lack of memberships from lake front owners. You can help with something as simple as encouraging your neighbors to join and asking them not to use fireworks. Even better step forward to volunteer your time and skills to help. Litchfield residents how about contacting town hall and requesting to join the dam committee?

A complete 2014 financial statement is available at any time to members only. Please send us your request to memberservice@tacomalakes.org or call me at 860-614-6321.

Buddy Potts, TLIS Treasurer



Photo credit: Julie Potter-Dunlop

TLIS 2015 ANNUAL MEETING

The Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society is pleased to announce the location, date and time of our 2015 Annual Meeting.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ANNUAL 2015 MEETING WILL BE AT A NEW LOCATION.

SATURDAY JULY 11, 2015

**Carrie Ricker Middle School
573 Richmond Rd. (Rt. 197)
Litchfield, ME 04350**

PUBLIC BREAKFAST: 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM

ANNUAL MEETING & OFFICERS' REPORTS: 9:30 AM - 9:45 AM

SPEAKER PROGRAM: 9:45 AM - 10:30 AM

ADJOURN: 10:30 AM

The speakers will be announced at a later date.

The breakfast is open to the general public. The Annual Meeting, Office Reports and Speaker Program are member only benefits.

Volunteers are needed for set up, food preparation, cooking and clean up after the meal. Can you help? If so please contact Rainey Doyle at 207-577-8878 or drop us a note at: memberservice@tacomalakes.org. Thank you!

Business Donations for 2015 Annual Meeting

The Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society is seeking donations from local businesses for auction items for our Annual Meeting silent auction. We welcome almost any item including gift certificates and discounts on business services. Food items are always appreciated! The auction has become an important fund raiser and will directly benefit the Society's important work.

Please contact Bruce Doyle at 207-312-3698 for further information. Thank you for past auction items and we appreciate your support again this year!

2015 Silent Auction

Who makes the top pie or dessert around the Tacoma Lakes? It could be you! Just dust off your recipe box and put your pastry to the test. At last year's annual meeting pies were the hot sellers in our Silent Auction. Can you help us raise money this year by baking and donating your favorite special dessert? We want to give all you bakers a head start to prepare a pie or dessert for the July 11th Annual Meeting. Please include your name, the name of your contribution with a list of ingredients in case of food allergies, or with the full recipe if you are willing to share it.

Please no items which require refrigeration! There is limited refrigerator space and people can't see your wonderful creation.

If you are not a baker, what better way to enjoy a yummy pie than to bid on your neighbors' pies or desserts?

If you cannot bring your pie to the Carrie Ricker School that morning, contact Diane Clay ahead of time to arrange for a pick up at 207-268-3247.

We will have other donated silent auction items available along with the sweet treats. Please come prepared to bid and pay for your favorite items!

Thank you!

TLIS OFFICERS & DIRECTORS 07.01.14 – 06.30.15

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TLIS 2015 SPRING CONTEST

Spring is here! It's hard to believe after this year's brutal winter. To help us celebrate the end of our long winter we once again offer our spring contest.

This year we thought a different approach to the contest might encourage greater participation. Rather than guessing a location on the Tacoma Lakes, how about something everyone can guess? **This year the contest will be to guess the total rainfall as measured at the Augusta, ME, airport for the month of June 2015, as reported by the National Weather Service.** The winner will be the person who guesses the closest **without going over** the actual amount. Here is a clue: The average June rainfall at the Augusta Airport is 3.56 inches.

Please make your guess in hundreds of an inch, such as 3.56 inches. Entries must be received not later than noon on Monday June 8, 2015.

The winner will receive a \$100.00 gift certificate from TLIS Sponsor Percy's Hardware. Percy's is located at 483 Richmond Road, Litchfield, ME. You will also receive two TLIS tote bags. How's that for a great deal! Good Luck everyone! Have Fun!!

RULES

- There is no cost to enter the contest. The only qualification to participate is 2015 dues must be paid by noon on Monday June 8, 2015. All members and their family are eligible to submit an entry, so long as dues have been paid.
- Entries may be sent by email to memberservice@tacomalakes.org or by mail to:
Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society
PO Box 293
Litchfield ME 04350-0293
- Valid entries must include your name, mailing address and phone number. Entries without this information will not be considered.
- Late entries will not be considered. If more than one entry is correct, one winner will be picked by pulling one name out of a hat.
- Judges will be members of the TLIS board of directors. Their decision will be final.
- Members of the TLIS Board of Directors and their families are not eligible to participate.

The winner will be announced at the TLIS Annual Meeting and the prize will be presented at the meeting. The winner does not have to be present to win.

TACOMA LAKES INVASIVE PLANT PATROL TEAM

The TLIS invasive plant patrol (IPP) is gearing up for our summer adventures on Tacoma Lakes. We have a dedicated core team of volunteers who screen our lakes for aquatic invaders. Why do we volunteer our time? Invasive aquatic plants have the very real potential to negatively affect our enjoyment of the lakes by reducing recreation and fishing opportunities, impacting property values, diminishing water quality, and, if allowed to become established, cost a significant amount of money and time to manage. The Tacoma lakes chain is especially vulnerable because of its close proximity to infested lakes like Cobbossee Stream, Pleasant Pond and just recently Annabessacook Lake. The invasive plants found in these lakes thrive in waters as deep as 20 feet - much of our shoreline is less than 20 feet!

TLIS's volunteer Invasive Plant Patrollers - Diane Clay, Buffy Dematteis, Millie Donahue, Rainey Doyle, Dian White, and Suzy Wilding-Hartford - have attended workshops at the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) and try to keep current with the types and locations of invasive plants that threaten our waters. The team is available to consult with residents about questionable plants they find and to train folks who would like to join us in monitoring the lakes for invasive plants. The team's main goal is to cover different sections of the lakes each year and frequent visits to the boat launch. The more plant patrol members, the larger area we can cover. Plant monitoring is a good excuse to get out on the water with a group or for some quiet alone time. The native plants in our area are what keep the water clean and full of fish. By locating invasive plants early, we can remove them before we lose the habitat we enjoy.

The invasive plant patrol is planning to host a plant paddle for anyone who would like to spend an afternoon on the lakes and learn a bit about plant identification. It is also our hope to put together an event for young people and for paddle boarders. This date for this event, when planned, will be posted on the TLIS website, emailed to all TLIS members, and posted in the local Sodalite.

Check out the Maine VLMP website for more information on invasive aquatic plants: www.mainevlmp.org and if you have questions or comments for the Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society's IPP please call Diane Clay: 268-3247.

Maine Warden Service Courtesies

WHAT TO DO WHEN APPROACHED BY A MAINE GAME WARDEN

Each year, Maine Game Wardens check thousands of hunters, anglers, trappers, and recreational vehicles for compliance with fish and wildlife laws. A compliance check by a Game Warden is an opportunity for outdoor enthusiasts to have positive interactions with wardens while in the woods and on the waters of Maine. Game Wardens can help explain laws and can help you learn more about outdoor opportunities and conditions in your area. Maine State Game Wardens are concerned with enforcement of laws that are intended to keep people safe, protect personal property, and conserve Maine's fish and wildlife resources for those who live in and visit Maine. There are things that you can do to ensure your experience with a Game Warden is a good one for both you and the Warden.

WHILE FISHING & BOATING: Game Wardens are concerned with boating safety and compliance with fishing regulations when checking anglers. When approached by a Game Warden in a patrol boat you should:

- Maintain your current speed and direction unless signaled to do otherwise or the patrol boat is displaying flashing blue lights, which is a signal for you to stop.
- Do not change direction or stop your vessel unless signaled to do so. This will help avoid contact between the vessels that could cause damage or injuries.
- Reel in all fishing lines on the side of your boat being approached by the Game Warden. Use care to keep fingers and rod tips out of the space between the boats to prevent injury or damage to equipment.
- If you are operating downriggers, trolling or operating a bow mounted electric motor, maintain your current speed and direction unless signaled to do otherwise or the patrol boat is displaying flashing blue lights indicating that you must stop.





A DRAGONFLY'S JOURNEY

by Bridgett Bonn-Wagner

During the spectacular summer on the Tacoma Lake System, one will surely be dazzled by the presence of the dragonfly. Although we know them mostly for their beauty and fantastic flying skills, they have a long and interesting journey relying on the air, the water, and the native plant vegetation. Dragonflies have a three-stage lifecycle, a metamorphosis, beginning in the air and continuing underwater in fresh water lakes, ponds, and marshes, like the ones found here on the Tacoma Lakes.

Dragonflies dance on top of the lakes surface, buzzing and zooming around over the water, reminiscent of miniature helicopters. This is how we know them best. They will live up to two days as adult flying insects. Not only do we enjoy their immense beauty, but also they provide us with pest control since they feast on other insects like mosquitoes, gnats, and flies. They will even eat mayflies, butterflies, moths, bees, and other dragonflies. Basically dragonflies will eat anything they can catch. Adult dragonflies are stealthy killers and can use their grabbing legs to catch prey in the air. As well as looking for food during their few days as an adult dragonfly they are also looking for a mate. This keeps their life cycle moving, leading to the next phase of a Dragonflies life, the egg stage.

We are lucky to have many different species of dragonfly living amongst us here on the Tacoma Lake System and throughout our watershed. At the peak of the warm season we can identify many different types. Some are smaller than others; some are more colorful, and some are noticeably more abundant. Still, they know each other apart and will choose a mate from the same species. Together they fly joined. During this mating ritual the male fertilizes the females eggs. If you look closely this summer I'm sure you will be lucky enough to witness such a dance! After they separate the female chooses a location that she deems safe to lay her eggs. She will most likely choose a native plant leaf or stem under the waters surface, but if no such place can be found the eggs will be laid directly into the water. It is underwater where the aquatic phase of the Dragonflies life begins as the eggs hatch into the dragon fly nymph.

The dragon fly nymph is a very different looking insect than its winged counterpart. They are macro invertebrates, meaning you can see them with your eyes and they do not have a backbone. Dragonfly nymphs are brown, about an inch long, and have a flat-segmented body. Some live underwater for up to four years, depending on the species, making them good

indicators of clean water quality. They require clear water for successful hunting and clean water for survival. Living twice as long as the adult dragonfly lives above water, the nymph has the longest phase of the life cycle. Nymphs are impressive hunters like their winged counterpart. Dragonfly nymphs have a very specialized tool aiding in their hunting success, a sort of propulsion system. Using their legs and body they shoot water behind them to speed up like a rocket. Their prey is defenseless against such sudden attacks. The nymph also will eat anything that it can catch. Some examples of a tasty meal for them are mosquito larvae, aquatic worms, and small fish.

They have even been known to confidently venture onto land to find prey. Nymphs are not easy to spot underwater. Potentially you may be lucky enough to see one emerge for a meal or to continue their metamorphosis on land.

When the time comes the dragonfly nymph will crawl onto the banks at the waters edge looking for something sturdy to hold onto to. They need support and protective shelter while they transition from dragonfly nymph to adult dragonfly. This is one of the many reasons that native plants and shrub growth along the waterfront are so important and valuable. For the purpose of the dragonfly life cycle it provides shelter during a time of vulnerability as they can fall prey to birds and larger predator insects at this stage of metamorphosis.

Once the nymph is sturdy and safe it can begin its metamorphosis. The winged insect breaks free from its nymph body, similar to the way that a butterfly emerges from a caterpillar's cocoon. The nymph exoskeleton, now empty, remains tightly gripped and the dragonfly perches on top of it basking in the sun. This process usually takes less than five to ten minutes from the time the adult beings to break free of its exoskeleton until the time it stretches out its iridescent wings to dry. The adult dragonfly appears still, almost unreal as its wings cure before taking it's first flight into the sky, leaving its nymph shell behind. At last the cycle continues as we will see here on the Tacoma Lakes this season where we will have the opportunity to enjoy the complex beauty of the dragonfly again.



Photo credit: Bridgett Bonn-Wagner

Bottle Donations

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!

2014 Maine Audubon Loon Count

LAKE	Buker Pond	Jimmy Pond	Sand Pond	Woodbury Pond
ADULTS	5	1	8	10
CHICKS	0	0	0	0

*Information supplied by the Maine Audubon Society. Baby loons were observed on the Tacoma Lakes in 2014 by our members but were apparently missed by the Audubon counters.

A special thanks to all who all volunteer on the same day and time each year to do a loon count on Maine's lakes.

What is loon habitat? All animals live in a **habitat**, a place where they get what they need to survive: food, water, shelter, and a place to raise their young. The key element of habitat for breeding loons in Maine is their **territory**, the area they defend from other loons. Territories are typically about 100 acres on a lake or pond. On larger lakes, loon pairs can have side-by-side territories, often with each territory having some physical boundary like a cove or island helping separate it from neighboring territories. Within each territory, a loon needs:

- **A nest site:** Loons build a nest, really just a mound of vegetation and muck, right on the water's edge. This makes it easy to slip on and off the nest undetected by predators. Nest sites have to be accessible and free from barriers that would prevent a loon from getting on-shore (like steep banks or large rocks).
- **A nursery area:** Loons need quiet areas, free from predators and disturbance, where they can focus on feeding and raising their young. This can be near the nest site or some distance away.
- **Food:** Loons eat fish as their primary food, which they find by sight and catch using their sharp, heavy beak and long, flexible neck. They can eat up to 2 pounds of fish each day to survive throughout the summer.

What is habitat "quality" and why does it matter? A lake with a quiet cove with fewer interruptions from boaters and kayakers may give a loon more time to focus on feeding its hungry chicks. A concealed nest site might be safer from predators compared to one out in the open. These elements of habitat "quality" could directly translate into loon productivity, or the number of chicks a loon pair successfully raises each year. This has long-term implications for how well our loons in Maine will do over the coming decades, especially as they face growing recreational use, more dramatic rain events, and warming water temperatures.*

Tacoma Lakes Fish Stocking Report for 2014

DATE	4-23-14	5-5-14	10-15-14	11-14-14	4-23-14	10-15-14	11-14-14
WATER	Sand Pond	Sand Pond	Sand Pond	Sand Pond	Woodbury Pond	Woodbury Pond	Woodbury Pond
SPECIES	Brook Trout	Brook Trout	Brook Trout	Brook Trout	Brook Trout	Brook Trout	Brook Trout
QUANTITY	400	400	300	200	400	300	250
SIZE	10"	10"	13"	12"	10"	13"	12"

Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife maintains a number of fish hatcheries in this state, which it uses to maintain an aggressive stocking program for Maine lakes. That program can be found at <http://www.maine.gov/ifw/fishing/reports/stocking/index.htm>. Ice fisherman this winter, despite the snow pack, have reported nice catches of brook and brown trout during the 2014/2015 season, which is probably attributable to last year's stocking program in the Tacoma Lake Chain. We would anticipate that this year's stocking dates and amounts will be very close to last year so get those rods and reels cleaned and ready to fish! This year's heavy February snows sharply diminished ice fishing activities; thus spring fishing should be good.

The Tacoma Lake chain falls under the general law and regulations and the following are the regulations in place for 2015. Daily bag limits in the Tacoma Lakes chain is 5 brook trout (6+ inches), 2 brown trout (18+ inches), and 2 rainbow trout (12+ inches). Bass caught from April 1 to June 30 are limited to 1 by artificial lure only and must be at least 10". From July 1 to September 30, 3 bass may be kept each day with a minimum of 10" and only 1 over 14". From October 1 to March 31, regulations only allow 1 bass of at least 10". In regards to pickerel, one is allowed 10 fish per day with no length limit and an unlimited number of white perch. Please do not hesitate to contact DIFW at 207-287-8000 should you have any questions in regards to these regulations.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS. THANK YOU!



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2015 MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$15.00

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