

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2016



Photo credit: Toby Lott

GET THE LEAD OUT

In late July of this year, a very ill loon was discovered in Buker Pond. It was an emaciated adult male with signs of trauma or disease. The loon was rescued by a warden, however, it soon after died. Results of the necropsy (autopsy on an animal) showed a fishing lure and two lead sinkers in the GI tract of the deceased loon. Body fluids tested positive and quite high for lead, and the cause of death was determined to be lead poisoning.

Fishing sinkers are ingested by loons because they are mistaken for gravel which is used in the normal digestive process. Lead sinkers under 1/2 ounce and lead jigs have been banned for sale and use in Maine lakes. Unfortunately, according to studies published by the Maine Audubon Society, lead poisoning continues to be the leading cause of death for adult loons.

What can the TLA do to "Get the Lead Out" of our lakes? The Board has decided upon the following actions to be taken next spring and summer:

- TLA will post signs obtained from the Maine Audubon Society reminding fisherman and boaters to use only

lead free tackle. These will be posted at several entry points to the ponds.

- Over the winter, officers will be giving consideration as to how to best clean up our lakes by offering some type of event to encourage lake residents and others to remove trash from our waters with an emphasis on lead sinkers, fishing tackle and monofilament line.

All of us can help by eliminating the use of any lead tackle we may still have in our possession.

In addition, we would like suggestions from members on other measures that could be taken by TLA. Please email us at memberservice@tacomalakes.org or call President Jim Adams at 207- 268-2070.

If you observe anyone disturbing loons or their nests, please contact Maine Audubon Society at 207-781- 2330 or the Augusta Game Warden at 800-322- 3606. Disturbing loons is both a state and federal offense.

Toby Lott, Director



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Members,

Tacoma Lakes Association enjoyed another successful year in 2016. TLA is a strong financially solid organization dedicated to maintaining the high quality of the water in our lakes. Our directors and officers are all volunteers. All have spent many hours working to achieve our goals.

Our annual meeting and breakfast was held on July 9 at The Carrie Ricker School. We celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Association with a beautiful cake featuring a representation of all five lakes. The meeting was well attended and featured presentations by the Maine Audubon Society and The Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed. Our silent auction featured several unique and outstanding items. The breakfast went off without a hitch, thanks to all of the volunteers led by Director Rainey Doyle. I would be remiss to not thank the administration and staff at the school for their continued cooperation. TLA Directors and Officers are already at work planning the 2017 meeting.

TLA lost two directors due to the resignations of Kurt Bechtel and Rainey Doyle. Both are to be commended for their hard work and dedication. They will both be missed. Two new Directors were added to the board, Michael Murray, and Toby Lott. Both have already proven to be willing to step in and help with whatever is needed.

TLA continued its outstanding partnership with The Friends of Cobbossee Watershed. This partnership enables our lakes to help be protected from invasive species by having weekend inspections of boats entering and leaving our ponds at the Woodbury Pond boat launch.

Photo credit: Bruce Doyle



We completed our first year of partnering with The Department of Conservation completing marker buoy inspections every three weeks throughout the spring, summer, and early fall. Due to these inspections, a missing buoy was replaced, and two others repaired during the summer.

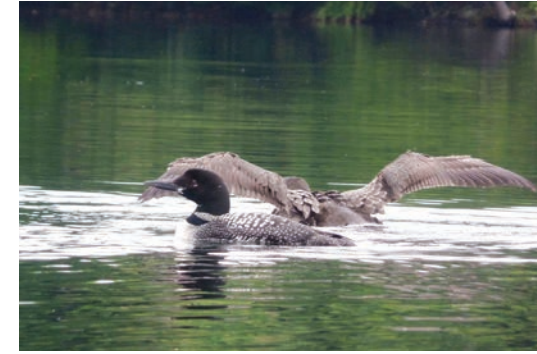
Most recently the Board acquired office space in the Litchfield Academy building. Renovations are underway at the space and we anticipate it being open in the spring. This space will give us the much needed opportunity to store our records, have our board meetings, and provide resources to you, our members. We are excited to be a part of this historic building's future.

In closing we thank you, our members, for your continued support. TLA is among the strongest lake associations in the state and we hope to build on this by adding more members. There is strength in numbers, and the more members we have the stronger the organization becomes. Our annual membership fee is only \$15. I ask that you talk to your neighbors about us and all that we do for the community.

My contact information is listed with the other Officers and Directors in this newsletter, and I encourage you to reach out to us should you have any questions, concerns or ideas.

**Regards,
Jim Adams, President**

Photo credit: Toby Lott



Dear Members,

2016 is shaping up to be another successful financial year for your association.

The heart of any organization like ours is the size of the membership. Our membership has grown every year since 2016. Unfortunately that trend may end this year. As this report is written our membership for this year is 242. Our total membership last year was 254. We have had good growth in new memberships this year but for unknown reasons we have an unusual number of 2015 members who have not paid their dues this year. We have sent out a final plea hoping this has been an oversight. If you have not paid your dues please do so as soon as possible. Thank you!

Other revenue is down a little this year, but this is from decisions made by the board of directors. We lowered the price of the breakfast this year to encourage attendance. We also decided not to hold a special fund raiser like we did last year with the Gary Crocker event. Despite these decisions we remain very strong and will end the year with a surplus.

Your donations continue to be incredibly generous. You will find a donor report in this newsletter. This year some of your donations will be used in the renovation of our new office space in the Academy in Litchfield. For the first time in our history TLA will have a home. Your donations support the Courtesy Inspectors and the Plant Patrol as well.

TREASURER'S REPORT

This summer's nice weekend weather allowed us to increase the number of inspections this year. This program would not be possible without the assistance of the Friends of Cobbossee Watershed. They manage the entire program for us. We only pay for the inspectors. Managing this program would be very difficult for TLA as all our activities are all by volunteers. Thank you to Tamara Whitmore, her staff and all the inspectors for another very successful summer!

Volunteer burnout is a challenge for TLA. The breakfast has become an overwhelming effort involving hundreds of hours of time and nearly an entire year of planning. The board is looking at how we can better manage this event in order to reduce the heavy burden on a few volunteers.

Speaking of burnout, I have been a board member and officer for over 10 years. At some point I would like to step aside as treasurer. We are seeking someone with bookkeeping or accounting experience to take on our bookkeeping. We might consider this as a paid position. We use QuickBooks as our accounting software. Can you help? I will be happy to discuss the details with anyone who has an interest. You can either email me at memberservice@tacomalakes.org or call me at 860-614- 6321.

**Thanks,
Buddy Potts, Treasurer**



TLA OFFICERS & DIRECTORS 07.01.16 - 06.30.17

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TLA ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

July 9, 2016 9:50 AM
Carrie Ricker Middle School, Richmond Rd, Litchfield

- A special 75 th Anniversary cake with an outline of the lake system was presented and served to members after the public breakfast.
- A welcome was given to all members and a quorum was declared by President Jim Adams at 9:50 AM.
- President Jim Adams thanked the school and Vicky, as well as the sponsors and GoodallLandscaping for its display. Members were encouraged to join or ask questions about the plant patrol.
- Bidding ended @ 10:20 for items in the silent auction. The items were available for pick up after the meeting. The TLA road signs were mentioned. The 50/50 raffle tickets were sold by Charlie Manchester, chairperson for the Dam Committee.
- Gifts were given to outgoing TLA directors, Pat Soboleski, and Kurt Bechtel in appreciation for their many years of service.
- A motion was made and seconded to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the last meeting. A vote was called to approve and passed.
- Kurt Bechtel presented the Audit committee Report. The report concluded that the financial books were in order. A motion was made to accept and seconded.
- Buddy Potts presented the Treasurers report. TLA is in good financial standing due to a strong balance sheet and generous donations from its members.
- On behalf of Michael Marcus, lead person on the Nominating committee, Jim Adams asked for additional nominations for the 2 vacant Director positions. Hearing none, a vote was taken to accept Toby Lott and Michael Murray as recommended by the nominating committee. Both were unanimously approved.
- Jim Adams presented the President's Report. President Adams commented on all that had been accomplished in the past year and that he was looking forward to continued growth in the future.
- Charlie Manchester presented an update on repairs on behalf of the Dam Committee.
- Diane Clay gave a Plant Patrol update and encouraged volunteers to participate.
- Jim Adams asked for new business, there was none. He opened the floor for questions and comments from members. There were none.
- Emily Berman from the Maine Audubon Society gave a well-received presentation on loons and the dangers of lead sinkers.
- Tamara Whitmore, friends of Cobbossee Watershed, presented information on milfoil and the importance of boat inspections.
- Both speakers had an opportunity to meet with members after the meeting and did so.
- The 50/50 winner was drawn. The winning ticket owner was given \$128.00, half of the total collected. The remainder was given to the TLA treasurer.
- Jim Adams presented Bruce Doyle with a beaver trap as a gift.
- A motion was made to adjourn, seconded and passed.

De Ricker, Secretary



THANK YOU TO OUR 2016 DONORS!

As of September 28, 2016, \$5,523.00 has been generously donated to the Tacoma Lakes Association. The TLA Officers and Board of Directors would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for their cash donations this year. Thank you for supporting the programs of the Tacoma Lakes Association!

Please note: this is NOT a membership list. It is a list of people who made donations in addition to their dues.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
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| Steve & Kathy Aucoin | Rainey Doyle | Richard & Jane Johnson | Bertha Ricker |
| Carol & Larry Auger | <i>in memorium Joline Arsenault</i> | Lee & Lyn Jordan | Robert Riendeau |
| Hugh & Marje Awalt | Rosanne Ducey & Michael Murray | Patricia Kierstead | Nancy Rines |
| Terry Averill | Cheryl & Norris Dwyer | Peter Koehler | Richard Rines Jr |
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OFFICE SPACE



Photos credit: Bruce Doyle

This summer the Tacoma Lakes Association (hereafter referred to as TLA) entered into a long term agreement with the Trustees of the Litchfield Academy to occupy space on the second floor of the Academy building. The Academy Trustees are elected town officials who manage the town owned facility. This space, which consists of an approximate 24' by 14' room, will be used as both office space and storage space for the Association. This semi-permanent office space is a milestone for TLA, which just celebrated its 75th year of existence this year. TLA has never had office space. Records storage over the past 75 years has been a serious problem which has resulted in the loss of many older records of the organization. Litchfield Academy is one of the remaining oldest buildings in Litchfield, having been constructed in approximately 1850. The Academy is connected to the Libby Tozier School and it currently houses the Litchfield Senior Center and the Litchfield Thrift Shop.

Officers are in the process of renovation this space with fresh paint and new flooring. It is anticipated that TLA may be able to start moving office supplies and records into this space by year end.

A large 4 drawer fireproof cabinet has been donated to TLA, which will be used to store our most critical records.

TLA is looking to acquire a conference room size table and chairs for this space. If any members have an unused large dining room table and chairs or conference table they would like to donate it would be much appreciated. Please call me at 207-312-3698 or email me at bdoyles@roadrunner.com if you have any items you wish to donate. Donations to TLA are fully tax deductible.

TLA believes it currently has enough file cabinets and other miscellaneous office supplies but should other items be needed we will be out a plea on our Facebook page.

Over the winter months officers will determine the best use of this space and what, if any, hours when the space will be open to members. Look for more information in our spring 2017 newsletter.

Bruce Doyle, TLA Vice President

TACOMA LAKES INVASIVE PLANT PATROL TEAM

Our invasive plant patrol now consists of 10 members representing 4 of the 5 ponds on the Tacoma Lakes. Our volunteers are Dian White from Jimmy Pond; Diane Clay, Buffy DeMatteis, and Millie Donahue from Buker Pond; Toby and Patti Lott and Bette Manchester from Sand Pond; Cheri Cooledge, Lynn Sidman and Susie Wilding-Hartford from Woodbury Pond.

Sand Pond was the target for our patrols this year and we're proud to say that we covered the whole littoral zone. The littoral zone is the area where light reaches the bottom of the pond. Our ponds have a native whorled milfoil in several places and we are keeping an eye on those areas to insure that we don't overlook an invasive by mistake. Our last project of 2016 is to survey the boat launch again as we do every year.

This year plant patrol launched our own Facebook page and we're still getting used to posting regularly, so bear with us. We have started using paddle boards purchased by TLA for the excellent view of the bottom that they provide. We were disappointed that outside of the plant patrol and our families only one group out of all our members came over to try using the paddle boards. The 2 teens had taken an introductory invasive plant class and did a scan of southeast Sand Pond as well as a section of Buker. We would like to see more young people with an interest in paddling who are also willing to help us look at plants. We've devised a simple type of marker that could be carried while on a paddle board. Hopefully next summer we can have a training/recreational event that will spark more interest. Please keep this in mind, and give me a call if you have any questions or would like to volunteer for next year.

Diane Clay: 207-268-3247

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CBI is the acronym for Courtesy Boat Inspections, a program that is the State of Maine’s first line of defense in preventing invasive aquatic plants from entering bodies of water. The Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed’s (Friends) CBI program just finished its thirteenth season, employs over 20 area residents, and accounts for over 10% of Maine’s boat inspections every year. During a boat inspection, the CBI inspector greets boaters and asks permission to carefully look over their boat, trailer, motor, anchor and any fishing equipment, for any pieces of water plants that may be attached. These “fragments” are removed and looked at by the CBI, who compares them to pictures of invasive plants. If the fragment looks similar to the pictures, it is bagged, labeled with information that will tie it to the waterbody and boat it was removed from and sent for further identification. In the Cobbossee Watershed, fragments found by CBI’s are sent to the Friends office in Augusta, where trained plant identification staff determines whether the plant is native or invasive. Sometimes, plants are at a growth stage where it is impossible to tell the difference between the native and invasive versions of a species of plant. In this case, we must send the fragment sample in to a state organization for DNA testing.

The most critical part of the program is not always the act of the CBI inspecting the boat; the modeling of the behavior and the information that is shared with the boater may have more of a consequence. Educating the public that it is crucial to check your vessel for hitchhiking plants every time you enter and leave a waterbody; if not to protect yourself from the potential of receiving a hefty fine for transporting plants, then for the protection of the lakes, ponds and streams that we all enjoy.



With 6,000 lakes and ponds, and only 46 with known infestations of aquatic plants, as well as a robust tourism industry that depends upon pristine natural resources, Maine has everything to lose if we are not diligent in protecting our lakes against these invasive threats. Unfortunately, five of the known infestations are located within the Cobbossee Watershed: Annabessacook Lake, Cobbossee Stream, Horseshoe Pond, Pleasant Pond and Purgatory Stream. The latter four waterbodies are connected by the flow of water, so it is no surprise that fragments of the Variable Leaf Water Milfoil, often created by boat propellers chopping up the plants, can move with the current from one area to another, from one waterbody to another. The fifth, and most recent infestation discovered, is in Annabessacook, which is upstream of the other infestations. It is our best guess that the invasive milfoil found in Annabessacook was introduced by a boat, perhaps carrying a fragment of the invasive plant from another waterbody in our own watershed.

Of the six types of Milfoil in Maine, only two are invasive: Eurasian Milfoil and Variable Leaf Water Milfoil. Although wimpier in appearance than the Variable Leaf, Eurasian grows more quickly and therefore takes over a waterbody faster than Variable Leaf. While we are lucky to only have the one invasive water plant (Variable Leaf Water Milfoil) in our watershed, and by all accounts the version that is slowest to spread, over 33 miles of shoreline are compromised by this plant. The Friends Plant Control efforts cost nearly \$50,000 per year, and we are able to barely control the spread of further growth, let alone work to eradicate the nuisance plant.

Stopping invasive plants before they can get into our waters is therefore a more efficient and economic use of our resources. Currently, FOCW works with lake associations, such as the Tacoma Lakes Association, to staff an inspector at the public boat launch on Fridays through Sundays and holidays throughout the summer months, in an effort to inspect the highest number of boats entering Woodbury. Monday through Thursday, however, the launch is not staffed, with only signage and the efforts of our education to remind and

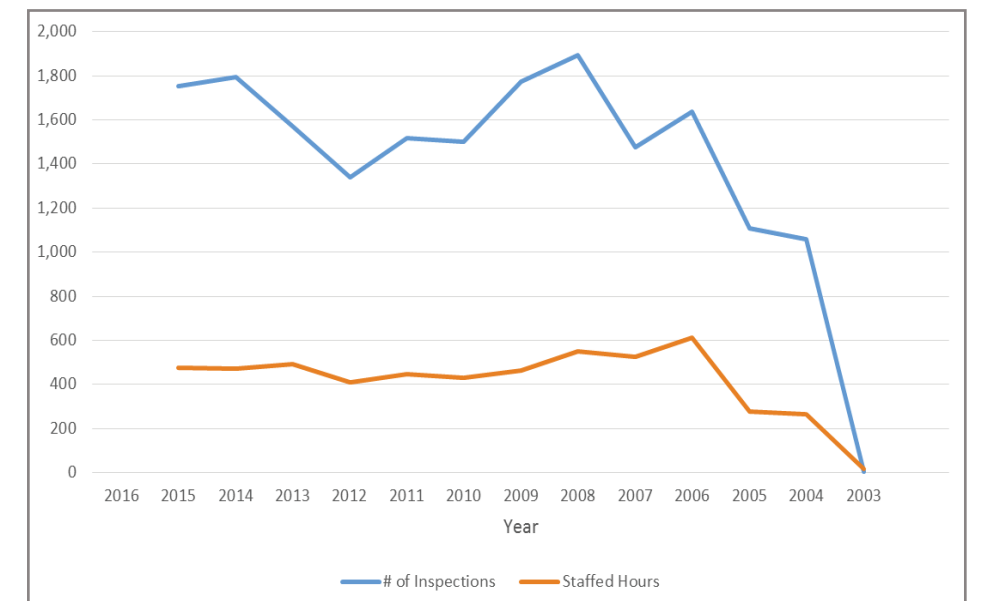
convince boaters to make sure their vessels are clear of any plant fragments before they enter the lake. We know that boaters have become accustomed to having a CBI check their boat for them; but how many boaters self-inspect their boat when the launch is not staffed? Making this effort a social norm, just as using a seat belt when driving has become custom, may be our best bet at protecting our lakes in the long run. If we all make sure to “check our boat before (and after) we float” and share this habit with others, we will double our efforts in preventing the spread of unwanted aquatic plants!

The Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed CBI program is funded by a combination of sources, including donations by Tacoma Lakes Association, surrounding towns, Friends’ member donations and grant funding from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection via sales of the Maine Milfoil Sticker. For more information on this, or any of the Friends conservation and education programs, please contact us at 207-621- 4100 or email tamara@watershedfriends.com.

Unfortunately, five of the known infestations are located within the Cobbossee Watershed: Annabessacook Lake, Cobbossee Stream, Horseshoe Pond, Pleasant Pond and Purgatory Stream.

2016 Woodbury Pond Boat Launch Courtesy Boat Inspections by the Numbers

- Inspections in 2016 **1,752**
- Staffed Hours in 2016 **477**
- Fragments removed from boats **312**
- Fragments Identified as Invasive **0**
- Inspections per Hour **3.67**
- Inspections conducted in the Cobbossee Watershed **18%**



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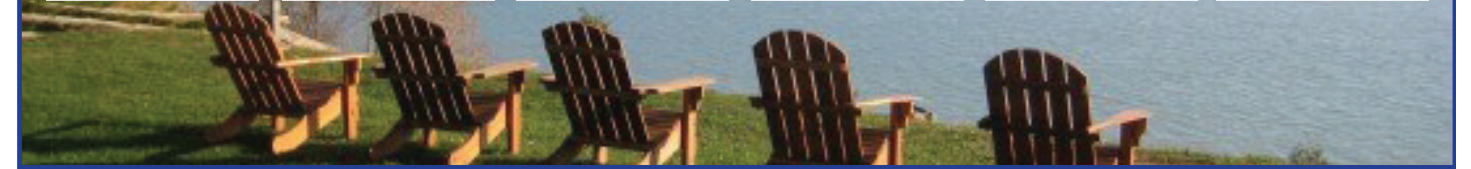


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 Tacoma Lakes Association
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Litchfield ME 04350-0293

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