



NEWSLETTER

FALL 2017



THANK YOU, BRUCE DOYLE

After more than 10 years of service to TLA Bruce Doyle resigned from the board of directors in May.

It is not possible to list all of the achievements while Bruce was president. Just a few of them are doubling the membership, working with town officials to get badly needed repairs to the dam accomplished and arranging the first office space for the organization in our history. Bruce spent countless hours working for TLA and helping our members, always as a volunteer and without any compensation. His responsibilities were year-round.

On behalf of the board of directors of TLA we would like to acknowledge and thank Bruce for his tireless work and dedication to our Association. TLA would not be as successful as we are today without Bruce Doyle.

Are you receiving the TLA newsletter for the first time?

If so welcome to the Tacoma Lakes Association! This summer we completed our first comprehensive lake front owner update in many years and identified nearly 100 owners we did not have on our mailing list.

TLA hopes all of you will consider joining our association. Our annual dues are only \$15.00 and a membership application is included in this newsletter. We are a volunteer run non-profit 501 (C) 3 association. If you have any questions about TLA please do not hesitate to contact us at memberservice@tacomalakes.org or leave us a voice mail at 207-956-9031. Thank you!

Not sure if you paid your 2017 dues?

We are happy to check for you! Please either send us an email to memberservice@tacomalakes.org or leave us a voice mail at 207-956-9031. We will check and promptly get back to you.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Members and Friends,

Another summer is winding down, and fall is nearly here. First off, a heartfelt thank you to all of our members for your continued support, and incredibly generous donations this year. Our membership numbers are once again strong, although there is still room for growth.

For those who may be new to the area, or new to our mailing list, our annual membership fee is only \$15. Our passion is to ensure the quality of life we enjoy on the lakes can be passed to future generations. We strive to educate our members on issues that have a direct effect on water quality, and watershed protection. Your membership fees and donations are crucial to continuing the work we do to keep our lakes beautiful and healthy. We have continued boat inspections at the public boat launch. On weekends and holidays this summer certified staff inspected hundreds of boats entering the lakes for invasive plant species. In addition, our plant patrol team can often be seen surveying the shoreline for invasive plants. An invasive plant infestation in our waters, comes with an extremely large price tag to eradicate the plants. These volunteers have been trained to identify plants and determine which are invasive and which are native. As an organization, we are actively involved with the town of Litchfield in the ongoing preventative maintenance of the dam. Two years ago, extensive

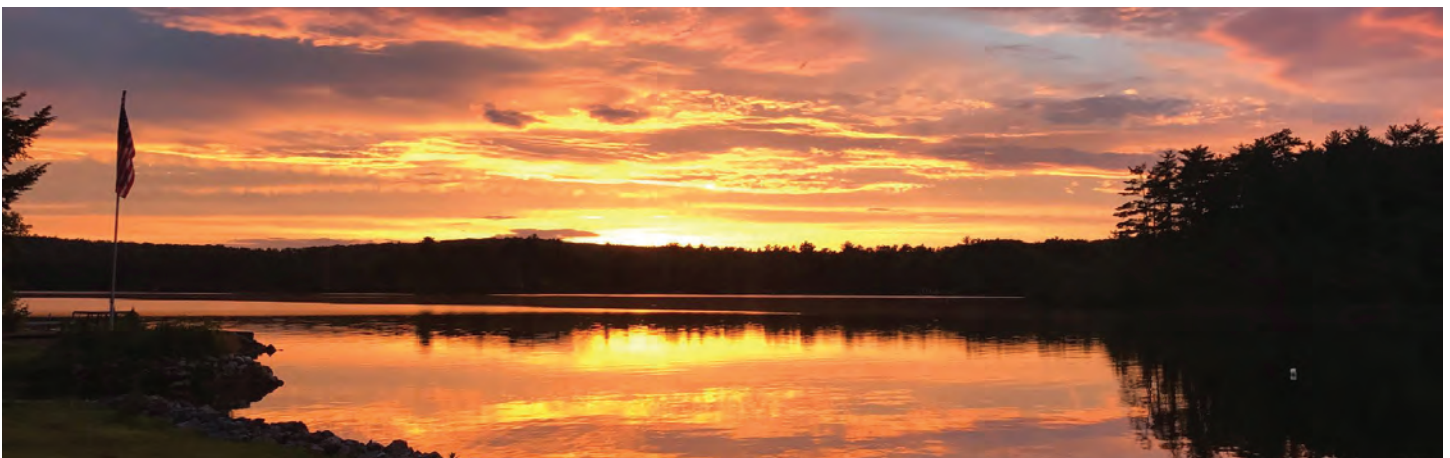
repairs were completed, and over the past summer all vertical surfaces were sealed. Nearby towns have not maintained their dams, and are now faced with massive repair costs. The dam is critical to the water levels being consistent, so all of our properties have sufficient depth. We also help the State of Maine by monitoring the boating safety markers that keep boater's safe, and away from hazardous areas. Your membership dollars help us keep funds in reserve to address these issues.

Volunteers also recently spent hours on end, upgrading our mailing list. If you are new to the area, or if you have not previously received a newsletter from us, please consider supporting our efforts. A membership form is included in this newsletter.

Lastly every summer we have our annual meeting, open to all members. Next summer, we are looking for a speaker who can do a presentation on the history of the Tacoma Lakes. Should you, or someone you know be willing and able to do such a presentation please contact Toby Lott, at toby9157@gmail.com.

As always if you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached at (207) 268-2070, or via email at jfadams13@gmail.com

Regards,
Jim Adams, President



TREASURER'S REPORT

Dear Members,

TLA is experiencing a very successful financial year in 2017. Your generosity never ceases to amaze us. 2017 donations totaled \$6,036.00, up \$623.00 compared to last year. A list of donors is included in this newsletter. Thank you everyone!

We are fortunate to receive a grant of \$2,000.00 from the State of Maine milfoil sticker program again this year as well as a \$1,000.00 grant from Litchfield and \$500.00 grant from Monmouth. These funds are used to partially support the Courtesy Boat Inspection program at the Woodbury Pond boat ramp.

Membership as of September 1 is 236, exactly the same as last year as of this time. This is disappointing on a couple of fronts. First, many 2016 members who have not renewed are long time members. Second, new members are up significantly this year over past years. We don't know why renewal memberships are lagging this year.

The heart of TLA is our membership. Our credibility and influence are directly related to our membership. I cannot imagine Litchfield investing as much in the dam as they have in the last couple of years without TLA volunteers making our case. Our award-winning plant patrol is entirely TLA member volunteers. So long as you are willing to invest \$15.00 in joining TLA our influence will only grow. If you have not paid your dues in 2017 please do so. Thank you!

This year's Courtesy Boat Inspection program was a great success. Our partnership with Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed is strong and is a critical part of the inspection program. It would be extraordinarily difficult for TLA volunteers to manage the inspection program. Heartfelt thanks to Tamara Whitmore and her entire team at the Friends!

Our member and lake owner record keeping is undergoing a major update and will give us a wonderful opportunity to introduce ourselves to new people and potential new members. Thank you to Cheri Cooledge and Patti Lott for your hard work identifying the many lake owners not on our current list. Welcome to all the new people receiving our newsletter for the first time!

Our website continues to be improved and updated. Our webmaster, Lisa Montagna of Dimensions Web Design, has been doing a wonderful job helping us to have an informative and good-looking website. Thank you, Lisa!

We are very active on Facebook with some excellent content. We have 595 "likes" of our page. We hope that more of you who use and enjoy the page will become a member of TLA.

I am always happy to answer questions about the finances of TLA. Please do not hesitate to contact me at memberservice@tacomalakes.org or leave a voice mail at 207-956-9031 and I will get back to you.

**Thank you,
Buddy Potts, Treasurer**





TLA OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

07.01.17 - 06.30.18

PRESIDENT

Jim Adams

P O Box 23 | Litchfield, Me 04250
207-268-2070 | jfadams13@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Cheri Cooledge

48 Island Ln | Litchfield, ME 04350
207-268-4815 | cheri@fairpoint.net

TREASURER

Harold F Potts Jr (Buddy)

7 Jeanne Marie Dr | Westfield, MA 01085
941-724-9461 | memberservice@tacomalakes.org

SECRETARY

Deanne Ricker

166 Eppinger Dr | Port Charlotte, FL 33953
207-441-4694 | ricknde@roadrunner.com

DIRECTORS

Diane Clay

6 Easy St | Litchfield, ME 04350
207-268- 4694 | c1l2a3y4@gmail.com

Toby Lott

Unit 22, 620 Beach Blvd
St. Augustine Beach, FL 32080
443-604- 3791 | Toby9157@gmail.com

Charlie Manchester

P O Box 99 | Litchfield, ME 04350
charliemanchester@fairpoint.net | 207-557- 4087

Mike Murray

111 Buker Rd | Litchfield, ME 04350
207-268- 3704 | mmurray@bates.edu

Normand Provencher

407 Rte 126 | Monmouth, ME 04259
207-268-1017 | njprovencher08@gmail.com

Dian White

138 Gustin Rd | Litchfield, ME 04350
207-268-4843 | figowhite1940@gmail.com

DAM KEEPER

Terry Averill

183 Neck Rd | Litchfield, ME 04350
207-446-3385 | TBAverill@aol.com

Why is the water so low this summer?

Everyone has noticed the low water level of the Tacoma Lakes this summer. Members have contacted the lake association asking why the water is low. It's a fair question.

Water is lost from the lakes for a variety of reasons. Minor losses occur from splashing from wind and boats. Some owners use lake water for domestic use. We have pool water companies who fill their tankers from the lakes. The wooden panels of the dam allow a little water to escape. While these issues cause water to be lost, the primary reason for the declining water level is evaporation.

Evaporation happens when a liquid substance becomes a gas. When water is heated, it evaporates. The molecules move and vibrate so quickly that they escape into the atmosphere as molecules of water vapor.

Evaporation is a very important part of the water cycle. Heat from the sun, or solar energy, powers the evaporation process. It soaks up moisture from soil in a garden, as well as the biggest oceans and lakes. The water level will decrease as it is exposed to the heat of the sun.

Although the level of a lake, pool, or glass of water will decrease due to evaporation, the escaped water molecules don't disappear. They stay in the atmosphere, affecting humidity, or the amount of moisture in the air. The dam has been closed since late spring, when the water level was at the normal summer level after snow melt and spring rain. Since that time central Maine has seen less rainfall than average for the summer season. The National Weather Service has issued a moderate drought rating for the area.

The dam can only let water out. Springs can add a small amount of water to our lakes, but the huge majority of water recharging our lakes comes from rain. This summer's drought has meant that the rain we have received is less than the amount of water lost due to evaporation, etc. For that reason, the water level declined throughout the summer. Until rainfall increases the water level will remain low.

This is not the first time the water level has been low because of drought, and it won't be the last. Lowering the water level is controlled by the dam. Raising the water level is controlled by mother nature.



THANK YOU TO OUR 2017 DONORS!

As of September 12, 2017, \$6,086 has been generously donated to the TLA. Officers and Board of Directors would like to thank the following individuals for your cash donations this year and support of our programs! Our donor list is regularly updated. For the most up to date list please visit our website at: <http://tacomalakes.org/our-donors/>

Please note that this is NOT a membership list but a list of people who donated in addition to paying their \$15.00 dues.

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THREATS TO LOONS



DISTURBANCE

Loons generally return to the same nest site each year, unless they are disturbed or their habitat is degraded. Increased human activity in an area can cause loons to abandon nesting sites, and can result in incubating birds leaving their nests, thus exposing vulnerable eggs to predation. Boat wakes may force water into nests and flood them. High speed watercraft sometimes kill or injure chicks or adults due to collisions. Boats may also get between chicks and adults, causing them to separate and exposing chicks to increased risk of predation.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO AVOID DISTURBING LOONS

You can help avoid disturbing nesting loons by keeping your distance from likely or known nest sites (marshy or boggy shores, river backwaters, small islands). A good rule of thumb is to try to stay at least 400 feet or more away from nest sites, or from any loons that are showing signs of 'distress' or disturbance.

Here are some loon disturbance behaviors to watch for, that indicate you are getting too close:

- Brow of bird is a 'square' shape, rather than smoothly rounded.
- Bill is pointed up, neck is stretched up, bird looks alert.
- Bird 'dances' upright on the water, while flapping wings.
- Bird's neck and body are stretched out low on nest (or on water)
- Bird makes a 'tremolo' (laughing sound) or 'yodel' call.

If you observe any of these behaviors, please make sure you increase the distance between yourself and the loon.

FLUCTUATING WATER LEVELS

Loons build nests mid-May through June. Fluctuating water levels during this time can result in nest failure. Rising water levels can flood nests and cause them to be abandoned, while decreasing water levels can make nests inaccessible to the loons.

FISHING LINE, HOOKS AND LEAD SINKERS

Loons have been known to get tangled in fishing line left behind by fishermen. Once a loon becomes entangled, it is very hard for them to free themselves. Loons also swallow hooks. One of the biggest threats to loons comes from lead sinkers. Loons swallow sinkers thinking they are pebbles they need to aid digestion. A bird with lead poisoning displays physical and behavioral changes and their ability to fly becomes impaired. Once a bird becomes weak, it is more susceptible to predation; it has a harder time finding food and nesting.

MERCURY

Mercury is a toxin known to cause abnormal behavior, physiological damage and death in loons. Mercury is a naturally occurring element in the environment, but current deposits are at a level 2-5 times the normal distribution. It is traced to coal burning power plants and incinerator emissions. In waters where loons have high levels of mercury in their blood, their productivity is below average. It is estimated that 21-35% of common loon breeding populations in New England have high levels of mercury.



TACOMA LAKES INVASIVE PLANT PATROL 2017

This has been a great summer for the plant patrol. The big news is that so far we have found no invasive plants! Our focus has been Woodbury Pond where we have nearly completed the entire western shore. Hopefully, given good weather it will be complete before we put up our equipment for the winter.

Also, we have added three new plant patrollers to our roster: Michael Murray, De Ricker, and Janis Boyer. And, thanks to Patti Lott and Buddy Potts we are now posting our information on the TLA Facebook page each time we go out! We have 2 new kayak scopes funded by TLA and put together by Cheri and Buffy. These make seeing the plants much easier.

We enjoy paddling and looking into the water along with good company and lots of laughs. Our goal is to get as many of our members as possible trained enough to

know when they encounter a suspicious plant and how to deal with it. Folks around the lake are encouraged to call the lake association or one of our members if they spot a questionable plant and we'll come take a look. Of course, if you'd like to join us – welcome!

- Diane Clay
- Buffy DeMatteis
- Dian White
- Cheri Cooledge
- Toby Lott
- Patti Lott
- Millie Donahue
- Michael Murray
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MANY EYES ON THE WATER: **Stopping Invasive Aquatic Plants** **is Everyone's Responsibility**

Non-native, invasive aquatic plants can take over a lake or pond if not caught early on. Lakes that are overrun with these types of plants often lose property value, with property owners demanding their town to reduce their taxes due to lost value and lost enjoyment of their lake.

To prevent invasive plants from being introduced, the Tacoma Lakes have had a paid inspector stationed at the Woodbury Pond public boat launch since 2005, during weekend high boating hours from Memorial Day Weekend to Labor Day. The Woodbury launch is consistently the second busiest launch in the Cobbossee Watershed, out of 10, behind only the significantly larger launch on Cobbossee in Monmouth. In thirteen years of the Courtesy Boat Inspector program, managed by Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed, over 19,000 inspections of boats have occurred, successfully acting as the "first line of defense" in preventing invasive aquatic plants from being introduced into the Tacoma Lakes.

If a fragment of an invasive plant does slip through our preventative efforts and establishes itself in a pond, how quickly the unwanted plant is detected is the biggest indicator of success in stopping the invasion before it creates habitat and economic mayhem. Trained "plant patrol" surveyors, who paddle the shallow areas where sun is able to shine to the bottom, looking for signs of unwanted plants are critical in noticing invasive plants growing in a pond as soon as possible.



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Tacoma volunteers Buffy DeMatteis, Diane Clay, Susie Wilding-Hartford, other volunteers have led the way in the watershed, establishing their Invasive Plant Patrol team early on. In fact, they currently handle all of the surveying efforts on the Tacoma Lakes without any outside help from the Friends. This has enabled the Friends to focus our efforts on managing the Courtesy Boat inspector program and removing invasive aquatic plants where they are already established.



There are several indicators that increase the risk factor of a lake or pond becoming infested by invasive water plants. Those include: having an infested water body upstream, proximity to infested waters nearby, having a public boat launch, high boater activity at the launches, and proximity to major interstates (probably a direct tie to number of boaters). The extent of an infestation if it does occur can be influenced by the plant that is introduced (how fast does it grow, how many ways can it reproduce, etc.), what the bottom of the lake consists of, such as gravel, silt or rock ledge, and the amount of shallow areas in the lake. Once well established, invasive plants can be very costly to remove; current costs are approximately \$1,000 per day, per three-person team, with a team able to remove 300 to 1,000 gallons a day, depending on conditions.

The infestation of Variable-Leaf Water Milfoil on Cobbossee Stream is 1.1 miles away from the Woodbury Boat Launch. The Waughan Road public boat launch on Annabessacook, the newest known infestation of Variable-Leaf Water Milfoil, is located under 5 miles away from the Woodbury Launch. Not only is this a serious issue for Annabessacook, it is also a threat to Cobbossee Lake, which is downstream. The Annabessacook Lake Association, the Cobbossee Watershed District and the Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed are doing everything we can to prevent the spread of the invasive milfoil from Annabessacook to Cobbossee. Five plant identification and surveying workshops were held in the Cobbossee Watershed this summer alone. Annabessacook has over 20 volunteers on their team, with everyone taking a section of the shorefront to become familiar with and look for new or suspicious plants from year to year. Maranacook, Wilson and Torsey are all in the beginning stages of forming their own teams, through training, organizing and determining sectors for volunteers to “adopt”.

The Tacoma Lakes are truly very blessed to have a flourishing and expanding team of volunteer plant patrollers. Heck, the team even has their own page on the website! But the protection of our lakes is really up to all of us. All of us that live, recreate on and enjoy these beautiful natural resources. The stakes are especially high for waterfront owners, who have a vested interest in protecting their property values. I encourage all of you to do your part in protecting your pond; become trained to identify invasive plants and **keep your eyes on the water!**

Tamara Whitmore
Executive Director, Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed
and proud MVLMP Certified Invasive Plant Patroller



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2017 MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$15.00

Thank you for your membership in the Tacoma Lakes Association. Your dues are essential to support our many activities. Together we can all help to preserve the health of these beautiful lakes we love.

(Please print legibly so we can make sure we receive the information correctly. Thanks!)

LAST NAME: _____

FIRST NAME(S): _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____
 (Your Year Round Mailing Address):

MAILING ADDRESS CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____
 (Will only be used if we have questions about your application)

If you would like to receive email updates regarding TLA activities, please provide up to two (2) email addresses below. This is not a membership requirement. Your email addresses will be kept private and will not be shared with any other organization.

E-MAIL ADDRESS 1: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS 2: _____

If you own property on the Tacoma Lakes, please complete the following:

On which pond is your property located? (please circle):

Jimmy Buker Sand Woodbury Little Purgatory

Physical street address of your Tacoma Lakes property: _____

Town (please circle): Monmouth Litchfield

Thank you for considering a DONATION to help us continue our important work. TLA is a fully charitable organization under the IRS Code Section 501(c)(3). This means that all donations (monetary or otherwise) may be deductible for tax purposes.

DUES: _____ DONATION: _____ TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

Please mail completed form together with payment to:
 Tacoma Lakes Association
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 Litchfield, ME 04350-0293