



# FALL 2019 NEWSLETTER

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# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

## Members and Friends,

Another summer has passed, and most docks, floats, and boats are now in their winter homes.

Your Association enjoyed another great summer! The 2019 Annual Meeting was a huge success, more members than ever attended. Toni Pied from the Friends of Cobbossee Watershed gave a very enlightening presentation on the topic of invasive water plants.

Now is not the time for us to be complacent! With invasive species in 7 nearby bodies of water we must remain vigilant. We are struggling to maintain our membership level of the last three years, and I cannot understand why. Our membership fee remains the same at only \$15 per household, per year. This is the lowest membership of the associations in the area. Your fees allow us to be among the leaders in both boat inspections, and invasive plant patrol activities. Boat launch areas are widely thought to be the largest contributor to the spread of invasive plants. Although I do not have the final numbers yet, it appears we had a record number of watercrafts inspected at the Woodbury

Pond boat launch. Increased memberships could eventually enable us to do inspections on more than our current schedule of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. In a perfect world, I would love to have inspectors there every day.

I implore you all to help us grow our membership levels. If you have a new neighbor, mention our work, and how strongly you feel about the health of our lakes, and direct them to our website, or Facebook page. If you know people who are not members, ask them why they are not.

My goal has always been to reach 300 members, currently we are short of that goal. With all of your help, we can get there.

Imagine your children, and grandchildren enjoying these beautiful, healthy waters for decades to come.

Regards,  
**Jim Adams, President**



# TREASURER'S REPORT

TLA is currently in strong financial condition. TLA uses a year end date of December 31 for financial reporting purposes. As of September 25, 2019 memberships have increased by 14 over 2018, and donations have increased \$850.00 through that same period. Membership as of September 25, 2019 stood at 213 members.

We have again received support from the State of Maine, the Town of Litchfield, and Town of Monmouth. We thank them for their continued support. We also

thank our members and those in the community that support our fundraising efforts.

Currently, all bills are paid and there are no outstanding invoices. I am happy to answer any questions that the membership may have regarding TLA finances. You may contact me by email at [curtislindamoodcpa@yahoo.com](mailto:curtislindamoodcpa@yahoo.com).

Thank you,  
**Curtis Lindamood, Treasurer**



# THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 DONORS!

Thank you to all of our 2019 donors and their generous contributions to the TLA. Our Officers and Board of Directors thank the following individuals for cash donations this year. Thank you for supporting the programs of the TLA!

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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# STUDENT VOLUNTEERISM

Are your children or grandchildren heading to college in the next few years? Does your child or grandchild know what they want to do when they grow up? Whether you said yes or no to either question, you should know more about student volunteerism.

You may already know that most colleges require some amount of student volunteerism for the student's application. You may also know that some high schools require volunteerism credits for graduation. If you are not sure, you can check with your local high school or college admissions for information regarding number of hours required and how they can be met.

What you may not know regarding student volunteering is that aside from achieving credit requirements for high school or college, volunteering is an awesome way for the student to learn more about themselves and their interests. The student will gain experience, confidence, meet new people, improve communication skills, acquire technical skills and potentially discover a field of study for a college major and possibly a lifelong profession<sup>1</sup>.

If your student is interested in the outdoors, enjoys hands on experience or is considering a major in Environmental services, Wildlife, Biology, Marketing, Communication, Conservation, Education, you may want to inquire with The Friends of Cobbossee Watershed to look for volunteer/ internships. Founded in 2001, the watershed is a 217 square mile drainage basin located in central Maine, comprising more than 15,000 households<sup>2</sup>. Initially organized by local residents, the Friends of Cobbossee Watershed is a non-profit organization with the mission to engage communities in protecting and improving the lakes, ponds and streams of the Watershed through education and conservation<sup>3</sup>. The student will be provided with a multitude of learning opportunities and field experiences through an internship program for credit. Building on the students' interests, internship experiences provide real-world work experience while supporting the mission of the Friends. Additionally, there are nearly 40 paid summer hires each summer for boat inspections, slow the flow projects and plant surveying.

For more information contact Tamara Whitmore, Executive Director at [tamara@watershedfriends.com](mailto:tamara@watershedfriends.com) or [www.watershedfriends.com](http://www.watershedfriends.com) or call #207-395-5239

<sup>1</sup> Student Volunteering Guide. <https://www.onlineschools.org/student-volunteer-guide/>, downloaded September 27, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Friends of Cobbossee Watershed. <https://watershedfriends.com/about-us/employment/>, downloaded September 27, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Kennebec Valley Chamber. <https://www.augustamaine.com/index.php/cb-profile/1041-friends-of-the-cobbossee-watershed>, downloaded September 27, 2019.



# SWIMMER'S ITCH

Swimmer's itch is a rash that can occur after swimming or wading in the warm water of freshwater lakes and ponds and occasionally salt water. Also known as Cercarial Dermatitis, it is caused by an allergic reaction to parasites that burrow into the skin.

The parasites that cause swimmer's itch normally live in the blood of waterfowl and mammals such as ducks, geese, muskrats and raccoons. The parasites produce eggs that are passed in the feces. If the eggs land in or are washed into water, the eggs hatch, releasing small, free-swimming microscopic larvae. These larvae swim in search of a species of aquatic snail (schistosomes sp) that lives in the warm water along the shoreline.

If the larvae find one of these snails, they infect the snail, multiply and undergo further development. Infected snails release a different type of microscopic larvae (or cercariae, hence the name cercarial dermatitis) into the water. This larval form then swims about searching for a suitable host (bird, muskrat) to continue their lifecycle. Humans aren't suitable hosts, so if the parasites dig under human skin they will soon die without continuing the life cycle. Swimmer's itch is not contagious.

Many factors must be present for swimmer's itch to become a problem in water. Since these factors change (sometimes within a swimming season), swimmer's itch will not always

be a problem. However, there is no way to know how long water may be unsafe. Larvae generally survive for 24 hours once they are released from the snail. However, an infected snail will continue to produce cercariae throughout its life. For future snails to become infected, migratory birds or mammals in the area must also be infected so the lifecycle can continue.

Within minutes to days after swimming in contaminated water, tingling, burning, or itching of the skin may occur. Small reddish pimples appear within twelve hours. Pimples may develop into small blisters. Swimmer's itch typically clears up on its own within a week. It is important to remember that there are other causes for these symptoms.

- Swimmer's itch usually affects only skin not covered by swimsuits, etc.
- Waterproof sunscreen, has been reported to protect the skin from the parasite.
- Rinsing exposed skin with clean water immediately after leaving the water, and then vigorously drying with a towel can help detach any parasites that may be attached.
- Skip the bread crumbs. Don't feed birds on docks or near swimming areas.
- Do not swim near or wade in marshy areas where snails are commonly found.

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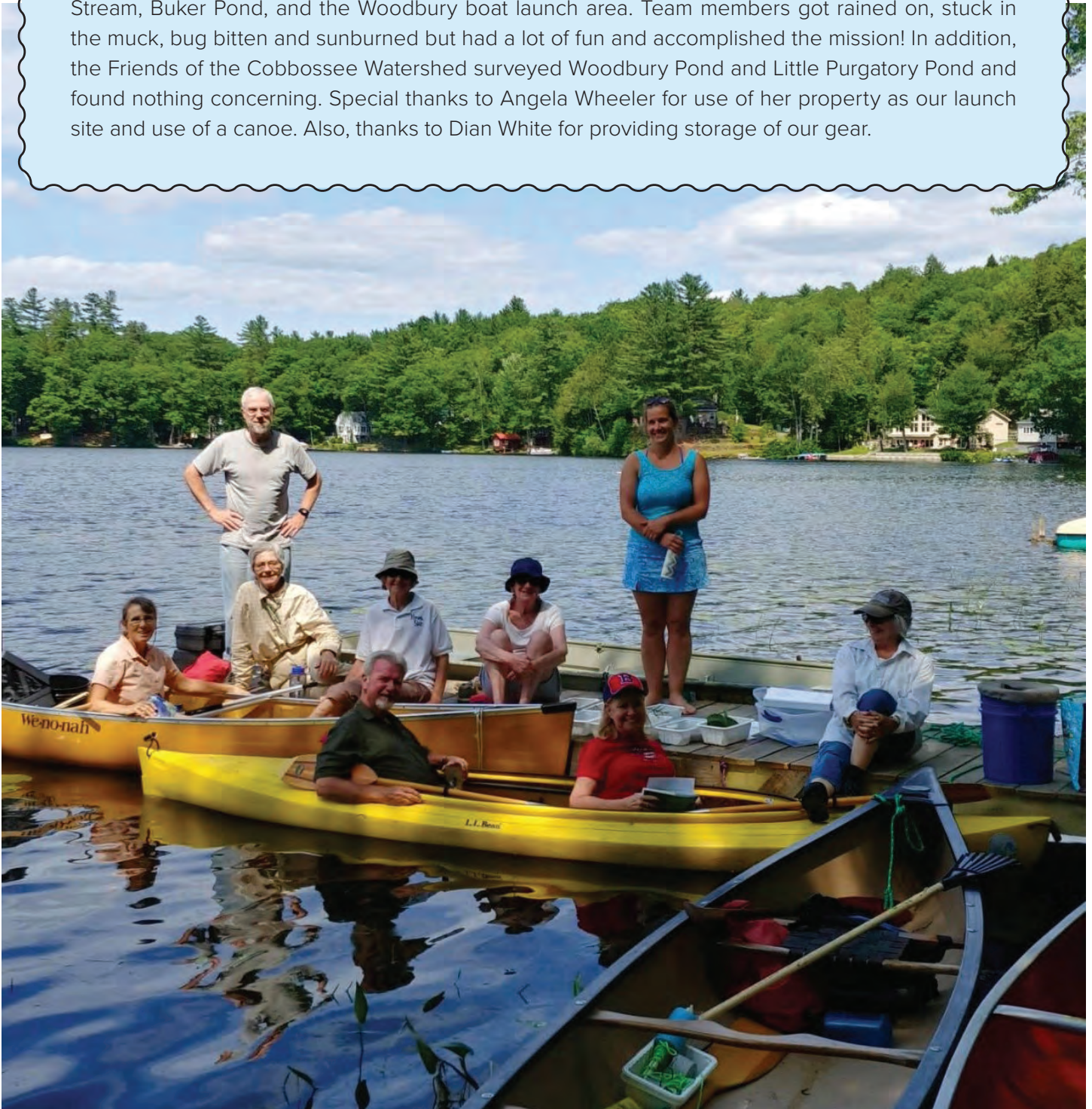
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# INVASIVE PLANT PATROL

The TLA plant patrol was out twice a week this summer and saw many beautiful plants, even one that we didn't already know about. Who knew there is freshwater sponge and that we have it in Jimmy Stream?! We also saw lots of wildlife and were all reminded just how beautiful it is to paddle that stretch of water. We accomplished a lot this year having surveyed all of Jimmy Pond, Jimmy Stream, Buker Pond, and the Woodbury boat launch area. Team members got rained on, stuck in the muck, bug bitten and sunburned but had a lot of fun and accomplished the mission! In addition, the Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed surveyed Woodbury Pond and Little Purgatory Pond and found nothing concerning. Special thanks to Angela Wheeler for use of her property as our launch site and use of a canoe. Also, thanks to Dian White for providing storage of our gear.



# LOON COUNT

The annual loon count is held early on a Saturday morning every July at a time when chicks can be easily spotted, but are not grown up. Maine Audubon arranges it and studies the data in order to monitor the health of the loon population.

Tacoma Lakes Association members participated on our lakes as well as folks from lakes and ponds all over the state. Thanks go out to Rick and Kristen St. Peter and Cheri Cheri Cooledge, Patti and Toby Lott for coverage of Woodbury Pond. They reported a beautiful morning and even decided to do more paddling at 7 AM. In addition there was a large group of loons. Across the road Angela Wheeler took on the job at Purgatory Pond a reported seeing a loon family.

Sand Pond was covered by two groups who have been doing this event for quite a few years now: Bonnie Adams, Joni Smith, Patricia Kiersted, and Sarah Duffy. Diane Clay covered Buker and Brian Kent and family went out on Jimmy Pond and stream. While a couple of chicks were born on those ponds also, until the whole count is summarized we won't know how the loon population in Maine is doing as a whole.

Let's keep doing our part by keeping our distance when boating and switching away from lead sinkers. There are other ways to protect loons too. Just ask Rick and Kristen about how they protected a chick that was grabbed by an eagle on Purgatory Pond. They scared the eagle and stayed with the young loon until it finally took off. Great work you guys!!



*Photo courtesy of Genevieve Pence via Facebook*

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# HEY, WHAT'S WITH THE ALGAE?

Most of us have seen the clouds of algae in our lakes this summer. It seemed to grow almost overnight in the middle of the summer and then seemed to disappear with cooler temperatures. Many of us have heard of pets being poisoned by algae in other states.

In community waterbodies, moderate amounts of algae often mean that the waterbody is in good health, but excess algae levels may indicate that the natural balance of the ecosystem is out of wack. Without proper management, certain species of algae, like cyanobacteria can begin producing harmful toxins.

Cyanobacteria, sometimes called blue-green algae, are technically bacteria. Dense growths often turn the water green, blue-green or brownish-green. These algae are found in all lakes and are a natural part of the lake ecosystem.

Unfortunately, high nutrient concentrations can promote a population explosion of these organisms and result in algal blooms, especially during warm weather.

These toxins can damage the liver or nervous system, produce gastrointestinal symptoms, or cause skin irritation. The World Health Organization established levels of concern for some algal toxins in 1998; the Environmental Protection Agency established similar guidelines for drinking water in 2015 and in early 2017 released draft guidelines for recreation. Maine DEP has been measuring cyanotoxin concentrations since 2008 to evaluate the range of conditions in Maine lakes. Fortunately most Maine lakes do not produce cyanotoxins at concentrations that are of concern, however some lakes that experience annual blooms have been found to produce cyanotoxins.

Algae doesn't necessarily mean poor water quality, but it can be a problem. So what's the key to reducing algae on your lake? The most effective thing to do is reduce the number of algae-feeding nutrients, especially phosphorus, that make it into the water.

## **Be careful with your detergents**

Canada banned phosphates in household cleaning products in 2010, but the US has basically only suggested that phosphates not be included in such products.

**Check the label on your dish detergent - you could still be dumping algae-feeding nutrients into your lake. Make sure you're using phosphate-free cleaners and soaps.**

The goal in preventing nutrient-rich runoff from making it into lakes and other water sources is making sure it's absorbed by the earth, which is a lot harder to do if you've paved or cut short grass right up to the edge of your shoreline. Ideally, you'll have a nice, natural shoreline, complete with plenty of native plants, around your lake to make sure run-off stays on land.

Here are some tips to keep our lakes in tip-top shape:

Sure, you want a nice green lawn and healthy plants — but that fertilizer you spread in your garden also encourages algae to bloom. It's best to avoid fertilizer altogether if you're close to a water source — plant native plants instead, which are well-adapted to the environment and don't require special maintenance. If you must fertilize, try and find a phosphorus-free product, and reduce run-off by applying it when there's no rain in the forecast. And don't think natural fertilizer like manure or compost is any better than a chemical version, anything that's going to make your garden plants grow is going to make algae grow as well. It's best to avoid fertilizers generally.

Just as manure encourages algae to grow, so does human sewage. (Plus, gross.) A leaky septic system can



easily contaminate water sources, so make sure you keep your septic tank well maintained and be on the lookout for cracks and fissures.

An eroded shoreline, meaning few plants or trees, means more run-off from the land into your lake. Make sure your shoreline is planted with native species to help keep its integrity intact and run-off out of the lake, and don't cut down vegetation that's already there.

Even if you're using biodegradable or organic soap, it's best to keep it far from water sources. Use a bucket or other container for your wash water, then bury your rinse water so bacteria in the soil can break down any contaminants. It sounds like a pain, but it's better than washing in slimy, smelly algae.

*This article originally appeared in the Kennebec Journal on July 19, 2019*

## Cobbossee Lake herbicide treatment for Eurasian water milfoil to take place Monday

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection plans to dispense an herbicide into Cobbossee Lake on Monday.

The treatment will be used to combat Eurasian water milfoil, which was found in 2018 near the bridge to Island Park.

The fairly new infestation is not well established, John McPhedran, who leads Invasive Aquatic Plants Program for the DEP, told residents recently during a public hearing in Winthrop.

Because the infestation is new, he said, the herbicide should produce good results, and possibly total eradication.

The herbicide that's been selected is ProcellaCOR EC. The active ingredient in it is floryprauxifen-benzyl, which is a synthetic plant hormone, McPhedran said during a phone interview before the public hearing. It makes the plant cells grow larger than normal, so the plant dies.

The treated area will be roughly 4 acres between Island Park and the northern shore of the lake. The lake is 5,516 acres in size.

The discharge of the herbicide is expected to take one day to complete. While restrictions will not be in place for



*The Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed are working to contain the invasive plant Eurasian water milfoil, which was found last year in Cobbossee Lake. This plant was photographed July 24, 2018. Photo courtesy of Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed*

swimming or watercraft use, the DEP advises lakegoers to stay out of the area during treatment.

Also, the DEP advises residents in the area to not use lake water for hydroponic, greenhouse or nursery irrigation without contacting the DEP to confirm the herbicide has dissipated. Residential and non-agricultural irrigation such as that for residential landscape plants and homeowner gardens should not be done for three days after treatment.



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