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TACOMA LAKES IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SPRING 2012

Welcome to the spring 2012 Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society Newsletter! We hope you enjoyed the easy winter and are now ready for the beautiful summer months ahead!

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

The Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society will be holding its annual meeting and breakfast on Saturday, July 14th 2012 at 8:30 AM, at the Sportsman's Club in Litchfield. The breakfast will start at 8:30 AM and end at 9:30 AM. The breakfast will consist of pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, orange juice, and coffee all cooked and served by your Society's directors and spouses. Cost will be \$5.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children under 12. The breakfast will be followed by a brief business meeting which will consist of a recap of the society's activities over the past year and voting for members of the society's board of directors for 2012. All residents are encouraged to attend the breakfast but only paid society members in good standing will be allowed to attend the meeting and vote. We are planning a fund raising auction of door prizes and homemade pies. Our speaker program will be announced at a later date. Following the meeting Buffy DeMatteis will be leading a "guided Plant Paddle" on Buker and Sand Ponds to view native aquatic plants and compare them to the invasive species in Purgatory Stream. A limited number of kayaks and canoes will be available for use.

MEMBERSHIP DUES NOW DUE

Your 2012 membership dues remain unchanged at \$15.00. A membership application is included in the newsletter. Your board of directors would appreciate you mailing your application and dues payment in as soon as possible. Every application and payment is processed by your volunteer treasurer. Traditionally the bulk of the dues are paid during the summer, putting a heavy burden on the treasurer who is only at his camp on weekends. **Please help us by sending in your application and dues early this year.** Thank you!

FIREWISE PROGRAM

The assessment of the Tacoma Lakes was completed last fall. The result of the assessment is nearly complete and will be available soon. Once the report is received it will be posted on our website as well as available at the annual meeting. Town officials in Litchfield and Monmouth will also receive copies. Discussions will occur this summer as to how we can use this program to improve fire safety around the Tacoma Lakes.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The treasurer is pleased to report that your Society enjoyed a very successful financial year in 2011. We were successful in obtaining grants from the State of Maine as well as the Towns of Litchfield and Monmouth. We enjoyed incredible support from member donations, business advertisers and donors, returnable bottles and cans, and our membership grew by 15 over 2011. We ended the year with a surplus of revenue over expenses of \$3469.96. We continue to carefully manage expenses, the largest of which is the inspectors at the boat launch. We are considering expanding the days covered by the inspectors this year and will also support the cost to continue to remove the milfoil from Purgatory Stream. The entire board thanks you for your membership and your support!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Members:

I and the directors of the Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society hope that winter has treated you well. Winter for the most part skipped Maine this year. It seemed like we bypassed spring and have gone directly to summer.

I am writing to you to bring you up to date on a few issues and also to ask your thoughts and assistance.

Beaver issue on Jimmy Stream: We believe we have successfully removed the four beavers who had managed this fall to successfully dam Jimmy Stream at its most narrow point. The dam is still there this spring. While it was hoped that spring rains would create enough of a water flow to remove the remainder of the dam this has not happened. A state permit is in process to allow removal of the remainder of the dam by hand.

Water level: The dam keeper has shut the dam gates and the lake level is rising as this is written. The water level should be back to the summer level by May 15.

Town taxes: As you may know the town of Litchfield engaged an individual last year to measure and review properties in Litchfield in order to correct discrepancies on the town's tax records. Over the winter and continuing as I write this the town is having the current assessor make the corrections to the tax records. This endeavor involved over 2,500 properties so it is quite a task. It is hoped that records will be completed by sometime this summer. This partial review did NOT include land, which will have to be done at a later date. Complicating what your next tax bill will look like this fall is a proposed 3% budget increase proposed by the local school district, which would negatively impact Litchfield residents to the tune of \$250,000. Fortunately, the town's rainy day fund has been increasing over the last few years so it may be able to absorb some of the increase. It appears the selectpersons will have their hands full this spring and summer as they attempt to mitigate any significant tax increases, while assuring that the town's fiscal responsibilities are met. I suggest that any inquires to the town, in regards to what your next tax bill will be, be held off until summer as our elected town officials by then will have a better idea of both expenses and revenues for the coming year.

Annual meeting: Our annual TLIS breakfast and meeting will be held on July 14, 2012. As a fund raising idea, board members are considering that in lieu of giving out door prizes (many of which have significant value) that we could quickly auction those items and put the money in the organization's account for future use.

Board vacancies and volunteers: It has become readily apparent over the past two years that in order to service the members adequately, we need to increase and diversify the volunteer hours currently being put in. The current burden is being put on too few people to carry the brunt of the workload and, in addition, some of the individual director's job responsibilities simply do not allow them the time to give to the position that is needed.

Please help us by mailing your dues in as soon as possible.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - CONTINUED

We will be having some vacancies on the board this year and would like to hear from any of you that would like to serve. We also need volunteers to do some routine office work. Currently, our much appreciated Treasurer spends his summer weekends at his camp buried in paperwork, while I'm buried in returnables! We are looking for individuals who would either like to serve on the board or a volunteer committee and would be willing to provide a few hours per week assisting both the president and treasurer. If you are willing to serve on the board I would need a brief background and when you would be available. I can provide your name to the nominating committee for this spring's elections.

Currently the board meets about once a month in the spring and summer. Meetings are usually held on a Friday night and last a few hours. If you would like to assist as a volunteer to work on some office duties we would also like to hear from you!

Your association has made great strides over the past few years and with your help we can keep the ball rolling. Please call me on my cell at (207) 312-3698 if you'd like more information about being a director or volunteer or feel free to email me at bdoyles@roadrunner.com.

Have a pleasant spring!

Bruce G. Doyle
President
Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society

WOODBURY POND PARK

Open Weekends May 28 to June 19. Open 7 days a week June 20 – Labor Day. Hours: 9:00 AM – 8:00 PM. Fees \$2.00 per person (under 5 and over 65 free), \$ 8.00 carload. Resident pass: \$30.00, Nonresident: \$50.00. Activities: Swimming (no lifeguards), fishing, picnic tables & grills, horseshoes, etc.

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. Their work is essential to help protect our lakes from an infestation of invasive weeds. 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 will be acknowledged on our website.

SENIOR CENTER HERE TO HELP

Something to consider for anyone who is a summer resident on the Tacoma Lakes and would like to be able to check their email or access the internet. The Litchfield Senior Center, located on Academy Road in the old Litchfield Academy building (next to the Libby Tozier Elementary School) has computers available during the days they are open. The center is open Monday and Friday 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM and Wednesday 8:30 AM to Noon. Stop by for a cup of coffee and check out the many other exciting activities going on as well.

BOTTLE DONATIONS

TLIS is continuing to welcome your bottle donations that are being left in the blue barrels at the town recycling center. Last year's contributions amounted to almost \$400.00. 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!!

BOAT INSPECTORS NEEDED

We staff the Woodbury Pond boat launch with paid inspectors on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and legal holidays from Memorial Day through Labor Day. We are also considering adding additional days to our inspection program. The inspector's job is to check boats and trailers entering and leaving the Tacoma Lakes to be sure no invasive plants are introduced to the lakes. They also educate boaters as to the importance of checking and thoroughly cleaning their boats after every use. Transferring plants from one water body to another by boat or trailer is a common way milfoil and other invasive plants get introduced to new areas. We try to create a culture where every boater checks for plant fragments before leaving a lake or river.

We are seeking volunteers to inspect boats and trailers on those days when we do not provide paid inspectors. These days are usually not busy, which makes the job a little easier. We provide training at no cost to our volunteers. Training is quick and easy and usually lasts about an hour. Job requirements include good eyesight, the ability to bend and see below boats and trailers, and the ability to talk kindly to boaters. The boat launch is a beautiful spot and is a great place to spend a few hours a week with a thermos of coffee and a good book. Teens through senior citizens are welcome to help with this important volunteer work. Please contact Buffy DeMatteis for more information. Her phone number is 352-422-3929 or e-mail at buffythelobsterslayer@yahoo.com. Thank you!

TLIS LEADERSHIP

July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012

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Beautiful Jimmy Pond. Photo courtesy of Dian White.



TACOMA LAKES IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

2012 MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$15.00.

Thank you for your membership in the Society. Your membership dues are essential to support our many activities. Together all of us can help to keep Tacoma Lakes beautiful and healthy.

NAME: _____

STREET: _____ **(Mailing Address)**

TOWN: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____ **OK TO E-MAIL?** _____

We would appreciate your permission to send you e-mail. We will keep your e-mail private and will not share it with any other organization. If you have already provided your e-mail we do not need it again. Thank you!

POND PROPERTY IS LOCATED ON: _____

DUES: _____ **DONATION:** _____ **TOTAL ENCLOSED:** _____

Thank you for considering a donation to help us continue our important work.

Please mail this completed application along with your check payable to Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society to:

**Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society
P O Box 293
Litchfield, ME 04350**

Can you help? We are seeking volunteer boat inspectors. Free training is provided. If you are interested, please indicate your interest below and we will contact you:

Please contact me, I'm interested: _____

WE APPRECIATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP

As a shorefront property owner, you can spend many happy hours gazing out at “our” lake, pond, river or stream. But if you want to guard against the greatest danger to your investment and your quality of life, you need to think seriously about water coming from an entirely different direction – above.

Start by asking yourself a very important question: Where does the rain go?

The Number 1 source of pollution to surface water in Maine is soil erosion, according to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Each year rainstorms and snowmelt wash tons of dirt off the Maine land. Watching your valuable property being carried away is bad enough, but there’s worse news. Eroded soil particles carry pollutants such as oil, fertilizers, pesticides, and phosphorous into our lakes.

Murky water is tough on fish and wildlife. It makes it hard for fish to see and feed properly. Sediments can interfere with reproduction since many fish and aquatic insects lay their eggs in gravel beds. They can also fill in streams, making them shallower and warmer, which make survival difficult for cold water fish, such as trout.

And nothing destroys shorefront property values faster than a decline in water quality. In a University of Maine study, 98 percent of shorefront home buyers rated water clarity as one of the primary reasons they bought their home. That’s ahead of quality of swimming (87 percent) and even scenic beauty (82 percent). In fact, more than 51 percent of shorefront residents had specifically considered water clarity before buying property. The Tacoma Lakes are well known for the excellent clarity of our water.

But you don’t need studies to tell you how important clean, clear water is. All you need to know is that you don’t want to dive into murky water. You don’t want to fish in it or boat on it. And a scenic view isn’t very scenic if the water is covered with brown or green scum.

So TLIS’s goal is to help shorefront property owners help themselves. You can make a difference in water quality and protect your property at the same time. In fact, you can actually make your property more beautiful, but easier to maintain. And it’s far simpler than you might think. Please visit our website www.tacomalakes.org or the Maine DEP lake website www.maine.gov/dep/water/lakes/index.html for further information.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR 2012 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND DUES TODAY!

Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society
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