



# PARKER POND ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

Vol. II

PARKER POND ASSOCIATION

August, 1990

## Annual Meeting

The 1990 Annual Meeting will be held at the Mount Vernon First Baptist Church on Friday, August 24 at 7:00 p.m.

We will have an update on the water monitoring program and the testing Scott Williams has been doing this summer and discuss the future of the program. We will also consider the role and organization of the Association itself in the 1990's. The perennial concerns of too many gulls on the lake and not enough people in the lake association promise to be interesting issues.

We will have a short presentation pertaining to the lake environment if time permits. Please come. Please bring your neighbor.

See you there.

## Water Quality Monitoring

The water quality monitoring program for Parker Pond is now in the third year, but we have had to reduce the effort significantly because of the lack of funds. Ray Anderson has been helping with the Secchi Disk tests in the north end of the lake.

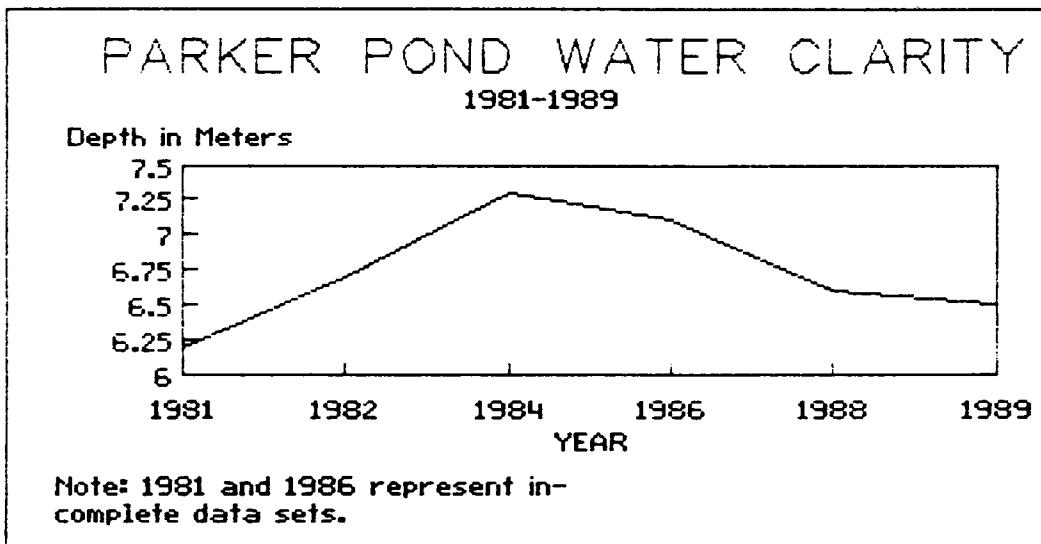
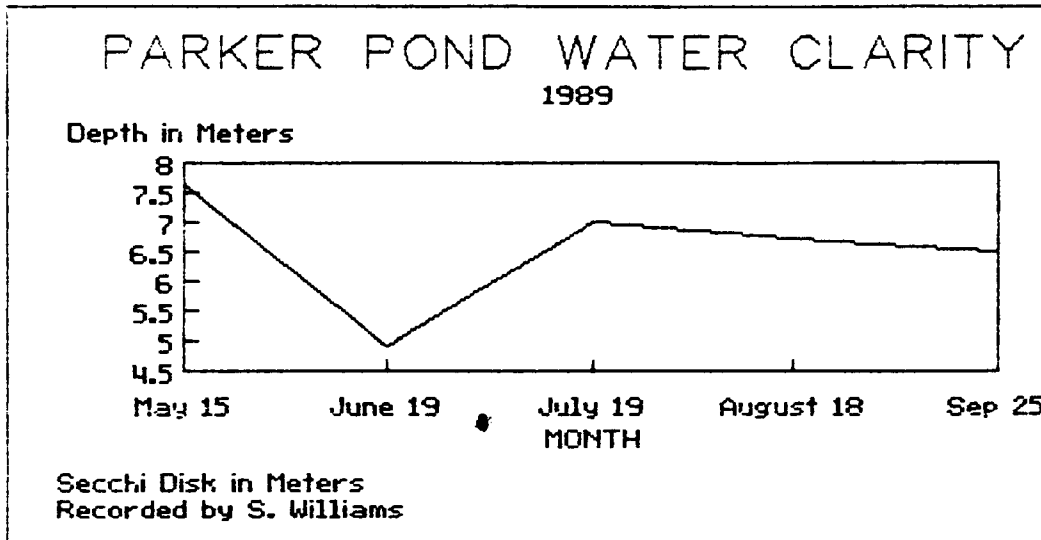
Scott Williams' report for 1989 was very similar to the report for 1988. The water clarity of Parker Pond was still above the average for Maine lakes and was not reduced significantly following the very heavy spring rains and runoff. Last summer a great many Maine lakes experienced water clarity far

below normal because of the heavy sedimentation and phosphorus loading from their watersheds during the spring storms and particularly the major storm of May 12. The water clarity of Parker did decline fairly sharply during June as a result of algal production due to the phosphorus that washed into the lake during the May storms; however, it could have been much worse, and probably indicates that the watershed of Parker Pond is quite stable overall. Water clarity recovered well in July and remained about average for the lake for the rest of the summer.

Like the previous reports, Scott Williams' 1989 report indicates that we have a situation in the deepest parts of the lake (below 13 meters) that needs to be watched and has the potential to cause us great problems in the future. By September 25 dissolved oxygen concentrations had dropped below two parts per million (2 ppm). When oxygen levels fall below 1 ppm phosphorus from the lake bottom is released and fuels algal growth of an unprecedented scale. This happened to Lake Annabessacook in the 40's and 50's and more recently at China Lake.

The 1989 report again stressed the need to minimize disturbances of the land. Special care should be taken to prevent exposed soils, major sources of phosphorus, from washing toward the lake. Permanent revegetation of a site should take place as quickly as possible after construction, and natural forest and cover should be left when possible.

Following is a graphic representation of water clarity for Parker Pond last summer and average water clarity for the lake over the past several years.



## Gulls

The issue of substantial numbers of gulls on the lake has come up again. A good number of people are concerned, and several individuals have applied to the Department of the Interior for a permit to shoot gulls; however, such permits can not be issued without the support of the Association. Shellcrackers have not discouraged gulls in the past, yet shooting the birds is an extreme and controversial practice.

What do you think? Are the gulls truly a nuisance and threat to the lake? How many gulls have you seen on the lake? What harassment of other wildlife, particularly loons or osprey, have you observed? What has happened to the gull population over the past years? Please think about this issue very carefully. There must be a clear mandate from the Association membership, one way or the other, on this issue. We must document the details in an objective and logical way.

A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature. The fluviate trees next to the shore are the slender eyelashes which fringe it, and the wooded hills and cliffs around are its overhanging brows.

Henry David Thoreau

# Phosphorus and Oxygen

Recently the DEP has developed a system for measuring and determining a lake's or pond's sensitivity to phosphorus. This is called the "vulnerability index," and was developed by Jeff Dennis, a DEP biologist who spoke at our Annual Meeting several years ago. The system has some kinks and limitations, but basically it is to determine how long it will take for the phosphorus content of a body of water to increase by one part per billion (1 ppb). Most lakes bloom at an average phosphorus concentration of 15 ppb and an increase in phosphorus could push them over the edge.

The amount of phosphorus in a lake is the amount that washes in minus the amount that washes out as the lake "flushes" itself. The remainder settles to the bottom and becomes locked in the lake's bottom sediments. Just how securely it is locked there is determined by the amount of oxygen present in the water. Oxygen and phosphorus strike a delicate balance; the lower the oxygen level near the lake's bottom, the more soluble the phosphorus trapped there becomes. As phosphorus is released from the bottom, it fuels algae growth

The outlet of Parker thunders in a torrent in the spring, but it may become a mere trickle during a dry summer. The "flushrate" of Parker Pond is probably quite low when the area, 1600 acres, and depth are factored in with the flow at the outlet. The bottom sediments contain quantities of phosphorus that have accumulated over the centuries.

The waters of deep lakes like Parker separate into layers of differing temperatures and densities as the sun warms the lake

during the spring and summer. The process is called stratification. When this happens the upper and lower levels do not mix as well and oxygen is not carried down from the surface to replenish oxygen near the lake bottom.

The situation is further complicated by algae which die and sink to the bottom to be decomposed by bacteria. The decomposition process consumes oxygen, the same oxygen necessary to keep the phosphorus in check. Released phosphorus makes more algae growth possible, and a vicious cycle can be triggered: The more algae growth, the more food for oxygen depleting bacteria and the less oxygen there is in the lake. The less oxygen there is in the lake, the more phosphorus is released. The more phosphorus, the more algae growth, and so on.

If this internal recycling begins a lake will have earlier and more extensive algae blooms. The water may actually stink and be unfit for swimming. Fish like trout and salmon that require deep, cold water with lots of oxygen may disappear. Property values may decline. The release of phosphorus from the sediments can be so extensive that the lake may continue to have algae blooms even after all other sources of phosphorus are significantly reduced.

A lake in this unhappy state may have to be restored chemically with aluminum sulfate. Phosphorus binds tightly with alum and can no longer serve as fuel for the algae. The treatment may cost \$100,000 or more and is often fruitless if other sources of phosphorus continue. Lake restoration is a thriving and profitable business in many parts of the country.

# NEW BOATING LEGISLATION NOW IN EFFECT

As of October 1, 1989, the following boating laws are now in effect:

- \* No person may operate any watercraft in the "water safety zone" (200 feet from any shoreline, including islands) or in marinas or anchorages at greater than headway speed, except to pick up or discharge water-skiers or while actively fishing. Headway speed is defined as the maximum speed necessary to maintain steerage and control of the watercraft.
- \* The owner of any watercraft who negligently permits another person to operate it is liable for violations by the operator.
- \* A person will be considered in violation of the law if he/she operates a watercraft while having .08 percent or more by weight of alcohol in the blood.
- \* A person will be required to submit to blood alcohol testing when so requested by a law enforcement officer who has probable cause to believe that he/she is operating under the influence or was the operator of a watercraft involved in a fatal accident. Failure to submit to a blood alcohol test is a civil violation.
- \* Penalties have been increased substantially for operating under the influence in a watercraft.
- \* Personal watercraft may not be operated between sunset and sunrise and may not be operated by persons under the age of 12. Anyone operating a personal watercraft, or any passenger, must wear an approved Type I or II life jacket at all times. Personal watercraft means jet skis, wet bikes, surf jets, miniature speedboats, hovercraft and similar vehicles.
- \* A parent or guardian of a minor child operating a personal watercraft is liable for violations by the child

whether or not the parent or guardian owns the watercraft.

- \* A person canoeing or kayaking on the Saco River between January 1 and June 1, must wear an approved Type I, II, or III life jacket.
- \* Inland towns may appoint municipal harbor masters who are authorized to enforce watercraft laws within their area of jurisdiction. Towns will keep the fines incurred by the violators.
- \* The Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife must submit a report during this session of the Legislature regarding the establishment of mandatory boating safety courses.

The following law is in effect as of April 1, 1990:

- \* No person may operate a watercraft on inland waters with a marine toilet, shower or sink unless the waste water from the toilet, shower or sink is fed directly into a holding tank. The holding tank for sanitary waste water must not in any way be connected to through-hull fittings.

Due to the fact that there are apparently many boats with toilets, showers or sinks which will not be able to meet the new requirements by April 1, 1990, legal action will not be undertaken before July 1, 1990, provided that the following conditions have been satisfied:

- \* Any holding tank which has a through-hull fitting must have that fitting permanently altered so as to completely eliminate any possibility of through-hull discharge.
- \* Any toilet, shower or sink which drains directly to a through-hull fitting must have the fitting permanently altered to eliminate any possibility of discharge or all pipes connecting toilets, showers or sinks to a through-hull or overboard discharge device must be severed and permanently sealed to prevent discharge.

## Changes in Shoreland Zoning

Last February the Board of Environmental Protection (BEP) endorsed a new shoreland zoning ordinance which will replace the shoreland zoning rules that have been in place since 1974. Maine municipalities have until December 31, 1991 to adopt the ordinance.

Some of the major changes include:

- \*A 100-foot buffer between any new building and the edge of any lake or pond of 10 acres or more.
- \*A new 75-foot protection zone on each side of any major stream.

\*Stiffer limits on rebuilding "grandfathered" structures damaged by fire, storms, etc.

\*Mandatory 250-foot protection zones around undeveloped freshwater marshes considered by the DEP to be especially important to deer, waterfowl, or other wildlife.

\*Restrictions on cutting of trees to a 6-foot path to the shores of lakes or ponds of 10 acres or more.

\*Increased minimum residential lot sizes in shoreland areas to 40,000 square feet for new homes adjacent to rivers, lakes, and streams.

\*Emphasis placed on protecting water quality from the effects of road construction.

# Fishing

Did you hear the one about the traveling trout? No? How about the vanishing trout? Also no? Well, apparently our mentors at Inland Fishing and Wildlife introduced 2500 brook trout into Parker Pond this May.

I was excited by the prospect of a repeat of last year's spectacle. When it comes to brook trout, I take a gourmand's approach. Forget "catch and release;" it's "catch and eat."

Where are the trout? I've spent hours casting in the cove and at the northern end of the pond, but I haven't turned over a single trout. I've developed dark circles under my eyes; my cast iron pan is rusting and I've taken to eating bass.

If any good soul out there knows the whereabouts of those char cousins I would be very obliged if the information found its way to me. Call me. Let's negotiate.

New ice fishing regulations went into effect in January, 1990. The important salmon fishing changes are: (1) Two trap limit (down from five traps) (2) One fish limit (down from two). Fishing is still limited to January only and fish length of sixteen inches.

These changes impacted the turnout last winter rather drastically. From the typical 750-1000 fishermen on the ice January 1, this year the number looked more like 100. Fishing pressure dropped from about 5000 traps to about 200. Apparently the meat fishermen wanted no part of Parker.

As part of the usual ice fishing ritual, I fished the pond later in the month with an out-of-state friend. The lake is exceptionally beautiful and quiet at that time of the year, and I enjoy those days even though we typically get skunked on salmon keepers. Thank God for bass!

The regulations regarding ice fishing do not apply to the open water season (two fish can still be taken) but the reduction in pressure and injured fish should produce more and larger salmon. And I'm told that the smelt population is on the upswing....more good news for the salmon fishermen. However, we will have to wait several seasons to experience the gains from the new regulations. As an example, to date, I have caught 46 salmon on Parker with about 10% keepers. This is considerably below previous years.

Bass fishing, on the other hand, does not seem to be suffering any specific problems. Most takes are with live bait, but just when it appears they're not hitting on top....Bang! A three pound smallmouth takes a popper and bends a nine-foot fly rod into small knots.

Some of the bass my friends and I have taken (and lost) are as big, if not bigger, than any I've seen in many years. Of course Bill Nurse, that great Maine Guide would have released most saying, "They're just babies; send them home to grow up."

Those of you who managed to read this article to the end are either from the "city" or have found yourself in a foreign out-house with only this newsletter to read. Hang on to it. You may need it soon. In any case, if you fish, Inland Fishing and Wildlife can use your help. Call them at 289-2535 and ask for a record book to log your daily fishing experiences. When there is a problem with the fish, we need all the help we can get. By cooperating with the agency, they are more likely to cooperate with us. Remember the squeaky wheel. Besides, maybe they know where the trout went.

Marty Arnold

## Members Needed

This newsletter is being mailed to 200 individuals and households around Parker Pond. Last year a similar mailing yielded 68 memberships. That figure seems disappointingly and disproportionately small when one considers the investment we all have in terms of money, time, and ourselves here at Parker Pond. The \$20 membership fee in an organization attempting to look out for the best interests of the lake seems quite modest.

The Parker Pond Association was formed at a time of crisis. The dam at the end of the lake had given out causing the water level to fall and leaving some property owners high and dry. The Association was formed by determined and foresighted individuals. The dam was rebuilt; the lake and property values were secure; all was well on Parker Pond.

Parker was known for its rocky shore, deep, crystal clear water, and fine fishing. When other lakes began to experience problems with algae growth and declining water quality, there was a widely held notion that Parker was immune to such degradation.

That myth persists to some extent to this day, but many people have noticed slow and subtle changes in the lake over recent years. Those changes have caused some concern. We began a volunteer water monitoring program in the early 1980's. Those efforts have given us a fairly reliable number of Secchi Disk readings for comparison, but in time it became apparent that we needed the assistance of a professional. We needed one with experience who could look at the lake objectively. We needed oxygen measurements from the lake bottom in parts per million and phosphorus measurements in parts per billion. We had neither the

tools nor the expertise to do the job. Three years ago we hired Scott Williams of Lake Environmental Services of Maine to help us. Scott is a top man in this new field of lake monitoring, but he does not work for nothing.

We have had to cut back on our water monitoring efforts because of the lack of funds. This comes at a critical time and will cause a significant gap in our data. Several volunteers have been performing some of the tests to take up some of the slack, but other tests are just not being done.

We need you in the Parker Pond Association. We need your dollars to continue our water monitoring program, and we need your ideas, energy, and involvement. We are at a critical point as far as the future of Parker Pond is concerned. Just what happens to the lake during the next few years may very well determine whether we continue to protect and enjoy our lake in its natural state or find ourselves in another crisis situation where we must manage the problems we have allowed to be created through shortsighted practices and neglect. This Association must become the watchdog of the lake 365 days each year. We must have greater grass-roots involvement of concerned and active people.

## Expenditures

Last year we had 68 memberships yielding \$1360. in revenue. Annual expenditures (without repairs to the dam) were almost \$1800: Water Quality Monitoring - \$1000; Property Tax - \$220; Insurance - \$300; COLA Membership - \$50; Miscellaneous \$210. The \$400 revenue shortfall had caused us to cut back the Water Quality Monitoring Program to about half. We need your help. We need to expand our programs and involvement rather than cut them.

## Loons

On July 20th the Maine Audubon Society conducted the annual loon count. Marty Arnold, Steve Cowperthwaite, and Waine Whittier were up bright and early and counted 13 adults but only one chick here on Parker Pond.

There is much speculation about the rather alarming decline in the number of chicks. Many are quick to blame the gulls, and it is tempting to do so. Gulls do take eggs and the young of many species including loons, but the gulls were here last year.

Perhaps it was because the weather was really quite good this spring. Last spring was unusually wet; much human activity on the lake was curtailed because of the weather. Last year the loons enjoyed a respite at the very time when they are most sensitive to disturbance. Perhaps they did not have such an opportunity this year.

The single chick came from a

nest on or near Birch Island. There were two chicks originally, but one disappeared within a few days of hatching. At one point the pair actually had three chicks. A tiny loon chick just hours old was found by a passing motorist in the middle of Route 41 in West Mt. Vernon. Darkness was approaching. What does one do with a hungry, feisty loon orphan from the middle of the road? In desperation it was taken to the Birch Island area and released with the family there. The attempt was fruitless. Just where the chick came from and how it came to be in the middle of Route 41 remains a mystery.

## Association Board

Ray Anderson  
Marty Arnold  
Steve Cowperthwaite - President  
John Peterson - Asst. Secretary  
Beverly Shaw  
Chig Shuster - Secretary  
Brent St. Clair - Vice President  
Waine Whittier - Treasurer

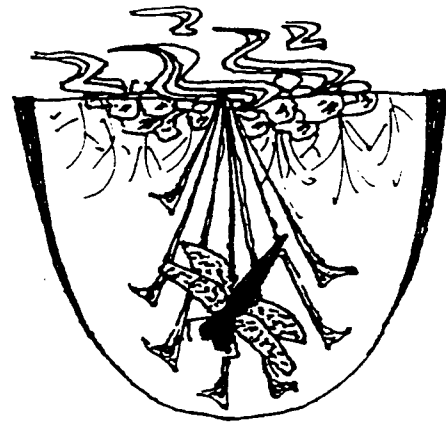
## Association Members

1989-1990

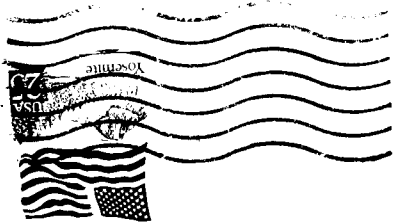
Burton Anderson  
Ray Anderson  
Martin Arnold  
John Austin Jr.  
Robert Austin  
Foster Beal  
Harold Berliner  
Fred Benner  
Douglas Boynick  
George Breault  
Richard Burhoe  
Maynard Bolokirk  
Murray Campbell  
Polly Carlson  
Courtney Chase  
Steve Cowperthwaite  
Janet Bragdon Cross  
Michael Cross  
Bob Davis  
Gerald Deschene  
Albert Desnoyers  
Clayton Dolloff  
Laura Duley  
Alice Farrington

Gary Fitzgerald  
Wesley Ford  
John & Martha Fowler  
Richard Fox  
Thomas Gelt  
David Gideon  
Jan Gooding  
Mildred Gordon  
Shirley Coleman Grant  
David Greenberg  
Margaret Grometstein  
David & Kathleen Guerard  
Jeremiah Healy III  
Morgan Henika  
Ruth Hinderman  
Adam Homick  
David & Judy Kirk  
Ruth & Glendon Kittredge  
Henry Laskey  
Susan Lockhart  
Michael Maker  
Thomas Marsteller  
Edwin Martin  
Robert & Erma Miller

Richard J. Mulcahy Jr.  
Alcide & Lucille Nadeau  
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Francis T. Power  
David Quimby  
Francis Robertie  
Margaret Robertie  
Mary & George St. Clair  
Beverly Shaw  
Fred & Margaret Sharis  
Robert Stolt  
Alan Shactman  
Althea Shuster  
Gerald & Susan Slavet  
Bob & Donna Turcote  
Ray & June Turgeon  
Bruce Verrill  
John & Kathleen Volante  
Harry Wells  
Porter Whittier  
Waine Whittier  
Gladys & Ervin Wirth  
Albert Zimmerman



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# Parker Pond Association

## Special Thanks

We are especially grateful to Josephine Mussomeli of Echo Lake and Miami, Florida for the use of her computer and the many hours she put in helping with this newsletter.

We also wish to thank Marty Arnold for his help with the mailing labels and Sarah Cowperthwaite for her dragonfly.

## COLA

The Parker Pond Association is a member of The Congress of Lake Associations, a private, non-profit statewide coalition of individuals and lake associations concerned with lake protection, water quality, land use and safe boating.

## Changes

Do you remember the enthusiasm and interest at the last Annual Meeting. Perhaps the time has come for the Association to meet more often. A late spring or early summer meeting would enable us to tap that resource, communicate, and sustain our energy.

Perhaps it is also time for some standing committees made up of those interested and enthusiastic individuals. Let's talk about this at the Annual Meeting.