



PARKER POND ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 2

Fall 2006

HELP! HELP! -- WE HAD A CLOSE CALL!!!

The preservation of Parker Pond faces some challenges. The one I would like to address in this newsletter is the threat of harmful invasive aquatic plants brought to us by watercraft launched at Parker Pond after visiting other bodies of water. Generally speaking, if a harmful invasive plant, especially milfoil, is established in Parker Pond it will eventually clog our entire shoreline up to a depth of 15 feet. For a real up close experience of what milfoil does to a lake, visit the public boat launch at Messalonskee Lake on Route 27 in Belgrade near Hammond Lumber Company. If you have had or do have a chance to visit this invasion at Messalonskee, you will understand why the Parker Pond Board of Directors is striving very hard to prevent something like this from happening to our beloved pond.

Over this past Labor Day weekend, a Parker Pond volunteer boat inspector discovered a suspicious looking aquatic plant on a boat trailer about to use the public boat landing. The "suspected invasive" was sent to the Maine Center For Invasive Aquatic Plants to be identified. Because the partial plant was so small, positive identification was not possible by visual means. However, the biologist did identify it as either a native

milfoil or Eurasian milfoil. The sample was sent to a lab for DNA analysis and the results are not yet known. The above experience is a perfect example of why we need more boat inspectors at our boat landing. Our coverage over the past couple of years has been very limited. We need to do more. That is why our objective is **to have boat inspection coverage every weekend from May 1st through Labor Day weekend**, as the very minimum. That equates to 32 individuals volunteering 6 hours of their time for boat inspection for the entire summer! We truly need you help.

If you can not volunteer your time, we would appreciate a donation that would assist in paying a college or high school student to do some boat inspections. Your donation can be sent to Waine Whittier, 321 Tower Road, Vienna, Maine 04360. (Donations are tax deductible.) If you would like to volunteer, please email: **ParkerPond@peoplepc.com** . (See next item for more.) Your help would certainly be appreciated. Have a nice winter and we will see you on Parker Pond next summer!

Dean Wells, President

WELCOME OUR NEW BOARD MEMBER

Lidie Robbins joins us as the new Chair of the Invasive Plants Committee. She has started to organize her program and, as you can see from Dean's letter, Volunteer inspectors are a top priority. There will be training classes. You will have plenty of information and support as a volunteer. Lidie can be contacted at **-lidiew@ hotmail.com.**



DAM REPORT (November, 2006)

The work we planned to do on the dam this fall will have to wait until next year. The permitting process has proven to be more complicated than I expected but is in progress. The weather has been very wet, and it wouldn't have been possible to do the work if we had the permit. We will do the work next summer or fall if/when the earth dries enough to get the equipment to the dam without creating a quagmire. Next summer **we will need some volunteers** to cut bushes along the road and on the dam.

Steve Cowperthwaite
steveatlake@gwi.net



Parker Pond Headland Trail – Now a Reality!

After two years in the planning, the Parker Pond Headland Trail is now a reality. Beth, Andrew and Sarah of the Maine Conservation Corps spent two weeks working on and supervising the trail work. A good number of volunteers from both Parker Pond Association and the Kennebec Land Trust helped the trail crew for a day or two and a contingent of students from Kents Hill spent their community service day helping to clear the trail. Many thanks to the volunteers. I look forward to seeing more in the spring as we finish up the trail.

The trail is a 1.5 mile loop beginning at the end of the Fellows Cove Road. A small parking area is slated to be finished by spring. From its north end,

OUR WEBSITE— parkerpond.org

The primary purpose of our website is to inform and encourage everyone to become knowledgeable about conservation and preservation of Parker Pond's top-notch water quality and environs. There are many references and links to information about pollution sources and remedies. A picture gallery to display your "Best Shots" around Parker Pond is available. Visit the site today and register for full access!

the trail crossing a small stream and reaches the trail loop itself. Crossing an old logging road, the trail then climbs the western side of the headland. The climb ends in a meadow of ferns before turning north to skirt the ledges on the eastern headland. The view past Birch Island includes the Kelly Family Conservation Easement on the Mt Vernon shore. The trail descends the eastern and northern headland to reach the water at the northern tip. The trail returns by the western side to the parking area.

The trail is currently marked by the orange ties on trees but is fairly easy to follow. It is not for the faint of heart as it climbs a total of 275 feet. Allow an hour to do the loop to enjoy the views, the varied boulders and plant life. I have seen wild turkey and partridge frequently. Deer and moose droppings can be found and I think I have seen bear scat as well. Enjoy the trail but remember that no motorized vehicles are allowed and no fires are allowed. "Take only photographs and leave only footprints."

Bill Rogers, Stewardship Chair

Noah Greeley's Dam II - The Mill

(This is Steve's second installment about our dam's history and the important part it has played in the local economy over the past two centuries.)

When this land was settled, saw mills were built before schools or churches and while people lived in log huts or hovels. Trees grew in great abundance, and turning them into lumber for the construction of homes and other buildings was essential. Mills

were built where there was moving water to power them. Noah Greeley built his mill on the stream that flows out of Parker Pond. In 1805 he built the dam that raised the water level of a wilderness pond to create the lake we know and love. He did not intend to create a beautiful place. He was a practical businessman first and foremost and built the dam primarily to provide a reservoir to store the water to power his mill.

It was a lumber economy in those days. There was little money exchanged. People paid to have their logs milled into lumber with lumber or with goods they had made or grain or crops they had raised for barter. Greeley and most mill operators set up stores by their mills where the goods could be traded for other goods. Villages began to appear. There was a time when there was a robust village in West Mt. Vernon with a grist mill just below Greeley's saw mill and another cluster of establishments by the mill of Pheneas Taylor where the chimney stands on the dam at the end of Taylor Pond. In time there was a church, school, cider press, brickyard, fulling mill (felt), tannery, and blacksmith shop. The pattern was not unique to West Mt. Vernon. It was typical of the pattern of development everywhere in New England.

There were basically three types of water wheels powering early mills. Undershot wheels just required moving water and were about 30% efficient. Overshot wheels required a high dam and a flume to drop the water over the top of the wheel. The weight of the water turned the overshot wheel, and they were about 75% efficient. Breast wheels also required a dam with a lock that could be opened to release water "breast high" on the wheel with about 65% efficiency. Noah Greeley's mill had a breast wheel.

Such water wheels had one very serious limitation. They froze and were useless in cold weather. About the time Noah Greeley built his mill, a New Hampshireman invented the turbine. It was installed in the streambed under water that did not freeze (hopefully) and revolutionized waterpower. Turbines enabled small, backwoods mills to work year round as long as water was available and made it possible to power the enormous factories in Lowell, Lawrence, Saco and Lewiston.

Greeley's mill, like all of the early sawmills, was a sash mill. A straight saw was fitted in a wooden frame that worked up and down like a window sash. A crankshaft in the waterwheel axle converted the circular movement of the wheel to reciprocal, up and down movement to power the saw. Logs were placed on a moveable carriage that was either inclined slightly or weighted to keep the log in contact with the blade. Where there was an abundance of power, two or three saws could be installed in a sash to saw several boards at a time. They were called "gang saws." In the 1820's, the circular saw was invented by a Shaker woman and quite literally revolutionized sawmills by speeding them up and making them more efficient.

Settlers cleared land around the lake. Today in a few places, we can see stone walls coming straight down through the woods to the water's edge. There were fields there. In other places the land was just too rocky to farm and was left woodland. The lake served as a fence as well as watering trough for cattle grazing in the back pastures. Farmers cut ice in the winter and stored it in icehouses packed in sawdust from Noah Greeley's mill.

Steve Cowperthwaite

Marty Arnold, Chair of the Lake Usage Committee, is looking to form a "Fish Advisory" sub-Committee. This committee will deal with the health of the Parker Pond fishery, meeting with local fishermen, biologists and speakers from Maine Dept of Inland Fishing and Wildlife (MDIFW), Trout Unlimited and other lake/stream organizations. If you are interested in the health and future of fishing on the pond, contact Marty at: **marnold@worldnet.att.net**. Please be sure to include "Parker Pond Fishery" in the subject line of the email.

One final note. If you've read this far you probably have noticed that this Newsletter's theme is "Be a Volunteer" for Parker Pond's preservation activities. The few hours you will spend will pay big dividends in a better environment.

Another goal of Parker Pond Association is to increase our membership. Both sides of the cover page describe the levels of membership. Discuss the advantages of membership with your neighbors and sign them up! (Yes, you can do it. You don't have to be on the Membership Committee. And you can make as many copies of the form as you wish!)

We welcome two local businesses as members: The Thomas Agency in Winthrop and Sprague & Curtis in Augusta.

Happy Holidays to all!