



PARKER POND ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 1

February, 2002

President's Corner

Serving as your president completes circle for me, because Parker Pond was the most beautiful local water I canoed and fished with my father as a small boy living in Augusta. The marvelous bass fishing, the many loons and unspoiled shoreline helped create a lifetime passion for fishing and conservation. Parker had no salmon, largemouth or algae back then. Bass were scorned as trash fish by most Mainers, who could still catch some 5-8 lb. brook trout in the nearby Belgrade Lakes. We trolled streamer flies and could often see huge small mouth swimming along bottom in 10-12' of water in the spring. The largest one we ever saw finning on the surface might have gone 7-8 lbs. Today there are far more camps, much faster boats and far fewer trophy bass (Our short growing season means smallmouth over 4lbs. are at least 15 years old, and only a tiny fraction of fingerlings reach that size.). In 1950 few boats had motors over 5hp; 10 hp was large, and 25hp was the largest.

Fifty years later in the year 2002, our beloved Parker Pond in 2002 remains "The Best That Is Left" in Central Maine. In the last three years many camp owners have discovered the quiet, intimate joys of kayaking and we even have a pair of nesting bald eagles (never seen in the days of DDT), ice fishing pressure has been alleviated, and algae growth is usually moderate.

Although Parker's water quality remains the best in Central Maine, pollution remains a very real threat to the long-range health of the pond. Each of us owes gratitude to Ray Anderson, Marty Arnold and Deborah Cayer for their many years of devoted effort

gathering accurate water quality data, which is crucial to safeguarding the pond's long range health. Marty has also done a great job organizing the annual loon census.

Additional phosphorous, nitrogen, herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers entering the lake can eventually reduce the oxygen level and the clarity; this endangers many forms of fishlife and may lead to algae blooms. This is called "non-point source pollution."

However, the latest, greatest irreversible threat Parker has ever faced in thousands of years is THE SPREAD OF EURASIAN MILFOIL, which has destroyed all forms of recreation on many New England lakes and entered southern Maine last year. Once present, it has never been eradicated, and it devastates property values. The EDUCATION of every landowner, of every person who launches a boat is crucial. You will learn more about this threat and what the Association is doing to combat it in this newsletter.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT?

- (1) BECOME WELL-INFORMED.
- (2) SIGN UP AT LEAST ONE MEMBER BY THE END OF THE YEAR (of approximately 200 landowners, we have just 65 paid members).
- (3) MAKE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN NO OUT OF STATE BOAT IS EVER LAUNCHED ON YOUR PROPERTY WITHOUT FIRST BEING THOROUGHLY EXAMINED AND EVERY SCRAP OF WEED REMOVED.

Bill Dunham, President

WATER QUALITY REPORT

Extensive research has been conducted on the subject of controlling invasive plants. Much of the research suggests that the most effective approach both economically and practically, is PREVENTION or EARLY DETECTION. Our primary goal is to make sure all lake users are well-informed about the ways in which plants spread – this may prevent infestations. If an infestation does occur, early detection could reduce the chances that the plant will spread throughout the lake.

In the last newsletter you will remember our discussion on invasive plants. Five PPA members, Jerry and Heidi Hartz, Marty and Fiora Arnold and Deb Cayer attended an invasive plant workshop in Turner at the VLMP (Volunteer lakes Monitoring program) office. We learned plant identification and how to conduct a survey. There are four levels of surveying: from just checking the public access areas to doing a complete shoreline survey, checking for new plant growth and identification and collection of suspicious plants. The fourth level would also include detailed information of the effects of human activities in shoreline areas.

The Association intends to do a Tier 2 Survey from mid to late July and see how it goes. If you find a suspicious plant, DO NOT try to remove it or take a sample because disturbance of the plant may cause it to spread. Instead, please call Deb Cayer (PPA water quality officer) at 293-2782, leave a message and way to reach you. Please stay turned! In the June newsletter we will discuss the current water quality of Parker Pond compared to what it was 60 years ago. This information is being gleaned from a 1940 biological survey conducted by the Dept. of Inland Fish and Game.

Deb Cayer, Chairperson; Water Quality

2001 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

65 members were in attendance August 4 in Mt. Vernon. Members thanked Brent for his work as president and Ray Anderson who completed his three-year term as a trustee. The following Officers and Trustees were elected: president- Bill Dunham; vice-president Cindy Stancioff; secretary- Steve Cowperthwaite; assistant secretary- Pat McInerny; treasurer and clerk- Waine Whittier, Trustee Marty Arnold (elected to 3 yr. term); Trustee Brent (retiring president, elected to complete Cindy's last year) and Morgan Henika (2 years remaining in term). Alicia Tenny, a biologist, and Pat McInerny will serve with Deborah Cayer on the Water Quality Committee and develop an invasive plant strategy. Members authorized the O&T to spend up to \$1,000 to hire a summer intern in 2002 to educate landowners about the twin threats of non-point source pollution and invasive plants.

The Parker Pond Shores Association expressed their gratitude for PPA's resolution in 2000 which they adopted. The Shores Association also reported that conservation restrictions have been placed on the 300 acres within the Association, which will prevent any additional subdivision. This was applauded by PPA members. Landowner Erica Diller, the PPA and the Kennebec Land Trust are in ongoing discussions regarding the possibility of providing long range conservation of the Headlands, perhaps THE choicest piece of Undeveloped land on the pond.

Treasurer Waine Whittier reported total funds of \$13,040.34. We are grateful to Waine for his steadfast work and will include his full Treasurer's report in the next newsletter.

The State of Maine will not issue another permit to shoot seagulls, which were driven from the north end by the eagles, but have relocated in the mid-lake islands area. They foul the water and are a threat to loon eggs and chicks.

A motion was passed that the bylaws should be changed to limit how much money the officers and trustees can spend without a vote at the annual meeting. Another motion was passed to donate \$250 to the Congress of Maine Lakes Association

The O&T were directed to invite David Pond landowners to become Associate Members of PPA, because David Pond needs to be included in PPA efforts, its outlet stream discharges into Parker. The T&O were charged with determining whether David Pond landowners could become full members of PPA.

Finally, the State has expressed interest in upgrading the north end boat launch. PPA members are worried that this will encourage more boats and more out of state boats that may be carrying milfoil and other invasive plants to use Parker. The O&T were requested to write a letter to the State opposing any such upgrade and the resulting increase in large boats on three grounds: increase the risk of invasive plant introduction, result in more harassment of ospreys and loons and eagles, and increase risk of large wakes destroying loon nests.

Minutes compiled by Waine Whittier,
Cindy Stancioff and Bill Dunham

Following is A Copy of the Letter Sent to the State Regarding the Boat Launch:

(You are encouraged to write, too.)

State of Maine Department of
Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
Lee E. Perry, Commissioner
284 State St.
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Commissioner Perry,

The Parker Pond Association, in existence for over 50 years, sees as its primary mission the monitoring and safeguarding of

the water quality, fish and wildlife of Parker Pond. Our members are lake abutters, non-landowners, Maine natives and summer visitors.

At our last annual meeting we discussed a rumored potential upgrading of the boat landing on the north shore of the pond. On the basis of biological and aesthetic integrity, as well as practical economics, the Association wishes to voice its strong opposition to such a project.

Parker Pond is unique for its aesthetic qualities, its clustered development and long stretches of unscarred shoreline and picturesque unspoiled islands. It also has a singularly quiet character, hosting few motorboats for a lake of its size. This is partly due to the hazardous rock outcroppings randomly scattered throughout, which many have experienced. That more fast boats have not been damaged is due to another factor, a steep, short public ramp that entices the more intrepid fishermen and non-power boaters, but not many recreational large and fast power boaters.

Parker Pond has also enjoyed a history of exceptional water clarity and quality that only recently has begun to flag. Reasons for a drop in clarity, oxygen and fisheries depletion have not been completely identified, but the Association has been assiduously collecting water quality data for several years and has moved aggressively to educate abutters and the public about the water quality impact of development, property maintenance, and recreational activities.

The Association's greatest concern, however, is the threat posed by invasive aquatic plants, which can overthrow the ecology of a lake and choke it within a few years. The risk of contamination to this relatively pristine lake rises proportionately with increased use by watercraft that may have visited contaminated lakes and retain some small piece of such a plant. Clearly, encouraging more traffic by upgrading the

ramp is courting disaster, unless the State individually inspects each boat. Increased gas discharge from additional large motors will adversely impact water quality. There are larger bodies of water in the area, which are much more suitable for skiing, speeding or just cruising the shoreline. The State should not be spending money to launch large boats on a pond that is not suitable for day-trippers.

Upgrading the boat landing would be costly. Parking space at the site is severely limited and any attempts to enlarge it would entail further expense. Long term maintenance would also be significant and the cost of trying to combat invasive plants is simply incalculable.

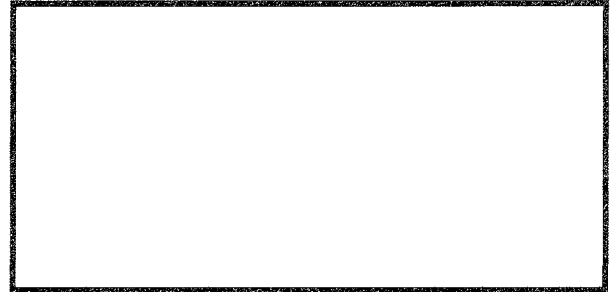
Parker is well served by the facility as it exists today. It is open to the public, there are no horsepower restrictions, and with the right equipment large boats can be launched if care is taken. The pond is ideal for fishing boats, canoes, and kayaks, but truly large, fast motorboats and jet skis should not be encouraged. These heavier, faster, noisier boats will jeopardize the loon, bald eagle, and osprey populations, the great blue heron rookery and will also impact mink and beaver.

As it is today, Parker Pond has public access and is appreciated by recreational boaters and fishing enthusiasts mostly for its unique features and lack of development. Expending scarce State resources to accommodate boats that cannot safely navigate its rocky obstacle course would not benefit the pond's constituents. Rather, this action would increase harmful pressure on the nesting pair of bald eagles that Inland Fisheries recently documented on the north end of the lake, endanger our nesting loons and disturb the blue heron rookery. The combined threats to the water quality and ecology posed by increased traffic from large watercraft from other watersheds leads this association to recommend against an upgrading.

Thank you for considering this testimony as you make your decision,

Sincerely,

William H. Dunham, Jr.
President
Parker Pond Association



CAMP BEARNSTOW CONSERVATION PROJECT

Last October a dozen Kents Hill School students and faculty, led Jim Roby-Brantley of the Maine Conservation Corps, completed a non-point source pollution control project at Camp Bearnstow. The School is dedicated to the belief that "one man or woman of principle can make a difference," has a strong environmental studies program and several current and former faculty members and graduates are Parker landowners.

They spent the day laying gravel in ditches and creating periodic small angles ditches to divert runoff from the steep hillside dirt road leading down to the Camp, so that phosphates in the road dirt are absorbed harmlessly by the forest, rather than eroding and washing down into the lake. Runoff from camp roads is a major source of phosphorus loading. Once phosphorus enters our lake it stays forever, and just one pound of additional phosphorus can have a very significant impact on additional algae growth and oxygen depletion.