

PARKER POND ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

ParkerPond.org

June 2009

ANNUAL MEETING WITH BRUNCH July 25 at MOUNT VERNON COMMUNITY CENTER 10AM-1PM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Every pond and lake in Maine has its own personality. Whether it is shaped by the people who first arrived on its shores, or is a result of the geography of the spot is an interesting question to ponder. I prefer to think that the personality of Parker Pond is the result mostly of the latter. A long "Y" shape, with many little coves and islands as shields, Parker Pond hides its size to most people on the shore. Site lines are broken up by islands, the Headlands, majestic evergreens. Camps feel secluded, clustered into "neighborhoods" and road associations, but separated from those in other areas of the pond. The underwater hazards and the rustic boat launch keeps motorized traffic at a minimum, and the pond is quiet. The personality of the pond follows the geography: people, while friendly and good-natured, are independent and prefer their solitude. Lake-wide events, regattas, derbies and barbecues are non-existent. That's Parker Pond and that's the way we like it.

However, the independence and solitude we enjoy on Parker Pond can make it a challenge when we need to marshal resources. There are many opportunities to help preserve the pond for generations to come. These opportunities are described in articles throughout this newsletter. From volunteering to inspect boats for invasive plants, to becoming an island steward, to helping to monitor water quality, or

just counting loons, there are many opportunities to volunteer your time.

If you cannot volunteer your time, consider volunteering financial resources. I encourage you to become a member of the Parker Pond Association for a nominal fee. Consider mentioning the Association to your neighbors, relatives and friends. Joining is an inexpensive way to help out and carries no obligations beyond writing a check. Of course additional donations are always welcome. We'll put both big and small to good use, and they can be earmarked for any area you suggest. These donations can be used to pay local youths to inspect boats at the launches, pay to train water quality and invasive plant monitors, or maintain the dam. We have had a great example of Parker Pond residents and friends coming together recently--the fund-raising effort for the Headlands Preserve was a great success, and the area and its trails are spectacular. Please visit it if you haven't already. In his article, PPA Treasurer Waine Whittier describes our current fundraising campaign for stewardship of an adjoining easement to the Headlands Preserve expanding this unique and beautiful resource. There are many ways to give to the pond. Give with your time, give some money. Very little of either goes a long way. And we can keep the pond just the way we like it.

John Linton, President, PPA

ANNUAL MEETING Join your neighbors & bring a friend for a summer mid-morning pot-luck brunch. Bring your favorite dish, warm or cold, to share. Coffee, hot water for tea, and

cold drinks will be available. A great time to greet and meet friends **We'll have a drawing for Door Prizes, too.**

30 Mile River Watershed Association

Report The Watershed Association has come great strides in coordinating efforts throughout the watershed to protect it. With Eurasian water-milfoil in Salmon Lake just above Great Pond in Belgrade adding to the threat from variable water-milfoil in Messalonskee and Belgrade Stream, we are at great risk of invasion by the worst of the worst of the non-native aquatic plants and must redouble our efforts. Lidie Robbins, of our own Parker Pond Association, has assumed the part-time executive director position for the new organization and thereby given it a momentum and professionalism that have propelled it forward quickly. With the help of a \$4200 DEP grant, she has hired three part-time staff: a courtesy boat inspection program coordinator and two inspectors. Inspections began Memorial Day weekend, and will continue on weekends until Labor Day. Contact Lidie Robbins (lidew@hotmail.com, 293-2181) on how to be a volunteer inspector.

In addition, Adrien Polky has continued as the Watershed Association's Lake Steward. He patrols the watershed in the organization's distinctive red boat, educates boaters about safe boating practices, helps in plant surveys, watches for potential zoning violations, and will help with the association's new Lake Visitor program. With the latter program, representatives from 30 Mile River Watershed Association and Parker Pond Association will visit camps around the lake encouraging membership in Parker Pond Association and support of both by volunteering and/or making tax deductible contributions. The Lake Visitor program also will be piloted on Androscoggin Lake this summer to encourage watershed support.

The Association is planning a watershed celebration event for a weekend in August, when you can join in a paddle and education

programs along the 30 Mile River. Watch for more details.

We are successfully helping to organize Minnehonk Lake, which will start a courtesy boat inspection program this summer and probably a lake association.

Road run-off is a major source of lake deterioration as development increases. Proper road construction and maintenance can prevent this. Clyde Walton, 30 Mile River board member and expert on such techniques will be giving a series of 2 hour walking seminars this summer. Requests for one to happen on your camp road can be made by contacting Clyde through Lidie Robbins (lidew@hotmail.com, 293-2181).

The "30 Mile River" is a connected chain of ponds, lakes and streams that begins in New Sharon and runs through Vienna, Chesterville, Mount Vernon, Fayette, Readfield, Wayne and Leeds. It includes 19 lakes and ponds represented by eight associations. Formed in 2008, the 30 Mile River Watershed Association is a non-profit coalition of lake and pond associations, municipalities and land trusts in this geographic area which have common goals and shared interests in protecting the watershed. Rather than individuals, our membership is comprised of the lake and pond associations, conservation organizations and the towns in which the 30 Mile River is located. The Association's mission is to preserve, improve and protect land and water quality in our watershed. To become involved or learn more, please visit **www.30mileriver.org**.

Dan Onion, Vice President, PPA; President, 30 Mile River Watershed Association

Water Quality Report PARKER POND DATA: 1524 ACRES, 83236 FT OF SHORELINE, MAXIMUM DEPTH OF 76 FT. Secchi disk clarity readings were taken by Fiora Arnold last season with an average reading of 7.2 meters. Dissolved oxygen (DO) readings were taken early and late by Deb Cayer and Marty Arnold and core water samples were taken on each trip for measurement of total phosphorus. The late season drop in oxygen in the lake in 2008

was profound. Some of this oxygen drop is due to warming of the water; however, compared to earlier years, 2008 was the worst yet. Too little oxygen severely reduces the diversity and population of aquatic communities, and will lead to release of phosphorus from bottom sediments which can contribute to algae blooms. The total phosphorus in the water column at the end of the season last year was actually less than the spring reading which is unusual but may have been due to the rainy spring weather and sedimentation into the lake. Spring reading was 0.012 mg/L and in August it was 0.009.

DISCUSSION: Water quality variances are the results of both natural and man-made factors. There is a strong correlation between weather cycles, especially the amount of rainfall, and water quality. During periods of heavy rain pollutants from a lake's watershed area (everything uphill of the lake) are washed in to the lake. Many of these pollutants, including loose soils, sand, and gravel, contamination from faulty septic systems, fertilizers, detergents, gas and oil, are all high in phosphorus and promote the growth of algae when they enter the water. Lakefront property owners play a critical role, as the last line of defense, in keeping these pollutants out of the water. Undisturbed or undeveloped land, with its natural ups and downs, abundant vegetation, and absorbent ground cover, offers much protection, by "breaking up" the impact of rain and slowing it down, allowing it to sink in to the ground before it washes in to the lake. As water front property owners it is important to disturb as little of our lakes' natural "buffer zone" as possible and revegetate as much as possible after development.

Deb Cayer, Chair

Loons and Eagle Nesting loons whisper and coo. They enter and leave their nest sites surreptitiously and fake nonchalance when leaving to fish or returning to relieve their mate of incubation duty. Imagine my surprise while planting pole beans on May 26th to hear the pair nesting in the cove shouting frantically. I dropped my Kentucky Wonders, sprinted to the

shore expecting to see a forty-foot bass boat or a flotilla of kayakers closing. There were no humans in sight.

Then a shadow instantly became a hurtling bald eagle swooping toward the nest like a dive-bomber strafing. It drove off the loon on nursery duty. The pair and I screamed, howled, cursed the bully. Eagle circled, hovered over the nest in clumsy imitation of his more agile cousin, Osprey. Perhaps distracted by our outrage, he seemed off balance, a bit wobbly, when he plunged for the eggs and missed the nest, splashing ignobly into the water. The loons immediately and unwisely, I thought, commenced a deafening, chorus of derisive laughter. Eagle seemed surprised, demeaned. He splashed awkwardly, flapped to a high branch of a pine across the cove.

Perched, he realigned ruffled feathers, regained composure, re-examined the situation. Loons continued their harangue while slowly swimming away from the nest toward the broad lake. Eagle remained without moving. He and I stared long at each other. I was silent, fearing he would swoop down at any moment to snatch the undefended eggs. Our national bird is indeed handsome, but I could not help imagining him the perfect model of a Taliban warlord on his perch. The very day his species was removed from the State's "threatened" list, that individual topped my list of necks I'd like to wring.

After an eternity of loony cacophony, he stirred, flapped, circled, found a thermal, circled high, soared north majestically. One loon returned to the nest the other remained on guard at the mouth of the cove.

I feared Eagle would soon be back with his mate and a vengeance. Our cove is conveniently on the way from their aerie to the bone yard where they scavenge and quarrel over tidbits with ravens and turkey vultures. The pair passed several times during the next few weeks, but there were no more major assaults. On June 17th a loon chick fledged. Mid June is early for chicks, a good head start on summer; however, the other egg remains abandoned on the nest.

Man is a threat everywhere, but on our lake Eagle is a threat too. Please **LOOK OUT FOR LOON CHICKS!**

Steve Cowperthwaite

PPA to Extend Stewardship to Our Islands

Who owns the islands? Can I use them?

Are there regulations governing their use?

Do any of these questions seem familiar to you? Well, they do to me (after all, I did write this article). Actually, I've been thinking about our islands for about thirty years and I've got to believe that more than a few of you have had similar thoughts.

We're not alone, since with heightened public interest in our dear Parker Pond, many island related questions are being asked and addressed by the State of Maine.

Our pond is an exceptional place for kayaking, canoeing, boating, swimming and fishing and as a result our islands are experiencing greater use. More people are doing more overnight camping, day picnicking, recreating and otherwise just using our islands than at any time in the past. Which also means that there is a greater threat of fire, uncollected debris, and damage to the environment along with vandalism. Do I have your interest?

To answer the question of ownership, let's say that if an individual (person, corp., trust, etc.) holds "good" paper (deed or lease that stands up to legal scrutiny) the state will probably recognize that person as the owner. Recognition may be long term or for a specified time period, as in the case of a lease. In Maine, property falls into two categories. It is either owned by individuals (tribes, corporations, etc.) or the state. Note that this is a rather general explanation as I am not an attorney!

As of the latest tally, there are three islands on the pond that might be considered "owned by an individual". They are Gooseneck, Loon and Long Islands. The state is currently working a paper trail on these and there is reason to believe that at least some will end up in the state's inventory.

Can I use them? None of the islands are currently posted and it would seem that reasonable use would be ok. But what is reasonable? That takes us to the next question. Are there regulations governing their use? **YES!!!**

Enter the **Lake Usage Committee of PPA**. Last year Bill Rogers, Vickie Kozak (Kennebec Land Trust), Flora Arnold and I met with two representatives of Dept. of Conservation, Bureau of Parks and Lands, at our camp. We toured almost all the islands and then discussed the state's position regarding ownership, safety, utilization and cleanliness.

As chairman of the Lake Usage Committee, I had been corresponding with the state about the islands for about a year. PPA's interest in stewardship is derived from the great job Bill Rogers (Chairman Stewardship Committee) and his committee has done regarding moving the Headland and Kelly properties into PPA stewardship.

Sometime during that year, the state indicated an interest in having the PPA become stewards of its islands. So far, it has been a comfortable negotiation since our goals match those of the state. Both of us want to see the islands used by the public, maintained, kept safe and regulated against destruction and vandalism.

It is our objective to complete our meetings, get final approval from the state and begin training to become stewards before the end of the summer. The organization approach we've chosen is to have the Lake Usage sub-committee on Island Stewardship responsible to oversee activities undertaken by the stewards. Each island will have a team of stewards, the leader of which will report to the sub-committee. We have since designated three islands to start. They are Birch, Spruce and Bill's Islands. The stewards are Steve Cowperthwaite (Birch), Gary Dubord (Birch), Morg Henika (Birch), Deb Cayer (Spruce), Bill Rogers (Spruce), Marty Arnold (Bill's), Lidie Robbins (Bill's) and Wayne Whittier (Bill's).

It is our objective to ask neighbors of the islands and interested residents from sur-

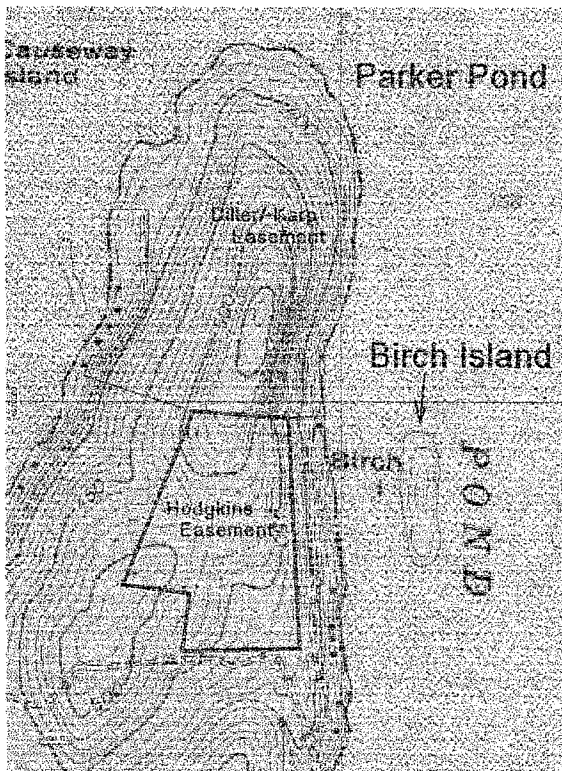
rounding communities to become stewards as well. The islands we admire and use, our "front yards", so to speak, will be cared for by "us".

We love our pond and all its island treasures. PPA is deeply committed to preserving the nature and quality of these islands. So, we ask you, members of the Association, to also step up and serve as stewards.

Marty Arnold, Chair

Headland Preserve Expanded

Glenn and Sara Hodgkins of Hallowell, along with 11-year old daughter Anna and 8-year old son Benjamin, recently donated an undeveloped 42-acre wooded parcel to the Kennebec Land Trust (KLT). The property is on the east side of the headland and shares a 1,500-foot boundary with the Headland Preserve. The KLT has given the Association a conservation easement on the parcel and we



have pledged \$7,000 for stewardship to KLT.

The significance of us holding the conservation easement is that it guarantees that the parcel will never be developed and that we will have a voice in trail development and other recreational use of the property. KLT can not develop the property or sell it to another entity that might.

When asked what inspired him and his family to offer their generous gift to KLT, Glenn said, "I've come to realize that the place where your passion meets great needs is where you should focus any time and money you can spare. For me, it's land conservation. Forest ecosystems are complex and we don't fully understand them. We need to leave some places undeveloped and unmanaged. It is very rewarding to me to know that these 42 acres will be added to the Headland and will forever be home to warblers, yellow birch, and porcupines. I hope that others will enjoy these peaceful woods as we have."

Stewardship Funds Are Needed.

Now we must meet our pledge. Please help by including your donation with your membership dues that you send to Deborah Dubord or send it directly to:

Waine Whittier, Treasurer

Parker Pond Association, Inc.

321 Tower Road, Vienna, ME 04360

[The Parker Pond Association is a 501(c)3 organization and your donation is tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.]

Dam Report

More than two years passed from the inception of a plan to repair the dam until the Maine DEP and the Army Corps of Engineers issued the permits to do the work. The application process was enormously complicated and frustrating to me, but we got the permits two years ago in early summer of 2007. We did the work in late September of that year when conditions were perfect. Now I can look back and understand why my anxiety, stewing and steaming could have seemed a bit humorous. But! You can't imagine what a relief it was to receive the permits and be able to get that job done promptly. I think our earthen-dike dam is in good shape. The State Dam Inspector would like to see a controllable gate in it, but that is a project for another time and another person. I'll be bold and say the dam is beefier than it ever has been since its construction in the early 1970's. When we have heavy snowfall like the past two winters and heavy rains, I feel confident our dam is strong.

I am grateful to Margaret Barrow for her vigilance at the dam and for up-dating our Emergency Plan last summer.

Steve Cowperthwaite, Chair

Membership Thanks to those of you who have already mailed in your 2009 dues. Send me an e-mail if you can't remember and I'll check my records for this year. [ddubord@fairpoint.net] Each year all property owners have a chance to continue our respect for this pond through a minimal financial contribution of \$20. This helps pay the annual expenses of preservation for our valuable wilderness real estate that is considered pristine by Maine standards. We are lucky to be part of this patch of "God's Green Earth". If it's possible for you to extend your financial assistance, please consider a specific donation for one of our major budgets; invasive plant inspections, land conservation, headland extension, dam maintenance or general funds. We have some very dedicated pond residents who wish to do right by the pond and keep it peaceful, clean, breathtaking and a memorable part of our lives. In 2008 we had 35% of all property owners contribute financially to the protection and maintenance of our pond. Do you suppose we could encourage more than 91 out of 258 folks to help with this very responsible act in 2009? Talk with your neighbor, team members needed.

Invasive Plants Report PPA partners with the 30 Mile River Watershed Association to keep the lake free of invasive aquatic plants, which continue to be one of the biggest threats to the lake. As of March 2009, 30 Maine water bodies were known to have one of the four invasive aquatic plant species found in Maine: variable leaf milfoil (the most common), Eurasian water-milfoil, hydrilla, and curly leaf pondweed. As discussed in the 30 Mile River update, two of these invasives are nearby in the Belgrade Lakes area.

We work to keep out the invaders through the courtesy boat inspection program. Paid inspectors and volunteers staff the boat launch on the Tower Road on summer weekends. Fortunately, most boaters are now familiar with

this program and very supportive. We need more volunteers to join our team, and it's easy to do, requiring only one hour of training. From there you can sign up for as many two-hour shifts as you would like. Inspectors do not need plant identification skills, as all plants get removed from boats. The most important thing a volunteer needs is a willingness to talk with boaters, helping them to understand the threats and to instill in them a sense of responsibility for protecting the lakes, through inspecting their own boats in the future.

The other part of our invasive plant program is to survey the lake every summer for invasive aquatic plants that are already growing. If these plants can be found early enough, when populations are small, there is hope for eradication. Last summer a team of about 20 volunteers surveyed most of Parker's shallower waters where these plants are most likely to grow. Some volunteers used SCUBA equipment, but most surveyed by canoe or kayak, looking underwater with a scope. We can always use more volunteers, and there's a training opportunity coming up August 9th on Minnehonk Lake, when the 30 Mile River Watershed Association hosts an Invasive Plant Patrol Field Workshop. This workshop will be conducted by the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program's Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants. Participants will have an opportunity to learn how to identify invasive plants, and have some hands-on practice on the water. To register for the workshop, visit www.mainevolunteerlakemonitors.org/mciap.

If you can volunteer as an inspector or surveyor, contact Susan Onion (293-4812, sonion@maine.rr.com) or Addie Michaud (293-4584, amwmichaud@yahoo.com). If you can't volunteer, please make a financial contribution so we can hire someone in your place. Mail your tax-deductible donation to the 30 Mile Watershed Association, 33 Porter Lane, Vienna, Maine 04360.

Lidie Robbins, Chair

Camp for rent call 293-4767 or 458-3055