

OSSIPEE LAKE REPORT

TREATMENT OF LEAVITT BAY MILFOIL WILL BE DISCUSSED

Key Dates:

- **Friday, October 10:** Public meeting on treating Phillips Brook milfoil. Ossipee Town Hall, 7:30 PM. Info @ 603-539-4181.
- **Sunday, October 12:** Annual fall meeting of Berry Bay Association, 4 PM. Info @ 914-725-3342.
- **Saturday, November 8:** New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services River & Watershed Conference. Info @ 603-271-3503.
- **Thursday, November 20:** Annual meeting of New Hampshire Lakes Association. Info @ 603-226-0299.

Ossipee Lake Alliance and state and local officials will be working closely in the coming months to determine how to treat the dense mass of exotic variable milfoil found in and around Phillips Brook on Leavitt Bay in August.

Exotic, or non-native, variable milfoil is an invasive, fast-growing weed that has infested more than 50 New Hampshire lakes and is the focus of extensive prevention efforts in the state and elsewhere in New England. Milfoil can be controlled but cannot be eradicated once it has taken root.

The Alliance and Ossipee officials will host a public meeting at 7:30 PM on Friday evening, October 10th, at which Ken Warren from the exotic species program of the New



Exotic variable milfoil blankets the bottom of Phillips Brook near the entrance to Leavitt Bay and has also spread across the surface of the water in large patches like this one. Phillips Brook is the third milfoil infestation to be documented by the state in Ossipee Lake. *Alliance Photo*

Hampshire Department of Environmental Services will discuss the infestation and what to do about it. The three usual methods of control are hand-pulling it from the lake, covering it with

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A SUMMER'S EDUCATION ON OSSIPEE LAKE

By Sarah Van Cor Hosmer

I wake up to my alarm clock. It's six in the morning – time to calibrate the water sampling equipment. I grab something to eat and a half hour later I'm on the road just as the sun is waking up. Three more hours of sleep would have been nice!

I arrive at one of the lake camps around seven and gather up my equipment cases, making me

feel like an eccentric bag lady carrying my precious possessions. As I make my way down to the boat, the mist is still settled over the water, waiting for the sun's rays to soak it up into the clouds. The campers are still pretty sleepy as our journey begins and food is on everyone's mind, not water sampling.

This was my regular routine as a summer coordina-

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THOUGHTS ON A SUMMER ON THE LAKE

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tor of water sampling and testing for the Ossipee Lake Protection Program, managed by Ossipee Lake Alliance and GMCG. With Moselle Spiller, the other coordinator, I was responsible for testing the water flowing into the lake for pH, dissolved oxygen, turbidity and other measures. We also tested the layers of water in the deep spots of the big lake and the bays for plankton, clarity, and chlorophyll with equipment like the Kemmerer bottle, which looks like a spare part from a Mars Lander.

In addition to water chemistry we researched recreational activities through the Lake Environment Assessment Program, called LEAP 2003. Five times during the summer we went out on the lake with campers and other volunteers using survey forms to report on the quality of recreation, which will help determine the need for a lake stewardship plan. Such a plan would help officials manage the lake for sustainable recreation.

The phrase "recreate with care" is important for Ossipee Lake because there are natural areas in and around the lake that contain many plants that are extremely rare. One of these habitats, Ossipee Lake Natural Area, also known as Long Sands, is managed by the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development and is home to unusual pondshore communities not found anywhere else in the world.

Milfoil is another concern for recreation. It has infested parts of Ossipee Lake for a few years and all it takes is one small piece to start a whole new infestation. Milfoil can affect both swimming and fishing where it grows. During the summer we found a large new area of milfoil in Phillips Brook, which was one of the sites where we were collecting water samples.

The data collected this summer from tributary



Sarah Van Cor Hosmer, left, with Moselle Spiller at the Ossipee Lake Protection Program booth at Watershed Weekend in July. The two college students were summer coordinators for the Alliance-GMCG partnership program. *Alliance Photo.*

testing, deep water testing, and LEAP research are still being analyzed, but unless these programs continue from summer to summer, the results may be inconclusive. That's why it's important that volunteers and stakeholders on the lake continue to support these programs.

Despite the early morning hours, I loved my summer job. It brought me closer to the lake and the natural area that surrounds it in a place that I grew up around as a kid.

Effingham native Sarah Van Cor Hosmer is a sophomore at Rochester Institute of Technology, where she majors in biology.

ASSOCIATIONS NAME NEW OFFICERS

Several Ossipee Lake property owner associations elected new officers during their annual meetings this summer.

North Broad Bay Association, the oldest such organization, elected Robert Smart as president and Gerard Costantino as vice president for two-year terms, while The Bluffs Association, on the main lake, named Sandy McGlinchey as president.

At the Broad-Leavitt Bay Association annual meeting, Sheila Jones became president, while Donald LaConte, Carol Puffer, and Frank St. Aubin were named officers.



TO OUR READERS

- **Ossipee Lake Report** is available in color on the web at: www.ossipeelake.org.
- **Ossipee Lake News** delivers free up to the minute information about the lake by e-mail, as events warrant. Contact: subscribe@ossipeelake.org.
- Report mail address changes to: info@ossipeelake.org or send to P.O. Box 173, Freedom, NH 03836.



RECORD CROWD FOR 'TALES OF OSSIPEE LAKE' GHOST NIGHT

Thunder rumbled in the distance and rain fell gently in the quiet summer evening, creating the perfect atmosphere for the Ghost of Ossipee Lake presentation that Ossipee Lake Alliance co-sponsored with Green Mountain Conservation Group at Calumet Conference Center in August as part of Freedom Old Home Week.



The Alliance's Susan Marks and David Smith, left, with author Janice Petrie and Ossipee historian Barry Hill after the Tales of Ossipee Lake presentation in August as part of Freedom Old Home Week. *Alliance Photo*

A crowd of more than 300 people - one of the largest events ever at the conference center - filled the center's main tent to hear author Janice Petrie talk about her book "Perfection To A Fault," which details the 1918 murder of Florence Small by her husband Frederick at the Small's Ossipee Lake cottage.

The main theme of the evening was not so much the murder itself, however, but the rumors that a ghostly presence continues to haunt the murder site on the lake. In this, Petrie was able to provide a first-hand account of an aborted childhood vacation she had in the cottage with her parents, a chilling encounter described in the opening chapter of her book, as well as her discussions with the current owner of the property, who confirms the reports of something inexplicable in the house.

Petrie's talk was preceded by a presentation by Barry Hill, a lake resident and former president of the Ossipee Historical Society, who offered a lively narration of pictures showing Ossipee and Freedom at the time of the murder, including the site of the cottage where the murder occurred and the court house where Frederick Small was convicted.

Small later was hanged for his crime.

Petrie also showed a videotape of a program segment produced by Boston's "Chronicle" television program which concluded that the ghostly presence was Frederick. Not so, according to Petrie, who believes that it is definitely Florence's spirit that haunts the lake.

In the final analysis, Petrie believes the ghost of Ossipee Lake is a fairly benign character - spooky but not menacing; a Casper-like "friendly ghost," as she described it.

The evening was a fund-raiser for the Ossipee and Freedom Historical Societies. Autographed copies of Petrie's book sold briskly after the presentation with the proceeds from the sale split equally between the two historical organizations. Two lucky attendees also won copies of the book.

The Ghost of Ossipee Lake was the second in the "Tales of Ossipee Lake" series on the human and natural history of the lake and is part of the Ossipee Lake Protection Program. A previous presentation in July explored the lake's rare and endangered pond shore habitats.

PUBLIC MEETING TO BE HELD ON LEAVITT BAY MILFOIL

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mats called bottom barriers, or treating it with an aquatic herbicides. All three are time-consuming and expensive and must be repeated when the milfoil returns.

The Phillips Brook infestation is in a lagoon just off Leavitt Bay, an area believed to have been dredged for boats many years ago when the area was developed.

Officials have expressed concern that boats in the lagoon are chopping up and spreading the weed when entering and leaving the area. Milfoil can be spread within a lake by prevailing currents when it is cut up or dislodged by boats. It can also be spread from lake to lake when it is attached to boats and trailers.

The Phillips Brook milfoil is Ossipee Lake's third and most extensive infestation, according to Amy Smagula, coordinator of the state's exotic species program. It was discovered in August by camp volunteers collecting water samples as part of the Ossipee Lake Protection Program, a partnership between Ossipee Lake Alliance and Green Mountain Conservation Group.

The area is in the southwestern portion of Leavitt Bay in the vicinity of Remle Road and Jay Loop Road in Ossipee. Other infestations on Ossipee Lake are in Danforth Brook where it enters Broad Bay and in the narrows between upper and lower Danforth Ponds, both in Freedom. The previous infestations have been treated at various times by hand-pulling and by using herbicides.

After the Phillips Brook discovery, Ossipee Lake Alliance contacted local environmental groups and town officials and toured the infested area with Ossipee Se-



Sheila Jones, president of Broad-Leavitt Bay Association, with Ossipee Selectman Harry Merrow as they view the milfoil infestation in Phillips Brook on Leavitt Bay. *Alliance Photo*

lectman Harry Merrow, Ossipee Conservation Commission chairman Tim Nolin, and Broad-Leavitt Bay Association president Sheila Jones. The Alliance and Green Mountain Conservation Group also alerted Freedom and Effingham town and conservation officials.

Although the discovery of the Phillips Brook milfoil demonstrates one of the benefits of the Ossipee Lake Protection Program, which was implemented this summer, the Alliance's executive director David Smith says it also underscores the scope of the challenge faced in controlling the lake environment.

"The two previous infestations have been relatively stable and the Lake Host program has prevented milfoil from entering or leaving the lake at the Pine River public boat ramp. We believed we were on top of the situation so the discovery of such a dense new infestation is very frustrating."

As a result of the finding the Alliance will increase its focus on milfoil next year. "We have to do a better job of communicating that milfoil can cause significant recreational and economic harm to the lake. No state program is ever going to pay to monitor every access point. We have to address this issue locally and voluntarily, and there is a lot at stake."



Exotic variable milfoil in bloom. *Photo: NHDES*

MAINE TAKES AGGRESSIVE AIM AT MILFOIL AND HYDRILLA

As the Ossipee Lake community considers how to deal with the Phillips Brook milfoil infestation and how to prevent new ones from occurring, actions to fight exotic weeds are being taken in Maine that were considered unthinkable just a few years ago.

In July, Maine's Department of Environmental Protection responded to the milfoil infestation on Messalonskee Lake, north of Augusta, by closing the primary public boat ramp on weekdays. Boaters may only use the ramp on weekends when trained inspectors, much like New Hampshire's Lake Hosts, are present.

The move was in response to demands from area lake associations that something be done to stop the spread of milfoil which has clogged the southern end of the lake in the town of Belgrade. In support of their demand, the associations pointed to a 2002 monitoring study showing that 42% of boats leaving Messalonskee carried pieces of milfoil capable of infesting other lakes. Exotic weeds have been confirmed in eleven Maine lakes.

Although a spokesman for Maine's DEP calls the ramp restriction "unusual" and says that other closings are "unlikely," the move has sparked a statewide debate. The Sportsman's Alliance of Maine is opposing the restriction and vows to prevent additional ones.

According to its executive director, George Smith, limiting access should have been a last resort taken only after the state had tried other methods of control, such as closing off the infested waters, hand-harvesting the weed, and installing power washers at public ramps. "When the state decides that the first line of defense against milfoil is to close public access, we're in trouble," Smith said in an interview with state reporters.



Boats and jet skis in and around Phillips Brook on Leavitt Bay in August. Phillips Brook is the site of Ossipee Lake's third milfoil infestation. *Alliance Photo*

Although the Bangor Daily News newspaper has been generally supportive of the state's action, it too has expressed reservations by questioning the logic of closing the ramp while leaving the infested section of lake open to boat traffic. Last year the Maine legislature granted authority to the DEP to close all or parts of lakes if necessary to prevent the spread of exotic plants.

Citing the potential harm to recreation, property values, and the local economy, the newspaper said in an editorial that lake associations and the state "must get even more serious about the [milfoil] problem."

Meanwhile, weekend inspections at the Belgrade ramp are continuing, conducted not by volunteers but by paid workers supported by revenue from the state's aquatic plants boat sticker program.

The Maine program requires a sticker for all boats, whether registered in the state or elsewhere, with stickers costing between \$10 and \$20. A similar program proposed for New Hampshire this spring by the New Hampshire Lakes Association remains under study by the legislature.

As if milfoil were not enough to worry about, there may be worse to come from *hydrilla verticillata*, an exotic species used in home aquariums where it is known as

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Lake associations and the state "must get even more serious about the [milfoil] problem"...
Bangor Daily News

CASSIE COVE AND SPINDLE POINT CROWDING STILL AN ISSUE

In the early 1960s the Cassie Cove area was a magnet for boaters who were drawn by its relative isolation, calm waters and inviting sandbar.

More than 40 years later, the area, now extensively developed for homes and boat slips, remains a prime boating destination. So much so that property owners have twice appealed to the New Hampshire Division of Safety Services (DSS) for help in addressing safety, environmental, and quality of recreation issues they believe threaten the area.

In the latest action, a group of property owners led by Katie Gove of Freedom unsuccessfully petitioned DSS to establish a new no-wake zone on the eastern side of Spindle Point. At an August 29th hearing the petitioners presented evidence of unsafe boating conditions and shoreline erosion, while those opposing the proposal said that better enforcement of existing laws was what was needed.

In denying the petition, the DSS stated that current laws “are sufficient to allow the enforcement of [the] described unlawful boating activity” and noted that it was not clear whether the shoreline erosion was manmade or “naturally occurring.”

Three years ago, another group of property owners petitioned DSS for relief from the hundreds of rafting boaters who congregate regularly at the Cassie Cove sandbar, citing obstruction of the navigation channel, trespassing on private property, littering, and noise. After a contentious hearing in July, 2000, DSS established limits at the sandbar, but just what those limits



Good Old Days: Vintage post card reads “Fast action on the water skis at Cassie Cove off Broad Bay, Ossipee, New Hampshire.” Today, rafting and safety are issues for Cassie Cove residents. *Alliance Collection*

are is the subject of debate.

For Frances Lebel, former president of the Broad-Leavitt Bay Association, the ruling was clear: by limiting “the size of the raft” to ten, the state limited the total number of boats that can congregate on the sandbar at once.

Not so, according to DSS director David Barrett, who says that there can be an unlimited number of boats on the sandbar as long as each “raft” of boats consists of ten or fewer vessels, adding that boats must be “tied together” in order to constitute a “raft.”

Residents argue that the notion that there could be anything other than a single “raft” of boats in such a small area is illogical, and also say that Barrett’s “tied together” statement is at odds with state law, which defines a “raft” as “any two or more boats...congregated together, whether anchored, secured to one another, or adrift.”

Discussions with DSS are ongoing to resolve the ruling’s intent. In the meantime, the crowding that was detailed at the 2000 hearings continues unabated.

HYDRILLA MAY BE NEXT THREAT

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anacharis. Maine's first and, so far, only hydrilla infestation is in Pickerel Pond in Limerick, which is just 20 miles from Ossipee Lake

In Florida, hydrilla has infested 43% of the state's public lakes and has devastated recreation, tourism, and real estate values. Millions of dollars have already been spent in Florida to treat it in what amounts to a losing battle.

The scientists studying hydrilla have dubbed it "the perfect weed" for its ability to reproduce in a variety of ways, for its lack of reliance on sunlight, and for its ability to winter in extremely cold climates similar to northern New England's.

Hydrilla can grow an inch per day to a length of 25 feet and has spread all the way up the eastern seaboard. As a result of

its presence in near-by Maine, NHDES has turned up the volume on its hydrilla warnings to the public, briefing New Hampshire's estimated 200 trained Lake Hosts and 350 weed watchers who participate in mostly volunteer programs.

"I'm really scared of hydrilla," NHDES limnologist Jody Connor told a reporter for the Manchester Union Leader. "I've lived with it in Florida and I've seen what it can do. [The state] had to close off some lakes...because it grows so thick you can't row a boat through it."

Reflecting its new level of concern, NHDES has stepped up its vigilance for hydrilla by having its field personnel ply the waters of lakes in the Ossipee-Wakefield area. The task is far from easy, however. Ominously, the state's experts note that hydrilla can be spread not just by boats but also by migrating waterfowl.

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P.O. Box 173
Freedom, NH 03836

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Ossipee Lake Alliance
P.O. Box 173
Freedom, NH 03836
E-mail: info@ossipeelake.org
Fax: 509-271-3838

Officers:
David Smith, Executive Director
Susan Marks, Development Director



www.ossipeelake.org
webmaster: host@taylorsmith.net

