



Mascoma Lake Association

P. O. Box 9, Enfield, NH 03748

Mascoma Lake MAPS

Unframed \$15.00

Please email us
if you would like one:

mla@mascomalakeassociation.org

New Shaker Bridge project as
of Friday, October 28, 2011.
The old bridge is all gone, and
is now just a memory.



Mascoma Lake Association

NEWSLETTER
FALL 2011

CELEBRATING THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Nancy Sanborn

Celebrations of the 250th Anniversary celebration in several Upper Valley towns offered both marvelous entertainment and education.

The *Valley News* did a wonderful job reporting and publishing the events taking place in each town in the area. People attending events found themselves becoming interested in the histories of their villages. All at once, connecting the past and present gave their towns real meaning.

This awakening will ground residents and make them appreciate changes that have taken place in the last 250 years. History has a way of creeping up on most of us, making us more curious about our families' and our region's past.

That happened to me recently, when a chance comment brought out photographs that renewed my interest in the land where my cottage was built in the 1980s. They show what once was. Truly, seeing is believing.

My neighbors, Leonard Johnston and George and Donna Butler, have lived in Enfield since the 1950s. Leonard returned to the Upper Valley after serving in the armed services and purchased land from Bernard Currier.

The Enfield history book tells us that the Curriers were early settlers in Lebanon and Enfield. Their huge farm extended along U.S. Route 4 all the way up Dry Bridge Hill. Most of the farm was sold in 1924. But only in the 1950's did the descendents sell a parcel of the remaining land to Leonard.

At that time, the land was meadow with no buildings and extended to the shores of Mascoma Lake. In fact, Currier's Landing is still marked on



maps today. The steamboat Helena certainly would have stopped at its dock during its service on the lake

The photos shown here were taken in the 1950s, when Leonard purchased the property. Study them closely and you will notice the land cleared all the way to the water. In addition, Johnston's Drive is clearly visible (above).



The second photograph (above) shows the trees on the south side of the lake coming down to the water's edge. The photographer took the pictures near U.S. Route 4 looking west. My cottage (not yet built) and the cottage of my neighbors, the Rickers, would be to the right of the cove. Because the land was all meadow, you can see the transformation of the view seen as you come down Dry Bridge Hill. Trees and buildings cover the landscape and the lake is barely visible. Once the view of these homes was of the lake; today it is of trees.

Photographs courtesy of George Butler Jr.



Loon Report

Terri Lynch

Good News for a change. According to the New Hampshire Loon Census Report:

"Overall 2011 seemed to be a good year for loons in New Hampshire. Approximately 65% of the 270 territorial pairs nested on lakes and ponds throughout the State, hatching 185 chicks. This is the first time in 6 years that we have gone above 0.48 CS/TP which is the level needed to maintain a viable population for the long-term!"

This is encouraging.

Part of this success may be attributed to the increased use of nesting rafts. This year, 76 rafts were floated and 21% of the chicks hatched on these man-made surfaces. These offer certain protection from nest flooding and may also protect the loons from predation.



Lola on right is nearly as big as her mom.

On Mascoma, one loon hatched on a natural nesting site in Lebanon. The chick, named "Lola" by the girl whose property was home to the nest, has done very well. Although in early October she – or he – was still partially dependent on the parents for feeding, it was also able to catch some of its food. Soon it will be on its own. Both parents will leave for their winter habitat in coastal Maine or New Hampshire, and this young loon will be left on its own; nature's "tough love." We hope instinct and good luck will help her find the way to the open ocean and that more good luck will help her return to Mascoma in a couple years when she is of breeding age.

As the sounds of the loons vanish for 2011, I am already looking forward to their return when the ice goes out in the spring of 2012.

Best wishes to you all for a warm and healthy winter!

For more information about loons, see the Loon Preservation Committee's fall newsletter, which should appear on line in November.

www.loon.org/newsletter.php

MILFOIL: THE BATTLE CONTINUES

Martha Rich and David Kelman



It was a busy summer aboard the *S.S. Milfoil*. We (David Kelman and Martha Rich) joined the effort to control Eurasian milfoil as novice crew members this year, learning from veteran leaders Roger and Marta Barnes. We're grateful for their knowledge, guidance and support. After thirteen years of service, they know every inch of our lake and have shown unflagging dedication to milfoil control.

It is clear that the control program must continue. The total harvest this year was 2,271 plants removed. This is fewer than last year's 3,039, but far higher than some past years. (Since the program started in 1998, the lowest total was 221 in 2006.) Although some sections of the lake were free of invasive plants this summer, some areas had stubborn infestations that required repeated harvesting. These are the sunken islands off Perkins Cove and the channel where the Mascoma River joins the lake.

A new element this year was beginning to mark sites with a GPS device. Our goal is to create an interactive map that can track patterns of milfoil growth over time. While this will not replace existing record-keeping systems, GPS-based documentation should be a useful supplement that allows us to represent the data in new ways.

Everyone who uses this lake owes a big debt of thanks to our intrepid SCUBA divers: Bud Lynch, Jim Martel, and Dave and Rusty Michael. These people spend hours under water digging out plants one by one with hand trowels – a task that became especially difficult after tropical storm Irene roiled the lake bottom in late August.

We are recruiting more divers for the future, and welcome anyone interested in pursuing the necessary training.

We thank all the local "captains" who monitored their areas and reported to Marta when they spotted plants. This shared responsibility is a vital part of our program. We look forward to having more volunteers for this kind of "neighborhood water watch" next summer.

The *S.S. Milfoil* has finished its service for this season, but we look forward to launching "the barge" again next year. Battling the threat of Eurasian milfoil will require continued vigilance and action.

We're glad to be part of the effort and hope more of you will join us in 2012.

Martha Rich and David Kelman
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Irene Wreaks Havoc

by Betsy Child



Many roads and bridges around the area were badly damaged due to "Irene". This bridge connected residents of Shaker Blvd to Route 4A.

Town Manager Steve Schneider provided the following account on October 10: *"The Shaker Blvd. Bridge over the Knox River was structurally compromised as a result of Irene. The Selectboard made the decision to remove the failing bridge structure and replace it with a new bridge.*

The new bridge will be 13'6" wide and should be open for all types of traffic within the next week or two. The bridge can handle any service vehicles for those Shaker Blvd. residents – garbage, heating fuel, fire trucks, ambulances, and all of our DPW equipment. The bridge as installed has a life expectancy of 50 years."

The bridge is now open and residents can get back to their normal driving habits.



Thank you to all of the hard-working and very-thinly-stretched road crews who have worked so hard throughout the rebuilding process.

WATER QUALITY

Jim Martel

On August 28, Hurricane Irene made a direct hit on Mascoma Lake dropping 3 to 6 inches of rain. This caused the Mascoma River and other tributaries to overflow and transport a lot of sediment into the lake. You may have noticed suspended particles and an uncharacteristic brown color to the lake after the storm. However, most of the sediment appears to have settled out.

During one of my dives for milfoil a few days later, I noticed that the top layer of water was relatively clear, whereas the water near the bottom was very cloudy and visibility was only about 2 feet. I expect this sediment to continue settling out over the winter months.

Samples taken on 13 September, 16 days after the storm, contained slightly more total phosphorus and turbidity than those taken a month earlier. This should also improve over the quiescent winter months. It could have been a lot worse.

In spite of state budget cuts, the VLAP water testing program continues, although at reduced capacity. DES will continue to maintain the water quality data base, but visits by a biologist to check our performance will be cut back to every two years. The scope of the annual water quality report is still undecided. We hope they will continue to publish a report that contains recommendations for improving water quality.

We have a great crew of volunteers who take samples from 22 locations in the lake and tributaries. These intrepid and hardworking volun-

teers include Austin Flint, Roger Barnes, George Crowe, Jim Magnell, Jack Foster, Ray Buskey, Lee Hammond, and Erland Schulson. I have all the data we collected this year if anyone wants to see it.

We are purchasing a new dissolved oxygen (DO) meter this year, thanks to a generous donation in memory of Bill Martin. The old meter was getting cranky and unreliable. The new meter will be much more user friendly. We want to know how much DO there is in the water because it is essential for sustaining fish and other aquatic populations.

As a result of endorsements from the MLA Board, local conservation commissions, selectboards, and planning commissions, and our state representatives, the legislature approved the HB 336, which brings the Mascoma River between Canaan Center and the Connecticut River under the New Hampshire Rivers Management & Protection Program. Governor Lynch signed the bill on July 27th. A good thing, because it means greater oversight of large projects in the watershed, including those around the lake.

Mascoma Shores Update

Claire Swanson

The 67-unit residential construction project proposed by Mascoma Shores Ltd. Partnership will not move forward at this time.

The project was to have been built on Rt. 4A in Lebanon (near the Enfield town line).

Members of MLA and other interested parties persevered in providing information about their concerns to the NH DES and the Lebanon Planning Board.

These included potential negative impact on the lake's water quality as well as increased traffic on our roads.

On September 7, 2011, MSLP's lawyer sent a letter to the Planning Board discontinuing its subdivision development application.

No further proceedings are anticipated.

ANNUAL MEETING 2011

The 2011 MLA Annual Meeting on July 24th featured several special events, in addition to the usual business of electing officers and presenting the final figures for finances and water quality.

MLA member Mary Ann Haagen, gave a wonderful slideshow on the history of the Shakers on the lake. Haagen is a retired professor of music at Dartmouth College and a specialist in Shaker music and has recorded several collections of Shaker songs.

Tiffany M. McKenna, Director of Philanthropy of the Nature Conservancy, presented a project to protect 14,000 acres of land in the Mascoma watershed. This ambitious project, currently on hold, would help control the quality of water coming into our lake.

Harry Trumbull announced a bequest in honor of Bill Martin, longtime resident and inspiration to the MLA. The money was used to purchase new water testing equipment as explained in Jim Martel's story.

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by MLA Member**

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