

**HALFMOON LAKE ASSOCIATION  
SECRETARY'S REPORT  
AUGUST 2015**

The second annual meeting of the Halfmoon Lake Association for 2015 was called to order at 11:10 am by President Bill Mannion with 28 members present. The meeting was held in the Dining Hall of Camp Mi-Te-Na.

Bill introduced our guest speaker, Tiffany Grande, a project biologist from the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC). Located in Moultonborough, NH, LPC was founded in 2000 with the mission of restoring and maintaining a healthy population of loons throughout New Hampshire; to monitor the health and productivity of loon populations as sentinels of environmental quality; and to promote a greater understanding of loons and the natural world. The organization monitors 362 lakes and ponds statewide and has an active banding program so they can monitor the loon population and migration. Tiffany has been with the LPC organization since 2008 and reported that when first founded the loon count in New Hampshire was around 200. The most recent population has grown to over 600 which indicates a good chick production.

Before starting her presentation, Tiffany gave an update on a loon in distress that was reported on August 17<sup>th</sup> located in the cove just south of the Bramante's property on North Barnstead Road, John Cooley, Senior Biologist at LPC, checked on the loon that night and tried unsuccessfully to approach and catch the loon. It seemed to be in good enough health, to be foraging and staying out of harm's way, so the plan was to keep monitoring it. As of Sunday morning, the loon had moved to Locke Lake and seemed to be doing much better. Tiffany encouraged anyone who observes a loon exhibiting strange behavior to report it immediately to LPC (603-476-LOON), but not to approach or try to rescue it.

Tiffany's presentation focused on the life history of loons and the most common environmental and human threats they face, with lead fishing tackle being at the top of the list. Known for their bright red eyes, characteristic black & white markings, distinctive calls, and adorable baby chicks on their backs, loons are actually the closest relative to penguins and albatross. Their streamlined bodies, dense bone structure, and large webbed feet are designed to enable them to swim underwater for long distances and periods of time (often up to 5 minutes). They are relatively shallow swimmers so their main diet consists of smaller fish, such as perch, sunfish, and bass which they swallow whole. Unlike ducks, loons back feet are far to the rear of their body so they are not designed to walk on land, thus they will nest as close to water as possible, and once hatched, chicks are ready to go right in the water. Loons normally lay 2 eggs per season. Incubation period is 27 days. Both male and female assume the role of tending the nest. After hatching the chicks are able to feed themselves in 10 weeks and ready to fly in 12. In the winter, New Hampshire loons migrate in late October to the open waters of the Northeastern coast.

Loons face a variety of challenges during their 27-day incubation of eggs. Loon nests are vulnerable to natural or human-induced water level changes that can flood nests or leave them stranded out of reach of parents. Floating nest rafts rise and fall with water levels and help loons cope with these water level changes. Nest rafts that float in the water are one way to provide alternate nest sites to help loons displaced from traditional sites by shoreline development or recreational use of lakes, and offer protection from raccoons and other scavengers whose populations have increased due to the availability of human trash. Each year, LPC floats more than 80 loon nesting rafts throughout the state. This past spring Bill Mannion and John Wheeler attended a workshop to learn how to build a floating nest. The nest was placed in the cove off Rustic Shores. Although a pair of loons continued to show interest in it, they unfortunately did not choose it as a nesting site, partly due to an altercation with a muskrat. Tiffany

reported that it may take 2-3 years before a mating pair of loons will accept the nest. (See New Business for more information on Halfmoon Lake Loon Nest.)

The most common threats to the loon population include: shoreline development, boating accidents, predators which invade nests, water level changes which destroy nests, and lead fishing tackle. Of these the highest mortality rate among loons is a result of lead poisoning caused by ingesting lead fishing sinkers and jigs. When ingested the lead travels to the brain, at which point, there is no cure and the loon will die within 4 weeks. In 2000, the State of New Hampshire passed a restriction on lead fishing tackle. However, it did not restrict the length of the jigs. In 2016 a revision to the law will go into effect which will correct our current law's major deficiency by banning the sale and freshwater use of lead sinkers and lead jigs weighing one ounce or less. In the meantime, LPC strongly recommends that fishermen use non-lead tackle which is available in a wide variety of styles and sizes. The most common alternative materials are tungsten, bismuth-tin, and steel, although other materials are also available.

Tiffany ended her presentation with an explanation of the different loon calls. If you are interested in learning more about loons, the work of LPC, and listen to the different loon calls, please visit their website [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org). Or take a trip to The Loon Center in Moultonborough, which is open every day from July 1 to Columbus Day, and Monday to Saturday most other days of the year.

We were especially appreciative to Tiffany for her presentation and the Loon Preservation Center for all of their hard work. Meeting attendees contributed to a donation jar and raised \$64 dollars which will be sent to the center. Thanks to all our generous members.

Following the presentation, President Bill Mannion reminded members that they had already received copies of the July 2015 minutes. He asked for comments or objections. Roger Hatch noted that the statement at the end of the paragraph regarding our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Plans was inaccurate. It stated that 'all were in favor' which implied that all members were in favor of a joint celebration with Locke Lake. No vote had actually been taken, so the statement was incorrect. Kate Brown, secretary, agreed to amend the minutes accordingly. Pat Mannion moved to accept the minutes with amendment, Roger Hatch seconded, member vote was unanimous.

Treasurer, Linda Bramante, presented an update on the HMLA Income Status. The beginning cash balance was \$9,496.16. So far Membership Dues collected for this year are \$1,630 as compared to \$1,620 in 2014. However, some neighborhood associations have yet to submit their dues; plus Linda is still receiving checks from members (some which include past dues as well as this year's dues), so the number is expected to increase. The cost of water testing was down from the prior year (\$360 vs. \$560) based on a more streamlined approach. Postage was up to \$49.00 versus \$18.62 in 2014. There was a discussion regarding the cost of postage for those members who do not have or have not provided email addresses. A suggestion was made that the association put a notice in the next mailing that stated if they do not respond they will be taken off the mailing list. No action was taken on this suggestion. Other expenses included website hosting (\$115.00), printing (\$72.79) and a donation to the Town of Barnstead School system in the name of Maureen Fitzpatrick. Overall, expenses were down by \$349.40 as compared to 2014. Net income increase to-date from prior year is \$606.15. Linda will be preparing the final Income Statement that will be posted on the website. Pat Mannion made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Mike Fedorchak, and voted on unanimously by members.

## OLD BUSINESS

### WATER QUALITY/TESTING UPDATE

Upon introducing Mike Fedorchak, President Bill Mannion acknowledged an award presented to Mike on June 6 at a the NH Dept of Environmental Services workshop for VLAP members, Mike Fedorchak received the Volunteer Limnologist Award for his service to the lake community working for water quality. Here on Halfmoon, Mike and his team of Water Quality Officers, under the state's VLAP program, sample our lake's water three times over the summer season. Congratulations Mike on a job well done and a most deserving recognition.

Mike reported that the water sampling has gone well so far, other than a couple of troublesome areas, and thanked Bill Mannion for putting him in contact with Matt Hanson and Tom Hart at Camp Me-Te-Na, so he could walk the stream between the "Horse Farm Inlet" sampling area and downstream to Dugan's inlet. He reported that the stream is very shallow and barely running as it gets to Dugan's inlet. Mike sent his finding to Sara Steiner at DES and it was decided to suspend sampling, but to continue monitoring Dugan's inlet. He also reported that there are somewhat raised levels on conductivity sampling at Horse Farm Inlet and that he will continue working with DES on possible causes, as well as possible solutions to Dugan's inlet. The July water testing results were in line with June, except as noted above. As soon as Mike receives the August results, he will forward them to Bill Mannion for posting on the website. In addition, a fish was summited to the Volunteer Mercury fish program which just started this year and Mike is waiting for the results. It was captured by Daniel Nourse at their residence. Mike does not know if we have tested for mercury in the past, so he took advantage of the program. He reported that there were no reports of cyanobacteria this year. Finally, he is reconfiguring the spreadsheet that shows DES parameters with our lake's reading on one sheet.

### MILFOIL / INVASIVE SPECIES UPDATE

Linda Bramante reported that the sightings of the Chinese Mystery Snail that was identified as a concern at the July meeting seem to be less than last year. However, she recommended that if you come across any of these snails in the lake, pick them out and toss them into the woods. If you aren't familiar with what they look like, check out the internet where you will find several good images. Pictures and/or samples will be available at the next meeting.

Linda also asked members to be on the lookout for the Phragmite Reed, a tall feathery weed that can rapidly fill in low areas of the lake if not pulled.

Deb Fedorchak conducted another inspection of the Cove and collected three samples that appeared to be Variable Milfoil. These were sent to DES for testing. One came back positive, one negative, and we are awaiting the results of the third.

Linda pointed out an article that appeared in the Concord Monitor on Saturday, August 22, which presented an excellent overview of the battle NH fights to eradicate or control the growth of variable milfoil in our waterways as well as the expense it takes to treat once out of control (see link below to a copy of the article). Fortunately, thanks to our team of volunteers, Halfmoon Lake has aggressively monitored and taken measures to keep the lake as free of milfoil as possible. To continue with this effort, we encourage all lakefront owners to be on the lookout for milfoil. If you find something suspicious, you can contact either Deb Fedorchak (603-776-6899) or Linda Bramante (603-776-0486) and they will make arrangements to meet or go to your house. If you pull a sample, be sure to put the weed in a zip lock bag with water and refrigerate until it can be picked up. Let's keep our lake clean!!

<http://www.concordmonitor.com/home/18262322-95/our-lake-is-in-crisis-50-years-of-milfoil>

Bill Mannion also reported that the Alton Milfoil Committee was successful in their efforts to control the weed and that Winnepesaukee overall seems to have Milfoil under control. He also reported that Moultonborough spent \$200,000 to treat an invasion, but the high cost was due to the fact that the Town did not use herbicide, so they harvested using divers. Note that the cost of a diver is \$1,200/day.

#### LAKE REP UPDATE

Kate Brown reported that she has contacted nearly all lake reps via email and sent a current list of owners for updates. To date she has heard from two reps. She will reach out to all other reps and work with Linda Bramante to get a more accurate database of owners and their contact information.

Although he was not present at the meeting, Kate welcomed new owner Richard Perkins who purchased the vacant lot on Halfmoon Bay Drive.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### LOON NEST EXPERIMENT

As reported in the July minutes, Bill Mannion and John Wheeler attended a workshop conducted by John Cooley of The Loon Preservation Committee of New Hampshire and built an artificial floating loon nest to help attract more loons and better protect their nest eggs from predators. The nest was located in a low-traffic area off Rustic Shores Drive. Although a pair of loons took interest and continued to inspect the platform early on, they ran into a fracas with a muskrat that eventually drove them off. The loons then tried to nest in the brook across from Rt. 28 and in the beginning of July two eggs were seen in the nest. However, one evening the loons put up distress calls and on further inspection, the eggs were gone. One thought is that an eagle or other predator invaded the nest and took the eggs. It was agreed to take the floating nest platform out of the lake for this season and relocate it next year in a place away from where the muskrats are living.

#### BOAT TRAFFIC OBSERVATIONS

John Wheeler reported that there have been 26 more visiting boats launched from the Rt. 28 boat ramp since the last meeting, for a total of 65 this year. Starting in September, John intends to keep track of parked vehicle license numbers as a measure of security.

#### BOATING CONDITIONS AND SIGNAGE

John Wheeler reported that two jet skis were operating erratically on the lake over a couple of weekends in July. Jet ski operation is only permitted during week days. Jet Skis are different from Personal Water Craft (PWC) in that they are designed for one operator who stands on the vehicle. PWC's on the other hand are designed for 2-4 riders in a seated position and fall into the same class as any other boat. Tim Brand reported that he called Marine Patrol and the operators of the Jet Skis were given a citation and advised of their obligations. No sightings have been seen since. However, it was noted that there is no signage with regulations posted at the boat ramp on Rt. 28. It was suggested that a sign be developed that states the regulations. Bill Mannion noted that this is on the agenda for the Alton selectman. The HMLA Board will follow-up.

There were other discussions regarding Wake Surfing on the lake. Several members complained about the large crested waves that crash ashore. The concern is that the lake is not large or deep enough to support this type of activity and that the large wake that is created may have an environmental impact on our shorefront. More information is needed from the state to understand if this issue has been raised. In the meantime, the Association would like to remind all boaters towing skiers, tubers, or

surfers must remain 150 feet from the shore line or any swim area and whenever possible travel in a counterclockwise direction.

#### 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PLANS

2016 will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the HMLA and the board would like to explore ideas on how we can celebrate this occasion. President Bill Mannion asked for any recommendations from the attendees. None were raised, so he asked that ideas be emailed to him. It was suggested that that the celebration occur following the August 2016 meeting and that we use the YMCA camp if available. At the July meeting, Judy Cropper from Locke Lake offered the use of their facilities and suggested a joint celebration, but the general consensus was that we keep our celebration separate and explore venues on our lake first. It was suggested that a planning committee be formed and Bill asked for volunteers. At this time no one has come forward, so the Board will continue the discussion at the next Board meeting and recruit interested parties. In the meantime, the YMCA Camp has been approached about the use of their facilities and we are awaiting a response.

#### LABOR DAY WEEKEND BOAT PARADE

Our annual boat parade will be held on Saturday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. We encourage everyone to participate in this traditional event. If you would like to be a part of the parade, meet in front of the YMCA camp at 8:00 PM. All spectators please be sure to make lots of noise to show your appreciation.

#### JULY 2016 MEETING

Bill Mannion proposed two dates for next year's first association meeting – July 2<sup>nd</sup> and July 9<sup>th</sup>. A vote was taken and the overwhelming consensus was for July 9<sup>th</sup>. More information to follow.

### **OPEN DISCUSSION**

#### LAKE SECURITY

A summer resident of South Shore Drive brought up the fact that their cottage has been broken into twice during the winter since they assumed ownership. He asked if the Association would consider organizing cameras in the most vulnerable neighborhoods that would monitor vehicular traffic and document license plate numbers. Bill Mannion reminded the resident that this is not part of the mission or responsibility of the Association and that neighborhoods should coordinate this initiative individually. Linda Bramante also reminded us about the presentation made by representative of the Alton and Barnstead Police Department. They made several suggestions on how to secure your property when not in residence. The notes from this meeting can be found on website.

On a motion by Tim Brand and seconded by Renee Adams, the members voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kate Brown  
HMLA Secretary

**HMLA OFFICERS / CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Bill Mannion, President	603-776-2362	<a href="mailto:wpmatlake@aim.com">wpmatlake@aim.com</a>
John Wheeler, Vice President	603-472-3228	<a href="mailto:goatroper144@yahoo.com">goatroper144@yahoo.com</a>
Linda Bramante, Treasurer	603-776-0486	<a href="mailto:lbramante118@gmail.com">lbramante118@gmail.com</a>
Kate Brown, Secretary	978-376-9598	<a href="mailto:katebrown@browntech.com">katebrown@browntech.com</a>

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**Halfmoon Lake Association Dues for 2015 from:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please include your email address to help defray the cost of postage for meeting notices and to assure you receive emergency email notices (i.e. water conditions, etc.) during the year. Thank You!*

**MAIL THIS FORM WITH YOUR CHECK TO:**

Linda Bramante, Treasurer  
118 North Barnstead Road  
Barnstead, NH 03225  
Make checks payable to the "Halfmoon Lake Association".