



CHINA LAKE ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Volume 22, Issue 1

Summer '09

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President's Report

Good water quality is always a great way to start off the summer season, and that's what we have here in China Lake this spring. This follows last summer when we had the best water quality in 15 years! Since the China Lake Restoration Project was started in 1990, over 300 erosion control type projects have been done in the watershed of China Lake, all aimed at improving water quality. Lets hope that the improved water quality that we are seeing is the start of many summers without the algae blooms that we have had in the past.

The Lake Association, in cooperation with the China Region Lakes Alliance, has an active summer planned. This is the second work season on a \$108,000 water quality grant. Major erosion control projects are planned in the watershed as well as many smaller buffer strip improvement projects. The Youth Conservation Corp will be active around the lake working on shoreline, road, and buffer strip improvement projects. Many of the same high school students will spend part of their weekends working at our two boat launches inspecting boats to prevent the introduction of milfoil and other invasive plants into China Lake.

Three members of the China Lake Association Board of Directors, Marie Michaud, Nancy Woodbrey and Peter Caldwell, are heading up a buffer strip awareness program called *Lakesmart*. This program will recognize properties around the lake that have high quality buffer strips and provide incentives to other property owners who wish to make upgrades to their buffer strips.

The China Town manager, Dan L'Heureux, did a good job for shorefront property owners working hard to keep everyone informed about the revaluation process that occurred last fall. While no one likes to see their tax bill increase, by all measure, the process seemed to go smoothly and fairly. Thank you, Dan. The selectmen and citizens of the town continue to be very supportive of ongoing lake related work. Despite the tightening town budget, \$26,200 was approved for the China Region Lakes Alliance with additional money possible if matching money for grants is needed. This strong ongoing support for water quality is seen in few towns in the state.

Finally, the work that the China Lake Association does on your behalf is money dependent. If you don't have time to volunteer, please contribute. Your contributions help us work for water quality. Thank you.

Annual Meeting

August 13

7:00 p.m.

China Primary School

*Refreshments served following the meeting

Dave Landry, President

david.landry@yahoo.com



Children enjoy fishing off the dock in Wentworth Cove.

China Region Lakes Alliance News

The China Region Lakes Alliance (CRLA) was formed in 1995 by the China Lake, Three Mile Pond, and Webber Pond Associations along with the Towns of China, Vassalboro, and Windsor and the Kennebec Water District with the mission to improve water quality in member lakes. The work done by the CRLA falls into 4 broad categories: technical assistance and design work for major erosion control projects, hands on work on smaller project done by our Youth Conservation Corp, free land owner consultations, and boat launch inspections to prevent the introduction of invasive water plants into area lakes. In 2008 the China Region Lakes Alliance continued working on erosion control projects up until the time of our first major snowfall.

Major erosion control projects were done in the town of China in cooperation with the Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District with partial funding from the Department of Transportation. In China, a total of 18 erosion control projects were done last year with two more major projects set to be completed early this summer. At the suggestion of China Selectman, Neil Farrington, the CRLA, in cooperation with the China Lake Association and Three Mile Pond Association, has begun a buffer strip improvement initiative called

China Lake Water Quality Improving

The primary mission of the China Lake Association is “to preserve and protect the water quality of China lake,” so it is great news when we can report that last year China Lake had the best water quality that we have seen in 15 years! Water quality is dependent on many factors including runoff, rain, sunlight, wind, etc. One year of great water quality does not signal victory in the battle over seasonal algae blooms, but it is encouraging. Also encouraging is that we are off to a good start this spring. Water clarity, an overall measure of water quality, is measured by dropping a black and white disc called a secci disc into the water and observing how far below the surface the disc is visible. During the first week of May, we had secci disc readings in China Lake of 5.1 meters, which is 16.6 feet. This is water clarity that we have seldom seen in the spring.

The seasonal algae blooms that China Lake has experienced since 1983 were less intense last summer, barely reaching the threshold to qualify technically as a bloom at all. The technical definition of an algae bloom is a water clarity reading of less than 6 feet. In past years we have had the bloom level reached in early August. Last year, it was not until late September that this level was reached and only for a short period of time.

The Kennebec Water District keeps close eye on the water quality in China Lake on a year round basis, since the lake is the drinking water source for the city of Waterville. Weekly water quality checks are only a small part of what the water district does to protect our water quality, and you will frequently see the white and blue Kennebec Water District boat out on the lake working to protect our water quality.

Lakesmart. This program sponsored by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) works to improve the buffer strips around our lakes. Buffer strip health is related to water quality. The more naturally forested a buffer strip is the less soil erosion takes place. The CRLA and member lake associations will be assisting interested shorefront property owners to assess their buffer strip, select appropriate

(continued on p. 3)

CRLA News (continued from p. 2)

plants, and share the cost of the projects. It is expected that doing selected plantings in the buffer strip area will improve water quality by lessening runoff, while not interfering with the lakefront views.

Under the direction of CRLA president Jim Hart, the organization has a list of significant erosion control projects planned for this season on China Lake. In addition to these major projects, many buffer strip improvement projects are planned. For the past three years, the CRLA has partnered with the Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District. The district has helped bring a level of design and supervisory experience to erosion control projects that we have not had in the past. With China Lake experiencing the best water quality in 15 years, we all believe that the hundreds of erosion control projects that have been done to date are having a positive impact on water quality.

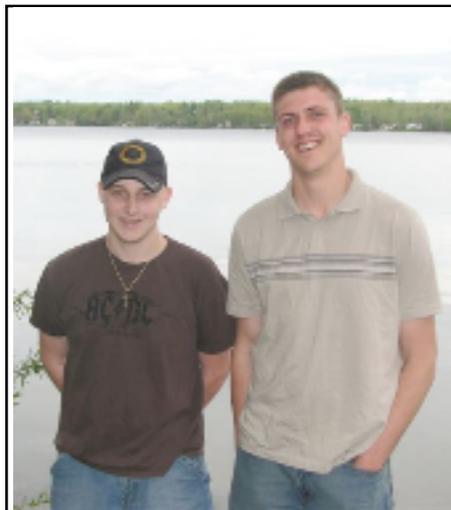
An important task of the CRLA in recent years has been the job of weekend prelaunch boat inspections to prevent the introduction of invasive plants. Last season, 912 courtesy boat inspections were done by the CRLA on member lakes; 511 on China Lake, 270 on Three Mile Pond, and 131 on Webber Pond. The boat inspection program is partially supported through grants obtained from the DEP.

The CRLA is again applying for grants to continue the important erosion control work that still needs to be addressed. Grant applications for both China Lake and Three Mile Pond are planned. Without

matching funds from the town of China, the CRLA would not be successful in the grant process. The state and federal governments assess local support for lake-related projects as part of the application process. The CRLA has been able to match every dollar contributed by the town of China by more than 3:1. For summer residents on China Lake, it is important to remember that China is committed to protecting and improving water quality through annual funding of the CRLA with some of your tax dollars. This is helping to maintain your property's value.

In December, David Landry completed his term as CRLA president with Jim Hart taking over. Jim works with the Kennebec Water District as treatment plant manager. Jim is an engineer by training and brings a good deal of knowledge and enthusiasm to his position as incoming CRLA president. Peter Wilkens, who was Youth Conservation Corp Director and chief site evaluator for the CRLA during the past two years, stepped down in the fall. Peter did a wonderful job, and many in the community can attest to Peter's hard work on behalf of the organization.

Justin Hebert will be the new YCC director for 2009. Justin is a three year veteran of the YCC and brings a good deal of experience to the job. Another returning veteran is Erskine Academy senior Christian Wilkens, who will be Crew Chief for the YCC. Nick Brown, also a YCC veteran, will be organizing the boat inspection programs. Those wishing to contact the CRLA are referred to the following contact information.



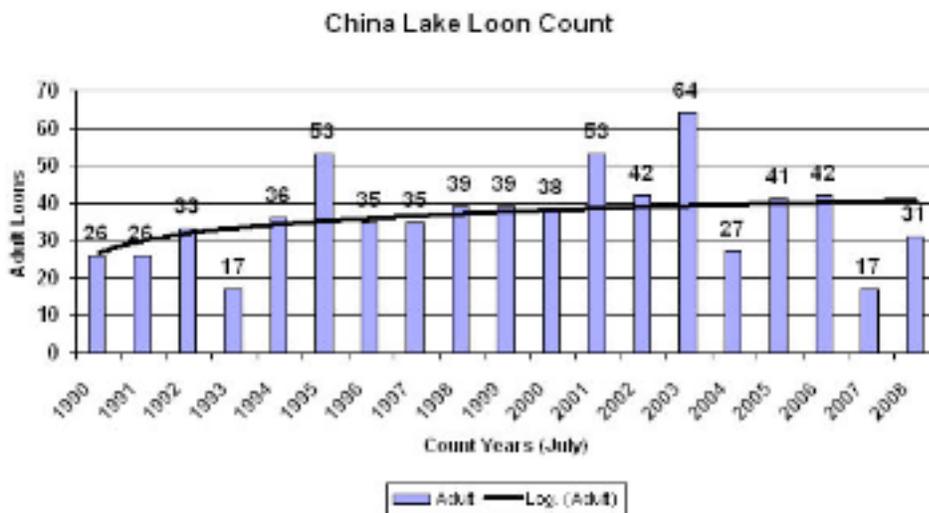
YCC crew chief, Christian Wilkens and YCC Director, Justin Hebert

Email: lakesalliance@yahoo.com
China Lake: David Landry 968-2856
Three Mile Pond: Rick Hayden (445-2077)
Webber Pond: Bob Nadeau 873-2025
General Information: Jim Hart 445-3358

david.landry@yahoo.com
rhayden61@juno.com
nadeau1@adelphia.net
jim.hart@roadrunner.com

Loon Rebound Expected to Continue

The results of the Loon Count for 2008 on China Lake were reassuring in that our loon population had come back from the unusually low count in 2007. The loon count last summer for China Lake was 31 adult loons (see graph below). This mirrors the state wide results tabulated by the Maine Audubon society: "After two consecutive years of declining numbers, findings from the 2008 Maine Audubon Loon Count show that the state's adult loon population is rebounding." The upcoming statewide Loon Count for 2009 will take place on Saturday, July 18, 2008. We hope that this count will show a continuation in the loon rebound. If you are interested in participating in this year's count, and you have a boat on China Lake, please contact Bob O'Connor at 207-445-4140 or send an email to Bob@MaineBob.com with "LOON Count..." in the subject line. Learn more about Loons and the count from Maine Audubon: <http://www.MaineAudubon.org/conserves/loon/index.shtml>.



Lake Vandalism

Vandals destroyed over \$800 worth of hazard markers in the East Basin of China Lake this winter according to Tim Thurston of the Department of Conservation (D.O.C.). Similar vandalism was seen on China Lake in 2004. It appears that the markers were destroyed intentionally, probably by being hit by an ATV type vehicle. The broken upper halves of the 8 markers were not found on the lake during a search this spring leading Thurston to speculate that they may have been kept by the vandals.

The D.O.C. marks hazards on China Lake free of cost but will stop this very valuable and expensive service if the vandalism continues. The China Lake Association is offering a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those involved. Anyone with information can contact Tim Thurston of the D.O.C. at 582-5771 or call the China Constable, Jim Lane, at 445-2954.

Alewife Project Update

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is working to reintroduce alewives to lakes they were once native to. After over a decade of effort, nearby Webber Pond now has a self sustaining run of this anadromous fish. As the number of fish migrating to Webber Pond to spawn has increased, the water quality has improved. Frank Richards, president of the Webber Pond Association, thinks there is a direct correlation between the two events. Thought is being given to reintroducing the fish into China Lake. Those of you present at last year's CLA Annual Meeting heard a very informative presentation by the DMR on this topic with mention of the possible beneficial effect on water quality.

The CLA directors are following this matter and evaluating the implications of alewives in China Lake. There are no plans to do anything before 2010. We will keep you informed as we learn more.

Special Thanks to Lakeview Lumber

Carl and Phyllis Farris of Lakeview Lumber have always supported the efforts of the CLA and last year was no exception. When the CLA was having trouble building box culverts for use in erosion control projects, we went to Carl for help. Carl volunteered Tim Fletcher who runs the "door shop" at Lakeview to built these heavy erosion control devices. With Tim's expert skills we soon had enough culverts for our immediate needs. Thanks again to Lakeview Lumber for their generous help!

We would also like to thank our private members for their donations as well. The following members gave at the "Loon" level or greater. As you know, your contributions go a long way in helping us fulfill our mission of improving the water quality in our lakes and streams. If you would like your contribution to be anonymous, please check the box in the membership form below. Thank you.

Peggy and Jim Budd
James Pitney and Virginia Davis
Carl and Phyllis Farris (Lakeview Lumber)
Steve and Gail Guthrie
Dave Landry and Diane Brandt
Elizabeth Davidson
W. Wistar and Mary Connie Comfort
Marie and Tom Michaud
Klein Family

John and Janice Massaua
Caroline S. Bailey
John and Mary Benziger
Jack and Marjorie Kurtzman
Harold and Sue Charles
Pat and Ray Ward
Mark and Lauren Jordy
Laurence and Donna Jacobsen

Membership Form - Summer 2009 China Lake Association

Please renew my membership.

I am a new member.

I would like my donation to be anonymous.

Annual Family Membership, \$25

Bass, \$50

Name _____

Trout, \$75

Address _____

Loon, \$100

City, ST, Zip _____

Eagle, \$500

Phone _____ email _____

other, _____

*Please make check payable to "China Lake Association" and mail to P.O. Box 6215, China Village, ME 04926.
Thank you for your tax-deductible contribution!*

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**China Lake Association
Annual Meeting**

Thursday, August 13

7:00 p.m.

China Primary School

Water Quality Update

*Refreshments served following the meeting

Website Help!

Have you visited the CLA website yet at chinalakeassociation.org? Don't bother, the website is basically nonfunctional. We need help! If you have the interest and ability to help the CLA enter the 21st century, please contact CLA president Dave Landry at 968-2856 or by email at david.landry@yahoo.com