



CHINA LAKE ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Volume 27, Issue 1

Summer 2014

President's Report Landry Passes Baton

This is the 22nd President's Report that I have typed. You would think I would run out of things to write about, but I never seem to, and this year is no exception. We have come a long way in our understanding of China Lake in the twenty-four years I have been on the China Lake Association (CLA) Board. There are few lakes in the state of Maine that have been more studied: DEP Studies in the 1980's and 1990's, Shore front erosion study in 2000, Stream Study in 2003, Colby College Report in 2005, Wetlands Analysis in 2009, and the Kleinschmidt Water Quality Study 2012. We have learned much from these studies, and I would say one of the more surprising pieces of information has been how important an optimally timed fall draw-down could be to water quality.

The mission of the CLA is to "preserve and protect the water quality of China Lake." We have always tried to use the scientific information at hand to direct our efforts toward water quality improvement. This year we will begin a more aggressive, better timed, fall draw-down, which is estimated to remove an additional 400 pounds of phosphorus from the lake annually. We had done an aggressive fall draw-down from the early 1990's until 2003 but then stopped. In the past we have considered doing an expensive alum treatment to the lake sediments, but we are now moving in the direction of re-introducing sea-run alewives to China Lake with partners from Maine Rivers and the Sebasticook Regional Land Trust. The Directors of the CLA believe the reintroduction of alewives to China Lake will restore a historic fishery and may also help to improve water quality as has been seen in Webber and Three Mile Ponds.

In addition to this being my 22nd President's Report it will also be my last. As I look back over my long tenure, I am proud of the many programs we have implemented in the interest of improving water quality, and it has been a pleasure working with the other dedicated board members toward this goal. While some may play golf or fish, the environmental interests of the lake have been my hobby, and I have very much enjoyed my spare time vocation. While we have accomplished much during my time at the helm of the CLA: forming the China Region Lakes Alliance, receiving the "Lake Association of the Year" award in 2000, recognition of the CRLA as "Maine Conservation Organization of the Year" in 2009, one goal has eluded us - stopping the seasonal algae blooms in China Lake. Progress is sometimes much slower than one would like, but I do feel some progress has been made. We clearly understand why we have seasonal algae blooms - lake sediment phosphorus release in the summer. Additionally, we have several tools available to combat the internal phosphorus: alum treatments, fall draw-downs, and perhaps alewife re-introduction. Finally, we have set a course to implement two of these measures - a more aggressive fall draw-down and returning alewives to China Lake. I leave the President's role knowing we have a strong organization, dedicated membership, and a talented nominee for the position of new President. Come to the annual meeting to find out who that talented and very knowledgeable person is, and cast your vote! I look forward to seeing you there on Saturday, July 26th.

Respectfully,

Dave Landry

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Dave Landry

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Paul Harwath

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Newsletter Editor

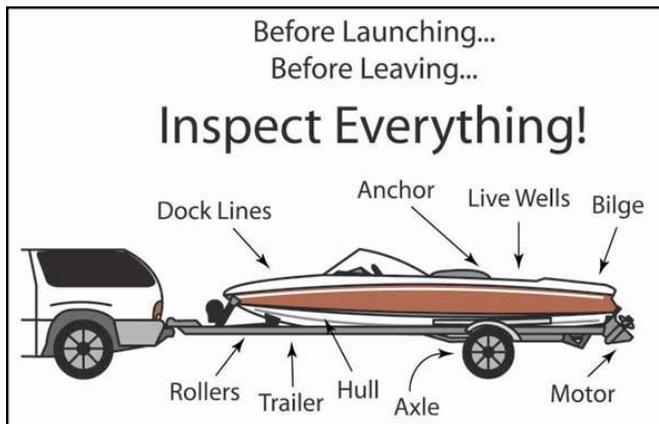
Janet Preston

China Lake Best in New England

The May 2014 issue of *Bassmaster* rated China Lake the top bass lake in New England! In an article entitled, *The 100 Hottest Fisheries on the Planet*, this popular fishing magazine rated China Lake 23rd in the country and top listed lake in New England. China Lake has long been a hot spot for bass fishing in the State of Maine with a number of tournament records coming out of the Lake in recent years. The Lake is a popular spot for recreational and tournament anglers. After the *Bassmaster* article came out, there has been a noticeable uptick in the out of state fishermen setting their sights on China Lake this spring.

Tournament competitor Josh Platt is not surprised that China is one of the top rated bass lakes. "You can come to China and always be certain of good fishing. It is not uncommon to pull 4-5 pound bass out of the lake." China resident and noted bass angler Gerry Boyle says that it is not uncommon for him to haul in 5-6 good sized fish during an afternoon out on the lake.

While all the attention about the great bass fishing in China Lake may seem like good news, there is a dark side to the notoriety. More anglers from out of state means there is more risk of the accidental introduction of invasive plants. Take care to inspect your boat and remove any plant debris before launching, and educate and encourage others to do the same!



DON'T LET MILFOIL SPOIL YOUR LAKE!



2014 China Lake Bass Fishing Tournaments

The Department of Inland Fisheries (IF&W) monitors and regulates the number and type of contests on China Lake. The list below is taken from the IF&W's website: <http://www.maine.gov/ifw/fishing/pdfs/BassByWater060614.pdf>

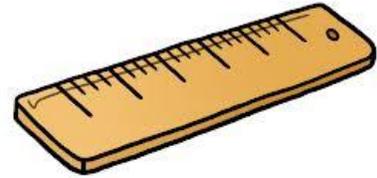
Date	ClubName	Representative	Phone	TournamentType
4/27/2014	Outcast Bass Club	Jeremy Von Oesen	649-3665	Open/Weigh In
6/14/2014	Buzzard's Luck Bass Fishing Club	Paul Brennan	978-667-2200	Measure Release
6/19/2014	Saco Valley Cast Masters	Steven Philbrick	730-3998	Club/Weigh In
6/28/2014	Capital Area Bassmasters	Bob Caron	441-3273	Open/Weigh In
7/12/2014	Mainely Bass	Roger LaFlamme, Jr	229-7110	MDSummer
7/13/2014	Mainely Bass	Roger LaFlamme, Jr	229-7110	MDSummer
7/27/2014	Central Maine Bassmasters	Wayne Morey	622-0343	Open/Weigh In
8/9/2014	Central Maine Bassmasters	Wayne Morey	622-0343	Club/Weigh In
9/27/2014	Banqor Bass Club	Ken D'Errico	735-7910	Club/Weigh In
10/5/2014	Rocky Coast	Dwayne Turnage	207-229-5216	Open/Weigh In

New Lake Levels Set

As part of the ongoing effort to improve water quality, the Kennebec Water District petitioned the State last year to allow for a larger drop in fall water levels in China Lake. This would allow a greater “flush” of algae and phosphorus out of the lake. In a 2012 research report, Bjorn Lake of Kleinschmidt Consults stated that a slightly early flush, from November to October, and a greater magnitude drop in fall water levels, from -1.5 to -2.5 feet would rid the lake of an additional 400 pounds of phosphorus annually. The excellent graphic that was done by CLA Director Bob O'Connor depicts the new water levels very clearly.

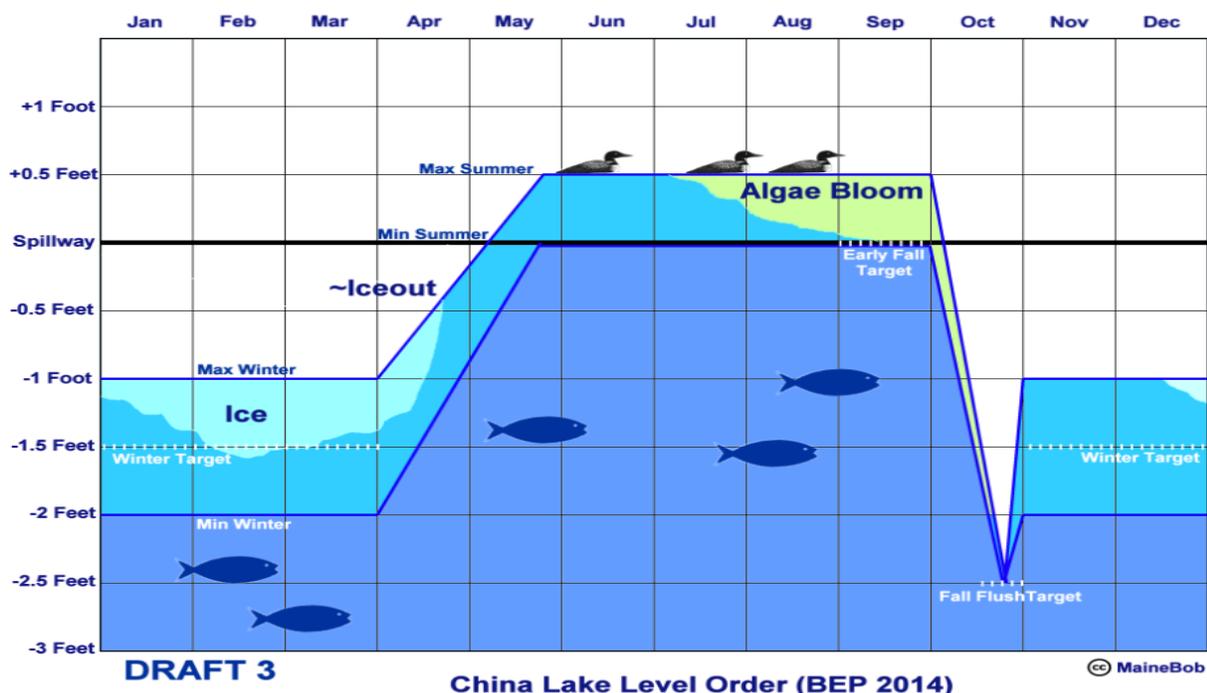
There are always questions about the lake being higher or lower than normal. The upper water level allowed in this new order is unchanged. What does change from year to year is whether there is enough rainfall to keep the lake at the prescribed levels. We have a dam with enough capacity to avoid flooding in the case of extreme rainfall, but there is little we can do in very dry years.

All of the water levels discussed are relative to the cement spillway on the outlet dam. If you are curious how the water level on any given day reflects the prescribed water level, take a trip to the dam with a yard stick and measure the water level above or below the spillway to see where we are. If you want more frequent water level updates, you can make your own water level gauge! (See box right)



Make Your Own Gauge

Get a small board about 4 inches wide and 4 feet long. On the center of the length of the board mark “0.” Then measure from the “0” in 6 inch increments going to +2 feet above and -2 feet below. Next, take a trip to the dam and see where the water level is in regards to spillway. Go home, take your newly painted “water level gauge,” and go down to your dock. Tie the gauge to one of the dock legs so that the lake water level you just measured is at that measurement on the gauge. For example, let’s say you measured the water level at 4 inches above spillway. Affix the measurement stick to the dock leg so the water laps at the +4 inch level on your board. Now you have your own water level gauge and will always be able to tell where the daily water level is in regards to the target level.



Courtesy Boat Inspection in its Tenth Year!

The China Region Lake's Alliance, with help from the China Lake Association, will be conducting courtesy boat inspections for the tenth year this summer. The inspections are done on both boat launches on China Lake as well as on Three Mile and Webber Ponds. Invasive plants are an increasing threat to lakes in the state of Maine. When the program was first begun 10 years ago there were eight lakes in the State with identified invasive plant problems. Now there are thirty-two! Remember to do a thorough self-inspection of your boat prior to launch. Also, if you have company bringing a boat to China Lake from out of state, please be sure to have them do a careful inspection of their boat prior to launch as well. Avoiding the small non-public landings that are scattered around the lakes can also help. These landings are more susceptible to having invasive plants take root than the paved landings with hard rock or cement ramps going into the lake.

The CBI program costs the CRLA about \$14,000 per year to run. In the past the state has contributed \$2000 per year towards the funding. This year, we were very fortunate to have received a grant for \$6000 to run this program. When you see the students in their bright yellow and green shirts doing boat inspections, be sure to thank them. Their keen eyes might just save the lake!



CBI leader Jade Canak (front right) demonstrates a boat inspection for this year's staff.

Back row left to right:

Kimberly Crommett, Celina Nadeau, Amelia Bailey, and Andrew Grady, Nathan Martin

Front row left to right:

Justin Studholm, Jacob Houghton, Jacob Boudreau, Joseph Morry, Amber Church, and James Poulin

Annual Poster Contest for Fifth and Sixth Grade Students

The China Lake Association is sponsoring its Third Annual Poster Contest. China Middle School students in Grades 5 and 6 have been invited to enter their artwork showing a home property before and after adding buffer strips to protect the China Lake watershed. Pamphlets pertaining to watersheds and buffer strips were provided to the schools.

Judges, who will be local artists and CLA members, will be looking for bold and imaginative drawings that focus on China Lake and its surrounding watershed. Posters will be assessed by the quality of the artwork (creativity, use of color, artistic design) as well as ideas for protecting the watershed. Winners will be selected by July 19th, and posters will be displayed at the Annual China Lake Association Meeting held July 26, 2014. Prizes will be awarded in both grade categories. First place prize will be \$50, second place will be \$35, and third place winners will be awarded \$25.

For more information, contact CLA Director Marie Michaud at 242-0240.

China Region Lakes Alliance News

By Jim Hart, CRLA President

The China Region Lakes Alliance (CRLA) was founded in 1995 by the Lake Associations of China Lake, Three Mile Pond, and Webber Pond, along with the Towns of Vassalboro, Windsor, and China, and the Kennebec Water District combining resources and talents to cooperate on common projects designed to protect and improve water quality in our member lakes. Notably, the CRLA was the first regional lake alliance in the State of Maine. Now, there are five other regional lakes organizations in the State that have adopted similar models and rationale.

Water quality in Webber Pond and Three Mile Pond continues to show improvement. This remarkable achievement is absolutely splendid news and coincides unequivocally with the restoration of the sea-run alewife fishery into these lakes. Bringing these fishes back – through numerous obstacles – to reach their historic spawning grounds is a testament to the unwavering fortitude of the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and its entire dedicated staff of scientists and, in particular, field biologists. The CRLA is proud to support their efforts.

The mechanism by which an alewife population enables water improvement is related to their metabolic uptake of nutrients, whereby millions of juvenile alewives consume food (i.e. carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus) and essentially export them when they swim out to sea for the winter. This removes phosphorus from the water column, depriving plankton and algae of these same nutrients, hence eutrophication is precluded and the lake is cleaner.

CRLA is working with numerous stakeholder groups to assist DMR's epic campaign to restore alewives to their historic habitat in China Lake. All of the six dam owners on the Outlet Stream have shown support and cooperation for fish passage, and CRLA is working with engineering firms to develop plans that are agreeable to each of them. It will take

time and substantial funding to reach our goal of "unfettered fish passage into China Lake by December 31, 2018." In the meantime, the DMR stocked 21,000 adult alewives into China Lake beginning in the spring of 2014. You may be able to see schools of them swimming along the shoreline or in front of your dock!

In addition, CRLA continues to staff and manage its important Courtesy Boat Inspection Program, to guard against Aquatic Invasive Species and Milfoil from invading our lakes. These are genuine threats and we are fortunate to have Dave Landry, President of China's Lake Association, manage the CBI again this year. It is a \$15,000 per year program to cover four public boat launches - a wise and worthwhile investment, particularly in comparison to the cost of remediating a major infestation. Your support of the Lake Associations helps to fund this program!

If you see our local students and volunteers working on conservation projects this summer, please say hello and thank them. They are working hard as young stewards for our environment!



Juvenile alewives swarm around the fish ladder in Webber Pond

Remembering Sherm Kelsey



Family and friends remember Sherm Kelsey, who passed away in February at the age of 71 after a courageous battle with cancer. Sherm spent his summers on China Lake in an Adirondack style cabin built in the '20's by his grandfather Avery and great grandfather Coffin. As a teenager, Sherm worked at The Landing and also spent time at local farms haying during the summer.

While Sherm was fond of any time he spent on the lake, he especially enjoyed fishing with his grandchildren and taking them tubing on the lake. In addition to fishing, Sherm enjoyed sailing, water skiing, and swimming. Much loved by family & friends, he was easy going and will always be remembered for his quick smile. China Lake has lost a strong and willing advocate.

China Lake Association Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 26 • 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. • China Primary School gym

- Welcome – President Dave Landry
- Poster Contest Winners – Marie Michaud, Nancy Woodbrey
- ***Storm Water Impact, Solutions, and Water Quality*** - Steven Kahl
Director of Sustainability, Unity College; President, Maine Lakes Society
Steve will be sharing creative ways, such as rain gardens and pervious pavement, to reduce storm water runoff . It should be an interesting morning!
- Coffee Break - Coffee and muffins provided by *Green Bean Cafe*
- CRLA Update on alewife passage into China Lake – Jim Hart
President, CRLA
- Election of Officers
- New Business
- Adjourn

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US POSTAGE
PAID
WATERVILLE, ME
04901
PERMIT NO. 26

China Lake Association
P.O. Box 6215
China Village, ME 04926

