

2020 SPRING NEWS LETTER

Conway Lake

Conservation Association



Letter from the President

June 1, 2020

Dear Conway Lake Neighbor,

I trust this newsletter finds you all healthy and safe in these turbulent times. As I write this missive in late April, we are continuing to do our work in protecting Conway Lake and its environs despite the uncertainties set before us in the wake of Covid-19.

Here are a few important items that we are excited to announce. First, Weed Watchers is creating a blog on our website to facilitate communication and mapping. Second, our water quality report is being expanded to include tributary run-off. And last, we are running a pilot program to provide additional nesting habitat for native ducks and other water fowl. We have included more information on each of these announcements below.

We hope to be able to schedule the annual meeting in the August time period, but only if permitted and if safe for all. If we are able to hold the annual, we will inform you by post card and by email at least two weeks before the meeting. We realize that in August we all would like to make the most of the day, and to that end we will plan on a morning meeting vs. the normal afternoon time.

The Lake Hosts are willing and prepared to inspect boats at the boat launch with social distancing put in place. We are on full alert and ready to modify every aspect of our usual actions to prioritize the safety and health of our Lake Hosts, community, and Board.

Please take care and I hope that we can all come together this summer around this beautiful body of water.

See you on the water,

Kin Earle

Kin Earle, President CLCA



Early Morning Misty View by Don Yurewicz



Conway Lake

Conservation Association

Moat Sunset by Don Yurewicz

CONWAY LAKE CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION (CLCA) MEMBERSHIP

– DUES REQUEST –

Our membership dues information card and return envelope for 2020 is enclosed. CLCA depends on you and all of our neighbors to help fund our efforts to preserve Conway Lake in it's pristine condition for generations to come. The dues of \$50.00 only covers about 20% of our annual costs, so any additional donation you are able to make at this time is very much appreciated.

The enclosed information card lists the current information we have for you in our records. If something is missing, needs correction, or updating please make the changes in the space provided and return the card with your check.

Please make the tax deductible check
payable to CLCA and mail to:
CLCA • P.O. Box 803 • Center Conway, NH • 03813

Should you have any questions or concerns about the CLCA or our Lake, please feel free to contact me at KinEarle@aol.com or call me on my mobile at 978-884-8541. I look forward to seeing you on the Lake and hopefully at our annual meeting, if it is possible to hold that event. If we are able to have the annual, we will inform you by post card and by email in mid-July.



*Sunrise on Conway Lake
-photo courtesy K.Earle*



WEED WATCHERS 3.0

The CLCA Spring Newsletter always contains important information on invasive plants and our efforts to keep them out of our Lake as our number one priority. This year we are shifting gears just a bit and devoting our write-up to the new initiative of establishing a web-based “blog” or information center and communication platform. Our long standing weed watcher leader, Maria Gross, jumped on the idea of creating this capability and we provide a description of the blog right after our kick-off meeting announcement. This meeting will also make a technology departure from past meetings due to COVID-19 and will be virtual.

KICK OFF MEETING

Kickoff for the 2020 Conway Lake Weed Watcher Patrol is scheduled for July 11th.

It will be hosted via Zoom at 9:00 AM by Maria Gross and Don Yurewicz

WW Patrol Coordinators

All who are interested are welcome!

To join the meeting, first please register with either Maria or Don:

Maria at maria.m.gross@gmail.com,

603-491-3107 (cell) or 603-447-6068 (home)

Don at dyurewicz@gmail.com, or 603-662-0438 (cell)

*If Zoom is new to you, we will happily help introduce you.
It is easy and friendly.*

AN APPEAL

from Maria Gross

We are the guardians of Conway Lake, and we all need to protect it from invasive plant and animal species...

It's critical to work together, learn what invasive species look like and be watchful every season of every year to keep Conway Lake, as we love it, pristine and healthy.

The Lake Hosts + Weed Watcher Patrols are vigilant and only a part of what's required.

TAKE ACTION-
Join the effort to patrol

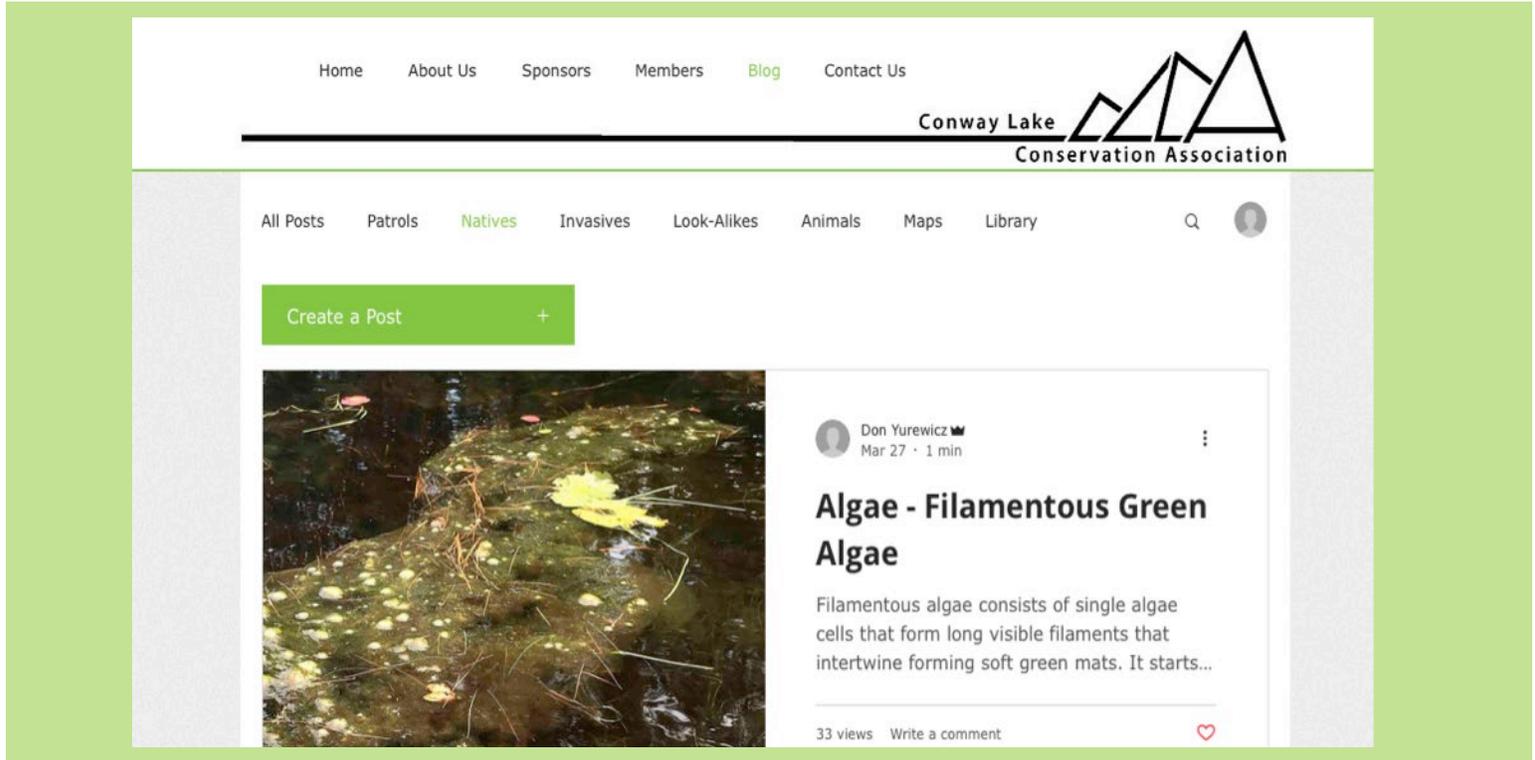
WEED WATCHER BLOG

Thanks to the efforts of a team of Maria Gross, Kathy Siranosian, Don Yurewicz and Rob Struble the CLCA website now has a Weed Watcher Patrol Blog that can be used for all sorts of purposes. The Blog contains a wide range of reference material for all lake shore folks. Not only does it provide a central location for all weed watcher patrol reports, it also contains detailed mapping of the entire lake that can be used for weed patrols, loon monitoring, fishing or even for general navigation around the many submerged rocks and other

hazards along the shore that can gash hulls and eat propellers.

To get to the Blog you need to go to the CLCA website, www.conwaylake.org and then select “Blog” located in the top line menu between Members and Contact Us.

Once you have clicked on “Blog” you have another top line menu to choose from. As an example, if you pick “Natives” you’ll see a screen like the one below.



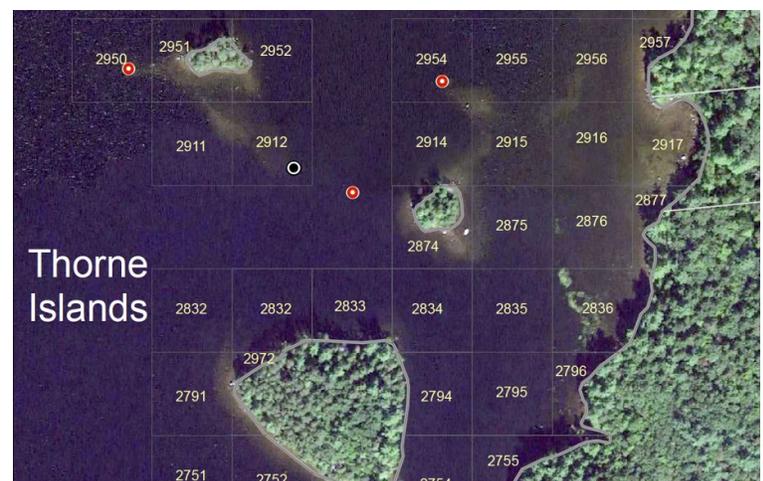
This section of the Blog has an alphabetical listing of the most common plants you will find in Conway Lake. There is some descriptive information and a photo taken of the actual plant as it appears in Conway Lake. The “Invasives” tab includes descriptions and photos of exotic plants that could be introduced to our lake from nearby infested lakes. Early detection of these plants would be critical for a quick response and a chance to eradicate them from the Lake.

There is a section showing “Look-Alikes” to help you distinguish between plants such as Exotic naiad and Native naiad. And under “More” there are two additional tabs - one labeled “Maps” and another labeled “Library”. The Library includes reference manuals that have complete information on all the plants you will see and those exotics you want to look for and hopefully will not see. The “Maps” tab includes detailed topographic maps with overlaid satellite imagery of our Lake. One of the maps shows the entire watershed for Conway Lake with the locations of the water sampling sites where we monitor water quality in the lake. There are 17 weed patrol zones or areas on the Lake and each of the 17 has its own map with a numerical location grid that can be used for finding items of interest on a future visit. ***The screen shot to the right is for Map 5 which shows the eastern shoreline around the Thorne Islands.***

Note that you can see rocks and vegetation around the shoreline. This feature can help you spot areas that need to be checked for

possible invasive plants and to avoid areas around dangerous rocks. Finally, the tab labeled “Patrols” will be used by Weed Patrol members to make comments. These comments will keep a log of when and where areas are surveyed during the season. It can also be an easy way to post photos with GPS notations of plants that need to be identified or sightings or plants they’ve seen that might be of interest to other patrol members.

We hope you will take a look at the new Blog and check out the resources that are now readily available to all that are interested in knowing more about our Lake!



WATER QUALITY TESTING & RESULTS

The Conway Lake water quality test program was reliably conducted once again by Fred Godbold in the summer of 2019. Test results have been compiled by Bob Craycraft at UNH and can be found at the UNH site: <https://extension.unh.edu/resource/lakes-lay-monitoring-program-lake-reports>. Thirty seven years of historical data for the Lake are shown in the report and the conclusion after assessing the data is that Conway Lake retains it's "oligotrophic" status as a pristine water quality lake.

The table below shows the major 2019 categories of water quality and lists the previous three years for comparison purposes.

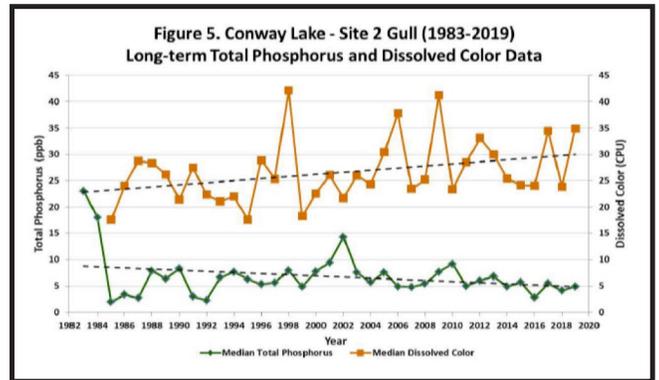
FACTOR	2016	2017	2018	2019
CLARITY (FT.)	21.5	17.5	22.5	15.5
CHLOROPHYLL-A (PPB)	1.7	3.0	1.8	1.6
PHOSPHOROUS (PPB)	2.8	5.5	4.1	4.9
DISSOLVED O2 (MG/L)	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.2

These measurements are seasonal averages for approximately 20 testing dates at 5 locations around the Lake.

- Clarity or transparency was lower in 2019 from previous years, largely due to the very wet spring we experienced where run off raises the amount of sediment in the water. This result was consistent with other lakes in the area and the clarity improved as the summer progressed.
- Chlorophyll-A is a measure of microscopic plant particles suspended in the water largely generated from aquatic plants. 2019 showed a slight decrease and while some areas of our shoreline seem to have dense aquatic plant growth, the overall volume of the lake is relatively plant free.
- Phosphorous is a key factor in water quality. It is a nutrient that promotes plant growth and it is an abundant element found in nature in both inorganic and organic compounds. At the levels found in Conway Lake, phosphorous is in balance and does not cause problems. However, denser concentrations can lead to undesired plant growth, both native and invasive, and can lead to algae blooms and cyanobacteria toxins. Excessive phosphorous is often caused by human activity including lawn fertilizer use and failed septic systems that can leach into the Lake and is accelerated by storm run-off,

both from lakefront properties and sources within the watershed. While 2019 showed a slight increase in the four year average, the overall concentration has showed a decreasing trend over the life of the program as shown in the chart below (Figure 5; phosphorous is shown on the lower portion of the chart).

- Dissolved Oxygen is a factor that measures the health of the Lake for cold water fish such as salmon and trout. This factor has remained in the average range for the last four years and is a measure of human impact on a lake where we are characterized as "minimally" impacted.



TRIBUTARY TESTING

In the many years of water quality testing the CLCA has taken samples of some of the major tributaries feeding the Lake and UNH has measured the amount of phosphorous in these samples. The tributary portion of our testing has not been nearly as regular as our testing of the main water body. However, in 2019 we took samples from six streams on the eastern shore of the Lake in late April and again in early November. The results are shown in the chart to the right.

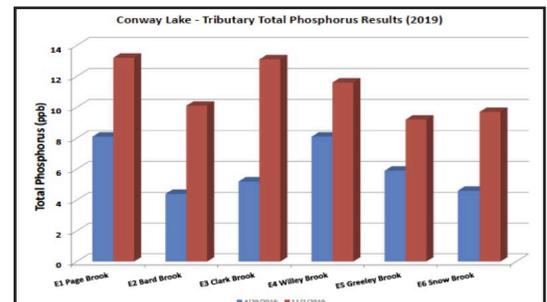
These measurements show that the average level of phosphorus flowing into the Lake in the spring (blue bars) was about 15% higher than the Lake average and about 100% higher in the fall (red bars). These levels,

in particular the fall levels, were concerning and we initiated a broader sampling program this spring to include several streams on the western side of the Lake. In total 15 samples have been taken and sent to UNH. Due to the COVID-19 shutdown, the UNH lab for sample testing is temporarily closed and our samples are not expected to be tested until the mid-June time period.

We discussed the 2019 results with Bob Craycraft of UNH who explained that it is not unusual for streams to have higher levels of phosphorous than the Lake itself and that the fall levels, while high, are not alarming, but worth watching more regularly.

In general, good shorefront property

management should take steps to reduce direct run off into the Lake and to eliminate the use of phosphorous in lawn or garden fertilizers or detergents that may find their way into our Lake. These same practices should be employed, where practical, in the watershed areas that feed the streams that flow into the Lake.



LOON REPORT FOR 2019

by Rick Blank



Photo Courtesy of Kieran Lombard



Loon on Nest - Don Yurewicz



Photo Courtesy of AO Lucy

A VERY ACTIVE BUT UNPRODUCTIVE YEAR

Loons arrived early in 2020. The ice went out on April 6th which is very early but loons were spotted on open water that very day, one still with winter plumage. Often our home loons come later than the very first sightings as the migrants hop from one feeding spot to the next as the ice retreats northwards.

And our loons did return in 2019. We had four pairs and started out with four nests, the first at the Town Beach island, as usual. Ropes and signs were pre-positioned around the island to discourage boaters, but by mid-June the nest was abandoned with a solitary egg still intact.

We suspect this pair moved onto the Gerson Island nesting spot used in 2018, but once again the nest was abandoned with a single egg left. Both of these abandoned eggs were turned into LPC for analysis.

Marble Island hosted a nest but by mid-July it had failed. There was an extremely heavy rainfall event that moved through the area in July and this may have contributed. However, there was extended loon fighting heard one evening and in the morning a distant observer detected a single egg floating free in the water. Heart-breaking.



Photo courtesy of D. Yurewicz

The Thorne Island pair never established a nest. There is a bald eagle nest near-by in a tall pine overlooking this area and Cindy Desmarais captured on video an eagle attacking a fishing adult loon in open water. The fight went on for 2-3 minutes and the loon survived, but this threat could have made nesting impossible. The eagles' chick fledged successfully. Bald Eagles 1, Loons 0.



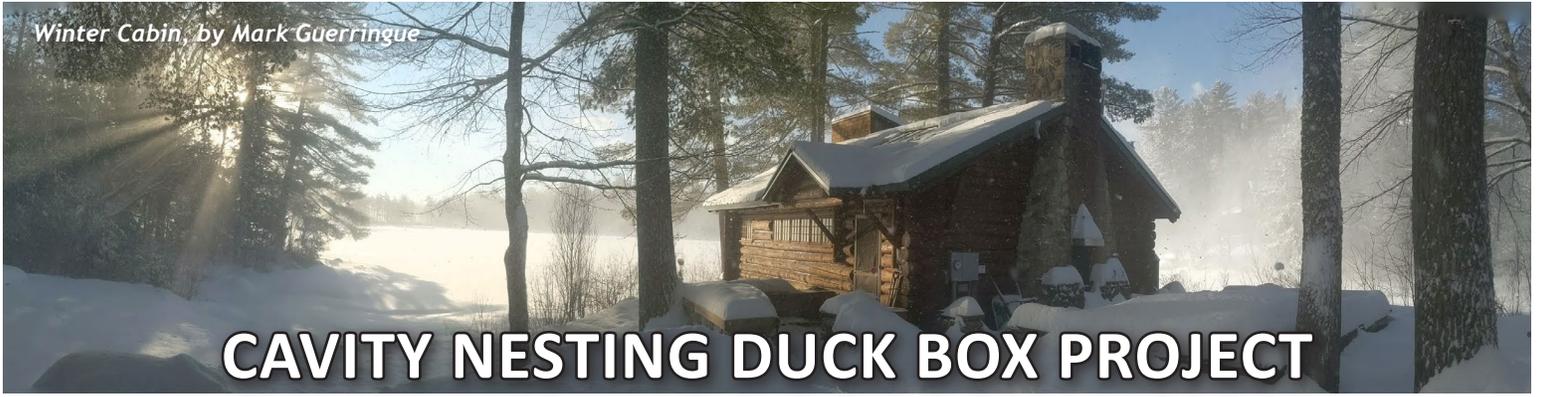
Photo Courtesy of Kieran Lombard

A nest raft was floated next to Boynton's Island at the South Cove, but we had no takers.

Rick Blank is going to receive some help this year from a strong back in the shape of Ace Tarberry. We welcomed Ace to the CLCA Board over the winter and he has taken to helping right away.

The annual loon census took place on July 20th. Fifteen loons were sighted - the four nesting pairs and seven single loons, perhaps in for the day for fishing. In 2018 we sighted only 9 loons in total, the main difference being the large number of single loons.

In sum, we had a high number of loons on the Lake with four nesting territories, all active, but no chicks were hatched. The Loon Preservation Society (LPC) reports that 2019 was an average year with a reasonable number of successful nests state-wide, so we are optimistic that 2020 will result in perhaps a few chicks being raised on Conway Lake. This year the LPC has a new northern lakes field biologist, James Longo. James was most recently with the Tin Mountain Conservation Center in Albany as an avian biologist and he knows the area well and has an excellent reputation and track record. We are fortunate to have James on the team looking after our Conway Lake loons.



CAVITY NESTING DUCK BOX PROJECT

A Tin Mountain Conservation Center & Conway Lake Conservation Association Joint Effort

Three species of ducks shown here are frequent migrants that stop off at area lakes and sometimes nest and raise their brood over the summer.

Habitat loss is one of the primary reasons these species are not regular residents of Conway Lake. We would like to change that by providing nest boxes at appropriate locations along the Lake shorefront.

Each of these ducks, the Hooded Merganser, the Common Merganser, and the Wood Duck, naturally look for nest sites in trees that overhang the lake front, often adopting abandoned woodpecker cavities.

However, shorefront property owners tend to remove dead trees and use their shorefront for docks, boats, swimming and fishing activities. This human activity discourages the ducks from nesting.

Our goal is to find 10 willing property owners who wish to have a nest box on

their property and to locate it away from their human activity areas so the ducks can select their nest sites, augment them with nest material, breed, lay their eggs over a period of days, and then incubate for 30 -40 days until hatchlings appear in late May or early June.

Once hatched, the parents encourage the chicks to jump from their nest into the lake front. They are ready to swim and feed their first day but take around seven weeks before being able to start flying.

Duck pairs will often scout the lake in the fall before migration, looking for suitable nest sites for the next spring. They arrive soon after the ice is out and normally take possession in April.

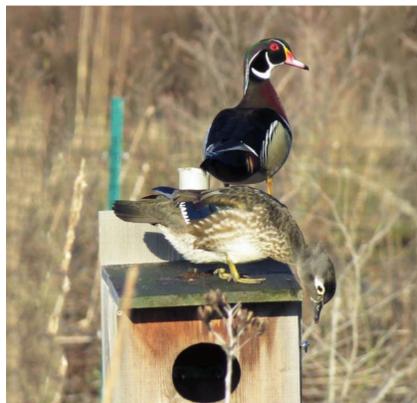
Call Bill Petry at 781-929-2021 or email at williampetry777@msn.com if interested in hosting a nest box on your lakefront property.



Duck Nest Box



Hooded Merganser - male



Wood Duck Pair on Nest Box



Common Merganser - female

LAKE HOST PROGRAM

Even with the corona virus threat facing all of us this year, the CLCA is committed to protecting our Lake from invasive plants and the harm they would do to our Lake if we were to relax and assume the boating public will not show up. We will not make that assumption and, coincidentally, the State of NH has asked us to maintain our Lake Host program and to start it earlier than usual to guard against folks seeking some early and perhaps excessive relaxation and escape. And the Lake Hosts are considered “essential” so they are free to work their normal duties while following social distancing guidelines.

Our dedicated Lake Hosts, led by Judy Capreralla, volunteered to again work inspecting boats at the town ramp, to start early in the year, and to operate in a safe manner to protect themselves and our visitors from the virus. The Program kicked off on the weekend of May 2nd, on a part time basis, and our Hosts will be present seven days a week, from before dawn until after dark, when the weather turns warm and the boaters show up.

In 2019 our Hosts identified and turned away two boaters whose boats and trailers had suspicious hitch-hikers on board. DES confirmed that the plant samples turned in were Eurasian Milfoil, a dangerous invasive and while not as prevalent as Variable Milfoil, could have been overlooked by less expert inspections.

In addition to guarding our Lake from infestations, our Hosts go beyond their job descriptions and help our visitors in a number of ways. Examples from the summer of 2019 include: Rescuing swimmers trapped by the open dam current, stopping an unwitting oil spill before it spread widely, and calming “lake rage” at the ramp that avoided possible weapons use.



Sheri Whitaker and Judy Capreralla, Awesome CLCA Lake Hosts

BOAT AND TRAILER TAGGING AND RAMP CLEANING



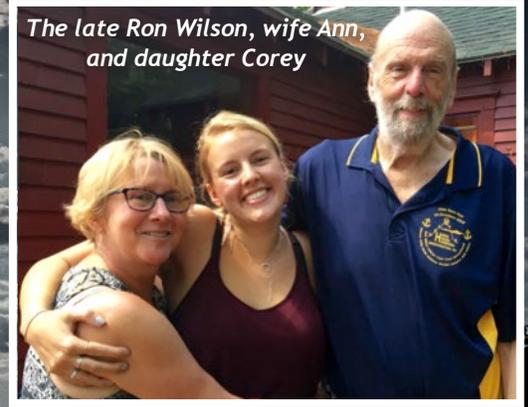
CD3 Cleaning Station with Tom O'Brien, President of NH Lakes Association

Conway Lake’s “Conway Cares In & Out” boat and trailer tagging system continued successfully in 2019. Approximately 100 boats are registered in the program and they speed the launching process for all boaters with a quick check-in with the host on duty. The program makes summer wait times shorter for everyone and makes the job of the Lake Hosts at peak times less stressful and more efficient.

Last summer, the NH Lakes Association had their portable boat cleaning station deployed to our launching area for demonstrations to boaters and town officials. The system uses no water but has the equipment to allow boaters to clean their vessels of weeds on site and is yet another tool in the defense against invasive plants. The system will be back at Conway Lake for further use and exposure mid-summer.

Moonshine by Don Yurewicz

*The late Ron Wilson, wife Ann,
and daughter Corey*



2019 TREASURERS REPORT

Total memberships increased modestly in 2019. As a result of the dues and the generous donations by our members, as well as other fund raising efforts, CLCA enjoyed another successful year from a financial perspective. Annual revenue at \$51,163 was nearly \$10,000 above budget while expenses of about \$35,000 were at budget. The surplus allowed us to increase our all-important mitigation reserve to nearly \$50,000.

The board of CLCA has long viewed invasive species as the greatest threat to the health of our Lake and the prevention of the introduction of those species into the Lake as our primary defense. Therefore, we have committed more than half of our budget to the funding of a robust Lake Host program. However, even the best efforts of our dedicated Lake Hosts cannot be a total guarantee of success. As a result, we continue to fund an on-going program of inspections by divers expert in the identification of non-native species and back this up with support of our enthusiastic volunteer team of “weed watchers” who monitor the shore line of our Lake for unusual growth.

This threat of an invasive infestation is why a healthy mitigation reserve is so important. If an invasive species is detected, it must be met with a rapid, aggressive response to have any chance of preventing it from establishing itself in the Lake. Such a response can be very expensive. An adequate and readily available source of money to fund such a response could well make the difference between success and failure.

Water quality is a prime concern as well. Therefore CLCA continues to organize volunteers to take water samples from different locations in the lake and from streams that feed into the lake. The samples are sent to The University of New Hampshire for testing. The testing and a comprehensive report of the results prepared by UNH are funded by CLCA.

Although not a major item of expense, CLCA does fund efforts to support our resident loon population as required.

Without question, the COVID-19 pandemic will make 2020 a difficult and challenging year for CLCA and for all of us individually. In spite of the situation, we expect an active season on the Lake and thus must maintain our effort to protect it. In this regard, the State of New Hampshire has designated Lake Hosts as essential workers and, therefore, we anticipate a full Lake Host program this year along with the attendant costs. With your help and support, we will continue to be successful in our lake preservation mission.

Sumner W. Jones

Sumner W. Jones, Treasurer



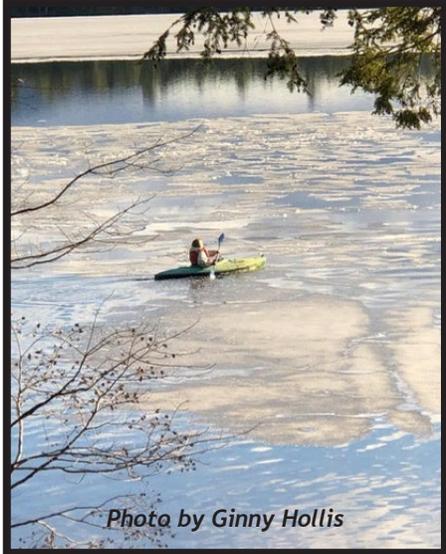
Howard West, 1938-2019. He loved the Lake.



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