



# Friends of Wilson Lake

Volume 13 Issue 3  
October 2020

## President's Statement

*"Like music and art, love of nature is a common language that can transcend political or social boundaries."*

—Jimmy Carter

I expect we all have heard our current medical, political, and racial issues described as, "unprecedented," "chaotic," and "turbulent." Indeed they are, which causes us as individuals and as organizations to reflect on our self-understanding, our values, and our goals.

Another term we hear regarding the times is "uncertain," but for FOWL our mission is clear and certain: *To preserve and protect the aesthetic qualities, the recreational value, and the purity of the water of Wilson Lake in Wilton and its watershed.* It is a treasure open to all, which transcends today's many issues.

Granted, because of the current COVID-19 epidemic, we had to cancel some of our 2020 activities such as the Academy Hill 3rd grade Loon Program, our Annual Meeting, and the free Blueberry Festival boat rides. However, we did carry on with our Courtesy Boat Inspection Program (CBI), Olivia Schanck was named this year's David Prince Memorial Scholarship winner, and we continued monitoring the clarity and dissolved oxygen levels in the lake.

Many studies have shown how an engagement with nature can have a direct impact on both our mental and physical wellbeing. We encourage you to take advantage of our most treasured asset, Wilson Lake and environs. As the Pulitzer Prize winning poet Wallace Stevens once observed: "Perhaps the truth depends on a walk around the lake."

Thanks for your continued support of FOWL.

*Rob Lively*

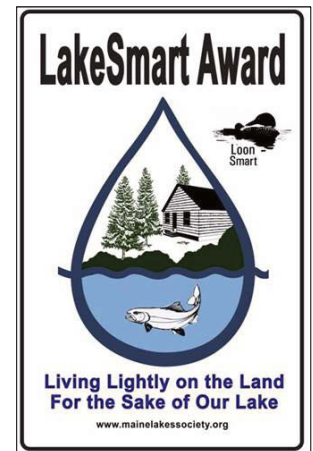
## Inside this Issue:

**Annual Meeting 2020**

**We Want Your Comments on Beautification of the Foot of Wilson Lake**

**Japanese knotweed (invasive bamboo)**

**Courtesy Boat Inspections — 2020**



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## Annual Meeting 2020

This year due to COVID-19, the FOWL Board met in May and voted not to hold an annual meeting in 2020 but instead move it to 2021. This was before many organizations decided to hold meetings via “Zoom”. Here is the motion that was unanimously approved by the FOWL Board at our May 8, 2020 meeting:

*Due to restrictions and safety measures relating to Covid-19, FOWL will not hold an annual meeting in July 2020. An extra year will be added to the terms of all the Board officers and directors. At the July 18, 2021 meeting, any Board positions that were due for renewal in 2020 will be up for election, and those positions that were previously expiring in 2021 will be voted on in 2022, thus maintaining our staggered terms of office. As stated in our by-laws, the Board may appoint people to fill any vacancies that may arise.*

Due to absence of a meeting, Wynn prepared this press release of what the meeting minutes might have presented had it actually been held. This was based upon an accumulation of committee reports and other items of interest to the membership. Since many of you may not have seen this in the *Franklin Journal* it is being presented below:

### Friends of Wilson Lake Recognizes its 31<sup>st</sup> year

On July 19th the Friends of Wilson Lake (FOWL) would normally be holding its Annual Meeting celebrating the 31st year of the organization. Due to the Coronavirus the Board of FOWL voted to suspend the 2020 meeting with all the current officers and board members remaining in place until the following year when those elections will be held on Sunday July 18, 2021. Normally at this meeting, in addition to conducting the business of electing officers, we hear reports from our standing committees. Below I will provide a brief summary of each of these committees.

The first item is the **Audubon Loon Count** which takes place on the day before our meeting. Obviously, that official count has not occurred, but from a preliminary count, our lake currently has 6 adult loons and 2 loon chicks. While we are discussing loons, the **Wayne Smith Lakes and Loons** program for Wilton’s 3rd grade students was not held this year due to the virus, but our current intention is to offer programs for both 3rd and 4th grades in the spring—subject to school availability.

Our **David Prince Memorial Scholarship** award this year went to Olivia Schanck. Olivia has been one

of our Courtesy Boat Inspectors for the past three years and will be attending University of Maine in Orono this fall.

The **Financial Report** submitted to the Board Meeting on July 19th, showed that we finished fiscal year 2019 slightly in the red, (Income \$17,075 vs. Expense \$17,754 for Net Loss of \$675). This resulted from having paid out just over \$2000 for the Courtesy Boat Monitoring program from 2018. For the current year through 6/30/2020 we are showing a Net Gain of \$4525, but this will be rectified with remaining expenses estimated at \$4500 and estimated income of \$1800. Our checking account shows a current balance of \$20,481.

Our **Water Quality** is normally assessed in two ways—**Water Clarity** and **Dissolved Oxygen** Readings. To determine **Water Quality** an instrument known as a Secchi Disk is lowered into the water until it disappears from sight. The depth at which this disk can no longer be read is compared year by year to arrive at a relative clarity reading. Wilson Lake has generally shown three-year average readings in the 17 to 18 foot range. Readings have been taken since 1974 and showed a high in 2004 of 20 feet and fell to a low of 14.1 feet in 2016. Since 2016 we have returned to over 17 feet over the past three years and our readings in 2020 indicate that this trend will continue.

**Dissolved Oxygen** is more difficult to explain. We drop a probe into the lake and take readings of temperature in Centigrade and dissolved oxygen in parts per thousand (ppm). Readings are taken every meter from the surface to the bottom of the lake – in Wilson Lake that represents about 23 meters before the probe reaches bottom and the readings become meaningless. These readings have been taken since 1974 but on a less regular basis. Dissolved Oxygen is most important to living organisms for life-needed oxygen—think fish, among other species. They are able to extract the oxygen from the water. Over the course of a summer the oxygen level naturally declines as the lake warms. When the oxygen level falls below 5 ppm, that level is generally considered so stressful that most cold-water fish will avoid these areas. In Wilson Lake since 1997 or earlier the late summer oxygen levels at 15 meters have remained above that 5.0-ppm level, making the water at that level safe for fish.

**Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI)** has been running this summer in spite of the Coronavirus. Our student monitors have been maintaining six-foot social distance and wearing facemasks and asking the boaters to inspect their boats under the guidance of our CBI monitors. So far we have inspected 566 boats





and only discovered two plants —both of which were non-invasive. The boaters have been most co-operative in assisting and we continue to have the financial support of the business community. Our sponsors have been Gary Paling Real Estate, Otis Federal Credit Union, Wilton Fish & Game, Wilson Lake Inn, Home Auto Group, J's Boat House, Life Made Products, Franklin Printing, and Calzolaio Pasta Company. Our sincere thanks to each of you for assisting in this most important effort.

**Lake Buoy Reading** is generally presented by Julia Daly and Rachel Hovel from University of Maine at Farmington. I do not have a report from them on the results over the past winter, but look for that report at a later date. I do know that they removed the buoy this spring, replaced the elements and re-employed the buoy in early June. As you may know, it resides at the deepest place in the lake and takes readings of Dissolved Oxygen and Temperature every 30 minutes throughout the year – even when the lake is covered with ice.

Our **LakeSmart** program has also been placed on hold due to the virus; however, we do expect to start the program up later this month with some new evaluations. This project evaluates lakefront property for water friendliness and if all conditions are met, a LakeSmart designation is awarded. If there should be some areas lacking, a report is given to the landowner and they are given the option to voluntarily make those revisions and be reevaluated.

**Membership** in FOWL continues to be robust in spite of the virus. Our current membership is well over 250 with expectations of exceeding 300 once again this year. Yet, since we did not meet this year, we do believe that it may impact on our future membership. If you are someone or know of someone who would be interested in working to protect Wilson Lake for future generations, please contact President, Rob Lively at [lively@maine.edu](mailto:lively@maine.edu) for information. You may also want to visit our website at: [www.friendsofwilsonlake.org](http://www.friendsofwilsonlake.org). We hope you will be able to attend our meeting next year on July 18, 2021. 🍷

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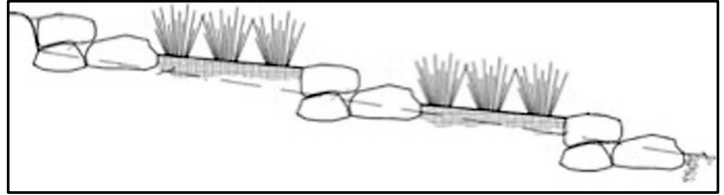
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## We Want Your Comments on Beautification of the Foot of Wilson Lake

On September 3, 2020 we heard a presentation from Sevee and Maher Engineers (SME) and Terrance J DeWan and Associates, Landscaping Architects (tjd&a) with proposals for completing the “wall” at the foot of the lake. This would be to replace the current rock wall that extends from the end of the concrete wall to the bridge at the dam. The existing wall is displayed below.



*Living Shoreline Design —by tjd&a*



*Current view of Wilton water front —Photo by tjd&a*



*Living Shoreline after development —photo by tjd&a*

They presented three concepts that will be discussed more in detail later. The first would be use of “rip rap” or layered stones designed to absorb the heavy wave action that occurs.



*Rip Rap example —Photo by tjd&a*

The second plan would be a “living shoreline” that would consist of a combination of rocks and native plantings to absorb the wave action and also provide filtering of storm water entering the lake from Lake Road.

The final choice would be a continuation of the current wall. While this might seem logical, it has two drawbacks—first it does not absorb the wave action but instead causes waves to rebound back off of the wall, creating turbulence in this swimming and boating

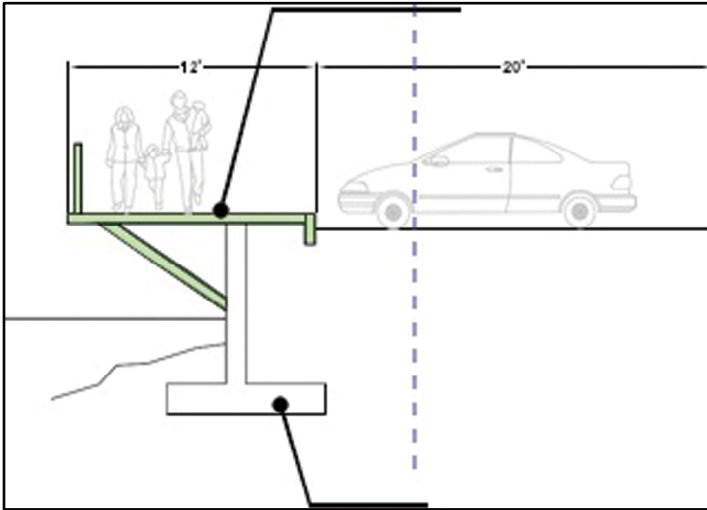
area. Second, it continues what many feel is an affront to the historic beauty of the existing rock wall.

The presenters felt that the project should take advantage of the opportunity to enhance the beauty and character of this area by improving its function as a park and extending a walkway from Bass Park along Lake Road and into town. They recognized the limitations of the current space with very limited area between the road and the current wall for maintaining the current parking area and brick path. They presented three concepts for enhancing the area. Each of these three continues the parking area on the waterfront essentially from Holmes Street to Gilbert Street and Bass Park. However the parking will be formalized to lined diagonal parking. Each of these presented alternative suggestions for **Section A**, the existing wall area and **Section B**, the area considered for new shoreline development.

For **Section A**, the second and third concepts both included a cantilevered boardwalk created by the extension of the lakefront through expanding the shoreline over the water, supported by braces into the existing wall. This cantilever approach would create additional frontage area for the boardwalk and additional parking that would not extend into Lake Road.

While this concept held significant merit in enhancing the parking area and creating a lovely walking area, residents pointed out that the concept was impractical since it would cover over the existing swimming area and preclude parents attempting to watch out for the safety of their swimming children. Consequently, the cantilevered boardwalk seems to have been dismissed entirely.





Cantilevered Design by tjd&a



Cantilevered Boardwalk as proposed by tjd&a

Concept 3 called for a similar tree lined path with an overlook at the top of the hill, but used the living shoreline for the meeting of the water and land. This took away the space for the amphitheater. Some residents questioned the use of multiple tree plantings that would interfere with the lovely view of the lake and mountains that currently exists. The engineers agreed to consider the use of shrubs and lower growth plantings for the living shoreline and considered moving the walkway to nearer the road, leaving more room for the living shoreline plantings.

All three concepts addressed the need to redefine the current swimming area and dog access point that appears to be the current concrete steps. They also all address a re-alignment of the crosswalk from Bass Park to the lake. Residents brought up the need to consider improvements to the boat launch that needs a longer ramp, more stable dock and better access to the dock. This will also be considered.

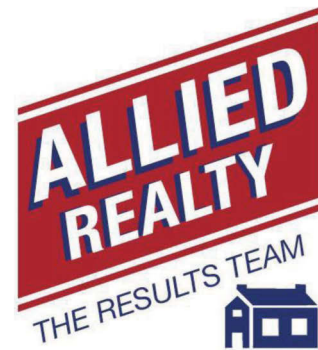
The topic of cost was not addressed since the purpose was to get residents' feedback as to which direction to go. However, when asked, the engineers did indicate that the Living Shoreline concept would be less expensive than continuing the present wall. Presumably the rip rap would also be less expensive than the wall continuation. The Town Manager, Rhonda Irish, indicated that the town is applying for a federal grant under the Land and Water Conservation

The first and only remaining option for section A, along the existing wall, calls for working with the existing limited area—which only shows 23 feet from Lake Road until the wall. The engineers indicate that we currently only have 14.5 feet from Lake Road for parking and normally 20 feet is the desired length for a parking area. They did indicate that perhaps something could be done with the 5 feet that the current rocks and benches use. But since the focus of their talk was on enhancing the area through the cantilevered approach, I did not get the idea that this had been fully considered. I look forward to their possible future enhancements for this area.

In **Section B** (from the existing wall to the bridge) offers more room for development. The area from Lake Road to the waterfront is greater, but also has some interesting potential due to its elevation. Here the second concept showed continuing the existing wall, and providing a tree lined walkway along the waterfront with the creation of an overlook and small amphitheater near the bridge, just prior to the pumping house.

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Fund that would match 50% of the cost and is also seeking for granting to assist with improvements to the boat launch area.

### **FOWL Comments on "Wall" Presentation**

On Wednesday, September 21st, Rhonda Irish, the Town Manager hosted a public presentation/Zoom meeting on the various engineering plans that have surfaced regarding repairing the retaining wall and the area around the foot of the lake. A summary of the presentation appears above.

Eight FOWL members/board members attended the Zoom meeting and participants were encouraged to share their impressions/suggestions/etc. with Rhonda and the engineering company involved. We felt it was appropriate that FOWL submit a response, as the work can have a direct and indirect impact on our mission and goals. What you see below is the collective response sent to Rhonda; it is the combined work of those of us who attended.

Reactions from the public are also welcomed. I encourage you to read the summary above and share your personal thoughts directly with Rhonda. What you see below is the "official" FOWL response.

#### ***Dear Rhonda and the Wilson Lake Wall Engineering Consultants,***

Thank you for the opportunity on Wednesday, September 23rd, to participate in a presentation/discussion of how to proceed with the repair of the Wilson Lake retaining wall at the foot of the lake, and the surrounding areas.

We would like to make the following comments/suggestions/recommendations:

\* We are the Friends of Wilson Lake (FOWL), the local lake association, whose mission is: "To preserve and protect the aesthetic qualities, the recreational value, and the purity of the water of Wilson Lake in Wilton and its watershed."

• Many of our observations, especially regarding boater and swimmer safety, are based on direct observations by our boat inspectors involved in our Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) program, where personnel are stationed at the boat ramp each summer weekend day, checking boats for invasive plants. They are our eyes and ears regarding the boat ramp and the surrounding areas.

#### **1. Public Safety: dealing with the concerns of separating swimming, boating, and dogging.**

- a. Driving on Lake Road in the summer months at the foot of the lake with cars parked and swimmers running around presents a significant

problem. Speed bumps? Pedestrian crosswalk lighted signs?

- b. Delineation of the swimming area from the boating area. This could be via marker buoys or something similar. Did someone mention a breakwater installed to ease the heavy wave action? That may be too aggressive, but would serve this purpose. FOWL did offer to purchase a rope with floats to go from the Bass Park area to the bridge to mark off a swimming area or a no-boating area. The town had a liability issue with naming this a swimming area without a lifeguard. Hence, a no-boating area or a posted "No Wake Zone" area might do the same thing.
- c. What is the place for dogs? It does not seem the swimming area is appropriate for dogs. The boat launch isn't a great place for them either, but it may be a lesser evil than the swimming area.

#### **2. Ecology of the lake. Concern with the present and potentially future continuation of untreated water entering the lake from the Lake Road area.**

- a. We believe Jeff mentioned the existing flow of untreated water into the lake and he suggested that something could be done to treat that prior to its entering the lake. We encourage such action.
- b. The Living Shoreline would seem to be a step in favor of ecology. It must be constructed by **Shoreline Certified Landscape** trained personnel, those professionals with experience with native plant design/installation on lakeshore fronts, and appropriate rip rap. Care should also be given to making it difficult for the public to traverse that Living Shoreline to access the water.
- c. We do not support the creation of an "amphitheater," since we see minimal use for it and since it becomes a source of water access that was not previously there. The present/future use of benches better serves the viewing public interests than a concrete two or three level "amphitheater."
- d. We encourage consideration of permeable pavers for the walkway ...:

<https://www.mwmo.org/learn/preventing-water-pollution/permeable-pavers/>

#### **3. Mention was made to make the swimming area ADA accessible.**

That seems to us to be difficult, although we do believe the walkway could be ADA accessible.

#### **4. The boat launch area should also be addressed with this project.**

- a. The present dock is still shaky when accessing boats, and the launch ramp needs to extend farther into the water to deal with low water times. A public safety concern.





- b. The steep ramp down to the dock, currently with no handrails, is difficult to negotiate by our older citizens and by those who have trouble walking. Is there a solution? A public safety concern.
- c. We did hear mention of a separate area at the launch site for kayaks. That would certainly avoid the interaction of kayaks and boat trailers and sounds like a good suggestion.
- d. We might also address the development of a boat wash and drain area at the boat launch site. Current CBI language states: “Clean, Drain, and Dry,” which suggests that boats should be cleaned and drained of water after use. We have no ability to do so without the water running right back into the lake. Since this may well become a future boating requirement, this would be a great time to address the issue.
- e. Parking for boat trailers is a real issue that might also be addressed with this project. We have no great suggestions for a resolution here.

**5. FOWL is here to help.**

We are pleased to assist in any way we can with this project. We have lake data going back many decades, as well as years of observations from our Courtesy Boat Inspection program. Thank you for your consideration.

*Rob Lively, President  
Friends of Wilson Lake  
[friendsofwilsonlake.org](http://friendsofwilsonlake.org)*

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## Japanese knotweed (invasive bamboo)

by Ken Sawyer, FOWL Board and Wilton Conservation Commission, August 2020.

Japanese knotweed has a colorful history. Stories about it range from scary to hilarious depending on whether you are a landowner, city manager, beekeeper, or chef. A quick history follows and then tips for its control.

Japanese knotweed (JK) is native to Japan, China and Korea where its growth is naturally controlled by native fungi, insects, and competition with other native plants. Outside Asia, however, JK lacks natural predation and competition so it quickly populates recently disturbed and open areas. It spreads easily because of its rapid metabolism, large flowering plants, and hardy roots and rhizomes. JK is listed by the World Conservation Union as a one of the world's worst invasive species. It is illegal to grow in Australia, is subject to two laws in the UK, and is now found in all but seven states in the U.S. In England, 2 billion pounds is spent annually on JK control, mortgages can be denied if it is on the property, and JK lawsuits are common among neighbors, insurance companies, and realtors. In the U.S., JK is rapidly emerging as a costly municipal and homeowner conservation problem. Maine towns and landowners are also beginning to struggle with JK as shown in the following link:

<https://wgme.com/news/local/mainers-battle-against-the-worst-invasive-japanese-knotweed>

Japanese knotweed was first introduced to the west by the Bavarian botanist Philipp von Siebold, who in turn introduced it to the U.K. at Kew Gardens in 1850. From there, it became popular as an ornamental landscape plant, eventually arriving in the U.S. in the late 1800's. More recently, beekeepers have turned to JK as a desirable late season honey source.

In New England, Japanese knotweed is easily identified by its bamboo like appearance, although it is actually a member of the buckwheat family. JK sprouts each spring from underground roots, grows rapidly in the summer into dense stands of tall stalks with large leaves, flowers prodigiously in August, then dries and dies before winter. The expansive stalk and leaf growth in the summer feeds the rhizomes and roots for the following spring.

As an aggressive invasive, it colonizes both dry habitat and waterways where its seeds float downstream to establish new colonies. Lake communities need to be particularly vigilant for such colonies to prevent further infestation. Many New England towns are already seeing major invasions along





*Invasive Japanese Knotweed* —photo by Linda Coan O’Kresik,

their highways, streams, and lakes. Unfortunately, this invasive is often spread unknowingly by contractors and town crews using loam and sand from contaminated storage sites. Invasive bamboo is extremely difficult to eradicate so, like all invasives, prevention is the best strategy. After that, control is more likely than eradication.

Japanese knotweed is already well established in Franklin County. In Wilton, three small stands were identified in Kineowatha Park two years ago that are being removed manually with good success. More importantly, there are well-established stands above the old Bass building parking lot on Canal Street, beside and behind (on top of the sand pile) the town office, and along the curve of Wilson Stream leading into East Wilton. It is difficult, if not impossible, to remove established stands which underscores the importance of watching for new growth on town and private property so it can be removed before it becomes a problem. As with all environmental issues, prevention is easier than cure

At present, the three main methods for removal are manual, cut and cover (also called smothering) and chemical. All require several years. Manual removal works best on small stands while cut and cover works for small and large stands and has the advantage of being chemical free, always an issue near waterways. Lastly, in areas not near water, some towns prefer to use herbicidal methods (usually Roundup) which requires training and repeated application. Given the above, most environmentally conscious programs now recommend the cut and cover method as the safest and most effective means of control. A quick guide to the manual and cut and cover methods follows:

**Manual Control** has three goals—to starve and remove the root system, to stop flower production, and to prevent spread of viable pieces to other areas. Manual control is never ending but each year you will see fewer and fewer plants. Guidelines for this method are:



1. **Do** cut new bamboo canes when they first sprout in April or May, again in midsummer (mid-June?), and a third time in late July to prevent flowering in August.
2. Some sources encourage digging roots, others say no. I suggest trying to get out the large “crown” root for each stand and working from there.
3. **Do** leave canes and roots in a pile onsite to dry and burn later.
4. **Do not** chip, compost, or put canes or roots in the landfill.
5. **Do not** transport flowering canes to avoid spreading seeds.
6. **Do** follow the three T’s of being timely, tenacious, and thorough. Also, prepare for ticks, as they are active during these same months.

**Cut and Cover (smothering)** has similar goals but is more aggressive and effective. Steps are:

1. Cut new as close to the ground as possible in the spring.
2. Add a layer of dirt or mulch to cover the canes to prevent ripping in the next step.
3. Cover with heavy cloth, black plastic, tarps or other material to block out light.
4. Cover the above with a top layer of mulch, rocks or other to hold it in place.
5. Leave for 4–5 years, then uncover and replant the area with native species.
6. If wanted, you can simply plant the surface layer with annuals and never uncover the pile.

The NH Department of Agriculture (reference below) has a great online manual for towns and landowners with full description and pictures of Japanese knotweed and control methods.

On the lighter side, Japanese knotweed is apparently edible, and some young entrepreneurs hire out goats to manage shoot growth. Adventurous cooks claim the taste is similar to that of fiddleheads and asparagus, and one Maine cook has published recipes for steamed knotweed, sautéed knotweed, and strawberry knotweed pie (Google Japanese knotweed Fia Fortune). I cannot vouch for their safety or taste but the pie in the picture looks delicious!

Quick references include Preventing the Spread of Japanese knotweed, Best Management Practices, New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, 2018 (an online comprehensive public works manual); the Maine Natural Areas Invasives Program website; Maine Cooperative Extension Service Bulletin #2511; and “Know your Invasives; Japanese knotweed,” Housatonic Valley Association, 2018 (online). A host of other references can be found through Google. 🍷



## Courtesy Boat Inspections — 2020

The year 2020 has created new challenges for each of us. The Courtesy Boat Inspection program was certainly one. First, we only received half of the sponsoring funding we anticipated. However, we are most appreciative for those precious sponsors who continued to support us. We did receive help early on from the following shown below: Life Made (formerly Jarden), Franklin Printing, J's Boathouse, Gary Paling Real Estate, Calzolaio Pasta Co., Otis Federal Credit Union, Wilton Fish & Game, Home Auto Group, and Wilson Lake Inn. We sincerely thank them for their support. Each received two weeks exposure at our kiosk. We also thank those many past sponsors that were not able to help us this year due to the pandemic. We look forward to having them back in the future.

created a need for significant revisions in the process we had previously used. Previously, our monitors were instructed to ask the boater to accompany them in inspecting their boats and they were to remove any and all plants from the boats.

Consequently, we encouraged the monitors to ask the boaters to inspect their own boats under the direction of the monitor. That way we could insure the proper social distancing and also allow the boater to be the sole one making contact with the boat. While this began well, it was not long before the process became too cumbersome to be practical and the monitors generally assumed the responsibility for the checking of the boats. However, since the facemask and social distancing had been already put in place, the process of the inspections under these guidelines proceeded smoothly.

I am pleased to advise that 2020 set a new record for the number of boats inspected. We inspected 1065 boats this year surpassing last year's record number of 983. The only plants found were native and not of the invasive type we are inspecting to stop from entering the lake. Thus, we are most pleased with the results. We had four top-notch inspectors this year—three were back from last year and one was new and has already applied for a position next year. We also had a full complement of adult support volunteers whose sole purpose in to provide back up to the monitors. If you would be interested in serving in this capacity next year, please contact me at: [wynnmuller@comcast.net](mailto:wynnmuller@comcast.net).



Our Sponsors —photos by Rob Lively and Sandy Muller

The second significant obstacle was the actual boat inspection process. Per state guidelines we were required to have our monitors be masked whenever checking a boat and also to maintain a six-foot social distance from the boater at all times. The monitors were also forbidden to come in contact with any boats. That

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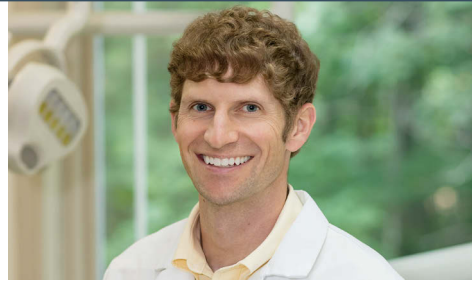
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