



# Friends of Wilson Lake

Volume 15 Issue 3

October 2022

## President's Comments – Sandy Muller, President

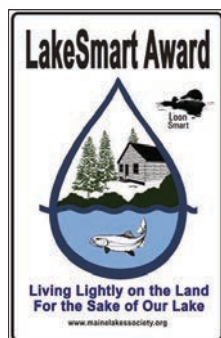
This is my first article as your President. Rob Lively has done a terrific job over the past seven years. During his service we have seen the Courtesy Boat Inspection set annual records for boats inspected—1109 in 2022 surpassed the previous record of 1065 set in 2020. Rob solidified our biweekly testing of the water for Temperature and Dissolved Oxygen and with his contacts at University of Maine, Farmington, has created the orange buoy to take these readings every thirty minutes throughout the year, recording the valuable information of how the lake changes over the months of ice cover. He created a Watershed Survey of Wilson Lake (and Pease Pond and Varnum Pond as well) that led to a Federal Grant to the Town of \$70,000 to make needed repairs to roads and culverts. But most of all Rob did it in such a friendly manner that we all enjoyed helping him to make our lake “a better place to live, work, and play.”

My goals for the next year are to follow the document called “Shaping the Future of FOWL” which we all helped to create over the winter of 2020 while we were all learning to use ZOOM to address COVID’s “Shelter in Place” standards. In doing so, we need to create strong committees and officers and include the next generation of leadership for FOWL. So, you can expect to hear from me over the year to see how you feel you can best help our organization continue to prosper. If you are getting this newsletter be prepared for a call from me.

In this letter, Wynn has given you a good look at how FOWL is doing in the seven areas suggested by Scott Williams on addressing Climate Change. Perhaps we cannot stop the changes we all see to the climate we live in, but we can look for ways to lessen its impact on Wilson Lake.

Also, in this newsletter, you will find the minutes of our Annual Meeting held on July 17th at the Wilton Lions hall. The Keynote Speaker was Adam Zemans, Executive Director of the Lake Stewards of Maine. You will also find reference to the recognition that FOWL received from the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and that Wynn and I received from the Natural Resources Council of Maine. We are very proud that others have recognized the work that FOWL does.

*Sandy Muller*



Visit our Website:  
[www.friendsofwilsonlake.org](http://www.friendsofwilsonlake.org)

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*(All articles by Wynn Muller, FOWL LakeSmart Coordinator, unless otherwise identified)*

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## Fowl Recognized For Community Service

by Rob Lively



Chamber Service Award Front Row: Renee Whitney, outgoing Chamber President, and Sandy Muller, FOWL President  
Back Row: Incoming Chamber President, Lee Nile, Wynn Muller, FOWL Treasurer, & Rob Lively, FOWL VP photo by Chamber photographer

The Friends of Wilson Lake (FOWL) are very pleased to report they received the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce 2022 Community Service Award at the Chamber Annual Meeting held at the Homestead Restaurant, Farmington, October 18, 2022. The award was unexpected, but very much appreciated!



FOWL Chamber Service Award 2022

During the award presentation the incoming Chamber President Lee Nile talked of FOWL's many efforts to insure and maintain the water quality of Wilson Lake and its watershed: monitoring oxygen levels, temperature, and phosphorous levels of the lake; the Courtesy Boat Inspection

program where boats are checked going into and out of the lake for invasive plants; community education programs at the Academy Hill School; and providing free boat rides during the Blueberry Festival and at other times. FOWL also maintains close ties with University of Maine Farmington faculty who, along with their students, provide valuable advice and service.

Congratulatory letters were also received from Senator Susan M. Collins, Congressman Jared F. Golden, and State Senator Russell Black.

The Award speaks to the great relationship that exists between the community and organizations like FOWL; that together we experience the true meaning of "Community."

## Annual Meeting 2022

Minutes by Holly Windle, Secretary  
held at Lions Hall, July 17, 2022  
with about 50 in attendance.

**WELCOME** – President Rob Lively welcomed those assembled and recognized the presence of State Senator Russell Black, who was instrumental in presenting FOWL with a Legislative Sentiment when FOWL was named Maine Lake Association of the Year in 2018. Rob presented outgoing Town Manager Rhonda Irish with a gift bag from FOWL, with gratitude for her many years of working with our organization. He noted that Wilton and FOWL had received jointly an Environmental Achievement award in recognition of the recent Watershed Survey project. He also acknowledged Shannon Smith, thanking her for many years of managing the Blueberry Festival, and presenting her with a FOWL gift bag.



FOWL Annual Meeting 2022 by Sandy Muller

He thanked the kitchen crew and board members for their work in managing this event: check-in, lunch arrangements, and more. He invited comments about this indoor location at the Lions Hall as a change from our previous Kineowatha gatherings.

**LOON REPORT** – Judy Landry announced that this year's tally for the annual Maine Audubon Loon Count was 7 adult loons, but no chicks. Rob L explained that the procedure for counting loons is that volunteers are limited to a half an hour, starting at 7 AM to navigate around the lake and locate loons.

**PRESENTATION OF DAVID PRINCE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP** — Rob Lively invited this year's winner, Sam Goodspeed and Nancy Prince to come forward as he presented Sam with a plaque. In addition to the scholarship money, he was given this personal award, as well as having his name added to the large plaque at Mt. Blue High School. Rob noted Sam's many connections to Wilson Lake, as he learned to swim there and served as a CBI monitor.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 2021 ANNUAL MEETING** – Justy Nazar moved acceptance, Judy Landry seconded, and the motion passed.



*J*Presentation of David Prince Memorial Scholarship Winner, Sam Goodspeed and Nancy Prince by Sandy Muller

**Board Members at Large (2-year):**  
Lyn Jellison, Judy Landry, Martha Lively, Mary Ryan

Sandy moved acceptance, Dennis Landry seconded, and the slate passed.

Continuing Board members (with one year remaining): Holly Windle (secretary), Wynn Muller (treasurer), Barry Hathaway, Justy Nazar, Rob Rogers, Oliva Schanck.

The meeting had periodic breaks to award door prizes.

**FEATURED SPEAKER ADAM ZEMANS  
of Lake Stewards of Maine:  
“Protecting the Health of Wilson Lake”**

Rob Lively introduced the speaker, Adam Zemans, new executive director of Lake Stewards of Maine. Rob noted his previous career in environmental health and his emphasis on citizen science. In addition to various degrees, he’s a licensed Maine Guide as well as having a black belt in Shito Ryu karate.

Presentation with PowerPoint: Adam Zemans thanked Rob, Sandy, and Wynn for giving him a pontoon boat tour of the lake and noted that FOWL’s leadership group is clearly a strength of the organization. His main message was about the importance of citizen involvement in facing the challenges of climate change. (On the screen: “It’s Up to You, but help is available.”)

**TREASURER’S REPORT** – Wynn Muller referred to the organization’s healthy balances and expressed gratitude to Barclays Bank for helping FOWL build up a reserve cushion. Norm Hurlburt moved to accept the report, Mary Ryan seconded, and the motion passed.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS** – Wynn drew attention to the materials people received at check-in. This included reports from FOWL’s various committees, as well as a newsletter from Lake Stewards of Maine and a schematic showing the configuration of monitoring devices on the FOWL buoy anchored at the deepest part of the lake. He said that some boats were seen tying up to the research buoy this summer. Because this could damage the expensive measuring equipment, FOWL posted a notice at the kiosk to try to prevent this.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND BOARD** – Sandy Muller explained that with Rob Lively’s decision not to run for re-election after seven years as president, the Nominating Committee did some soul-searching. The position of president is not a life-time commitment, but the long tenure of previous presidents may seem daunting to potential candidates. Some sort of trainee process could orient potential office holders.

Sandy has agreed to serve as president for one year (as opposed to the usual 2-year term) while the committee continues their search.

**The proposed slate:**

**President (1-year):** Sandy Muller

**Vice-President (2-year):** shared by Rob Lively and Wynn Muller

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He cited the example of a lake in Bolivia where harmful algae developed to the extent that the air nearby became toxic. He referred to Maine’s Governor’s

Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) that has moved climate change to an administrative priority. The past failures of international cooperation (COP 15 at Copenhagen in 2009, for instance) were in part due to China and the US lacking commitment at the national level for action. In Maine, drought, rising temperatures, and extreme precipitation in spring and winter create more opportunities for blue-green algae and invasive aquatic plants. So lakes are particularly at threat.

Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM), he explained, has been successful in expanding water quality monitoring and advocating for vigilance about invasive plants. He said that 95% of the state’s lake data is provided by volunteers. LSM’s work and these monitoring activities provide a sort of insurance policy, helping communities avoid the catastrophic cost of remediation. LSM could train Wilson Lake volunteers to do a plant survey of our lake and provide training through their Invasive Plant Patrol program.

He also mentioned “Maine Won’t Wait,” a 4-year climate action plan. Grants are available to support community resilience for facing the impact of climate change. He recommended that FOWL look into this, as it could relate to the LakeSmart, CBI, or other programs.

**Questions** related to the use of alum to combat phosphorus, and metaphyton.

Rob Lively clarified that metaphyton (which does appear in Wilson Lake as the summer advances) looks like green cotton candy under the water and is not toxic. He also explained that FOWL volunteers do regular Secchi disk readings (which Mary Ryan has been doing for more than 35 years), as well as testing for dissolved oxygen and taking temperature readings. He also announced that Mt. Blue TV will be doing a half hour show about FOWL which will feature many of our programs.

**BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL** — Sandy Muller, the newly elected president, explained that FOWL was not doing boat rides this year as it conflicted with the fireworks set up. She said FOWL would have an info booth with a loon display and t-shirts for sale, on Main Street near the Farmers Market.

**GIFT TO ROB** — Wynn Muller commended Rob Lively for his seven years as Board president, guiding us through long-range planning and the development of three committees to address Lake Science, Public Relations/Outreach, and Board & Membership Devel-

opment. As a thank you from FOWL, he presented Rob with a clock shaped like Wilson Lake.



Cake for Rob Lively, retiring as FOWL President by Sandy Muller

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Holly Windle



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## Wilton couple recognized as 'Clean Water Champions'

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**W**ILTON – In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, the Natural Resources Council of Maine has selected 100 people who have been leaders in protecting the rivers, lakes, and coastal waters of Maine.



Wynn & Sandy Muller Daily Bulldog photo

Wynn and Sandy Muller of the Friends of Wilson Lake in Wilton are two of these “Clean Water Champions” and their contributions will be recognized at a ceremony in Lewiston on Sept. 29. The full list of Champions is available on the NRCM website.

Since their arrival in Wilton in 1987, the Mullers have been a dynamic duo in promoting the health of Wilson Lake through the Friends of Wilson Lake (FOWL) and at the state level through Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM) and Maine lakes. Under Wynn Muller’s presidency, FOWL established a Courtesy Boat Inspection program in 2003, and in 2022 checked for invasive species on 1,109 boats coming in and out of Wilson Lake. They helped coordinate a 2016 Watershed Survey for Wilson Lake and its watershed—and then worked with the town of Wilton on remediation projects. They helped develop/install a research buoy in Wilson Lake, a collaboration with University of Maine at Farmington that measures temperature and dissolved oxygen year-round.

They continue to educate and persuade landowners of the importance of having a buffer on lakeshore property. Their work brought Wilson Lake Gold LakeSmart status in 2009 (40% of lakeshore properties currently certified—and that percentage keeps increasing).

For 35 years, they have provided inspiration, information, and encouragement about what needs to

be done to keep Maine lakes healthy. Their leadership, encouragement of other organizations and individuals, and their continued emphasis on learning more and doing better make them models of commitment for protecting and preserving our lakes for the future.

The Clean Water Act, which passed on Oct. 18, 1972, was spearheaded by former Sen. Edmund Muskie, who was appalled at the polluted state of some of Maine’s rivers.



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## Climate Change on Wilson Lake

*Adapted by Wynn Muller from an article in the Lake Stewards of Maine publication, "Water Column" by Scott Williams, Executive Director*

**W**e have heard more about global warming and climate change over the past 50 years that it seems to be one of those things we always hear about but can do nothing to resolve. I know I have been guilty of wondering what I can do other than listen to the news about mud slides, fires in the mountains, hurricanes, flooding, etc. It's true there is little we can do to stop the impact of climate change on the planet. However, Scott Williams has an article in the Water Column of last October that deals with: What we can do to mitigate the impact of climate change on our lakes. Lakes are complex ecosystems and the dynamic interaction of biogeochemical elements add to the complexity of predicting how individual lakes will respond to the potential impact of climate change. He states: "simple, easily obtainable, inexpensive, but highly valuable data will continue to be essential to predicting how lakes respond to climate change." He offers the following seven simple ways which we can help our lake and I have added my comments as to how FOWL is doing in each of these 7 areas.



Rob Lively taking Secchi Disk Reading by Sandy Muller

**1. Continue to use your Secchi Disk:** This continues to be one of the most valuable and universally accepted methods of evaluating the clarity of lake assessment. They are effective in identifying the short-term effect such as Algal blooms but also can be impacted by storm events such as drought, heavy rain, strong wind, and fluctuation in temperature by increasingly severe weather. It is especially critical to track any period when the Secchi readings approach the 2.0 meter "severe algal bloom threshold, below which toxic conditions may occur."

At FOWL we have great data dating back to the early 1970's of our Secchi readings mostly due to the efforts of Mary Ryan and her support personnel. We saw the result of these data when we were put on the "Watch List" by DEP in 2015 due to our declining Secchi readings. That allowed us to qualify for a federal grant of \$70,000.

**2. Carefully monitor the lake temperature and dissolved oxygen levels:** Lake surface temperatures have reached and sustained historic highs in recent years. This is likely to have profound negative impact on diverse flora and fauna in lake ecosystems.

We at FOWL have been tracking the monthly changes in temperature and DO over the past 10 years and the readings being taken by UMF at the Orange Buoy near Kinneowatha Park which are taken every 30 minutes throughout the year – including winter months.

**3. Track the annual ice out dates:** The earlier ice out dates that are occurring on all Maine lakes makes for a longer growing season for the lake resulting in higher lake temperature and potential for algal blooms.

We have data on ice out data going back to 1889 thanks to the work of the Wilton Fish and Game club. These data show a steady trend toward earlier ice out dates over the years from about April 29th to April 22nd. While this does not seem significant, to a lake with a very long "Life Expectancy" the addition of an extra week growing season in the spring (and similar trends in the fall) can have a drastic impact.

**4. Document Extreme Weather:** Documenting any extreme weather conditions that impact the lake can be most helpful. Many may be local and not experienced by the entire state. This is especially true for








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heavy rain events which may be strictly local and not even experienced by nearby water bodies.

FOWL has done nothing to document such extreme events. We need to create a committee to do so. The first task might be to create a list of what we mean by extreme weather events—high water, low water, hurricanes, blizzards, etc. Then it would be good to attempt to retrieve past data. The records of the Town Water Division would be one place to start along with the county (or state) weather division.

**5. Document local response to the extreme weather events:** Extreme weather events can have considerable impact on culverts and ditches. Many of these were created years ago and did not anticipate the impact of severe weather as is being experienced due to climate change. Also, the plans for erosion control for both roads and shoreline may be adversely impacted by extreme weather. Periodic inspections of the watershed after extreme events can be most helpful in identifying areas needing remedial repair.

Once again, FOWL is not set up to make surveys such as this following extreme weather. It would seem that we could refer to our last watershed survey and create a driving assessment of the watershed to be conducted after each extreme event documented in #4 above.

**6. Be on the lookout for Aquatic Invaders:** A warming climate will likely lead to an expansion of the range for aquatic invaders. Plants and animals that historically not been able to survive in Maine waters may now be able to survive with the warming temperatures.

The Lake Stewards of Maine have created “Plant patrols” which train individuals to conduct surveys of the lake identifying the plants found in each sector of the lake. We have never undertaken such a patrol, but it has been frequently discussed. We do have some historic data based upon surveys taken by Dan Buckley and his interns in the early 2000’s. Hence such plant patrols, would have a base point from which to work.

**7. Use tools to document your observations:** The Lake Stewards of Maine has created the “Field Guide to Aquatic Phenomena” app which allows users to identify and take photos of any unusual phenomena observed in the lake. While the app has high resolution photos to help in the identification process, your photos can also be submitted via this app directly to the LSM for assistance in the process.

Again, FOWL has never made use of this app but if paired with the plant patrol mentioned in #6, this would be a wonderful new area for our involvement. Now we just need you to step up and volunteer. 📷

## A FOWL Documentary

by Rob Lively



**W**e are excited to report that FOWL, in cooperation with MtBlue Community Access TV, will be creating a documentary on FOWL's work—its efforts with regard to Wilson Lake, the watershed, and our community. It will include interviews, historical and contemporary photographs, and an engaging narrative. When completed, it will be available on the MtBlue TV website (<https://mtbluetv.org>)

Do you have lake pictures and/or stories you would like to share for the documentary? If so, please contact Rob Lively at [lively@maine.edu](mailto:lively@maine.edu).

Thank you!  
Rob 📷

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## Loon Rescue

Article adapted by Wynn Muller from Biodiversity Research Institute Website



Loon being rescued by Monmouth Fire Dept. Biodiversity Website

**T**oward the end of the summer and into fall months, loon chicks are taught to take off from the lake and to fly. I am sure that those of you living on the lake have observed this action many times. Loon juveniles are not able to fly until they are 11 to 12 weeks of age. As the winter ice approaches, we frequently question what can be done if the chick is a slow learner and is trapped in the ice before it can gain flight? The answer I have heard from both Wardens and biologists is that this is part of the natural process and that nothing can be done about it because a “rescued loon” requires too much open water over the winter to survive. Here is an example of how wrong that advice can be.

In early January, 2022 a loon was identified as trapped in the ice on Tacoma Lake in Monmouth. The Monmouth Fire Department was notified and they responded to the task. The loon was about a quarter-mile from shore and it took the firefighters over two hours to complete the rescue. Avian Haven, a rehabilitation center for wild birds reached out to the Monmouth Fire Department and took charge of the rescued loon. I called Diane Winn, Executive Director of Avian, and I learned how wrong I was. She said: We had at least 6 rescued loons last winter. We X-ray them, band them, take blood samples and determine they are healthy to be released. We then take them to the coast of Maine and turn them loose. They would normally stay along the coast of Maine should they

have not gotten caught in the ice.” The juvenile loon will stay in salt water for two to four years before they return to their breeding grounds. 🐦



Rescued loon carried by Monmouth Fireman Biodiversity Website





## Loon Translocation

*Adapted by Wynn Muller  
from Biodiversity Research Institute Website*

In 2013, BRI began a study aimed to strengthen and restore Common Loon populations within their former ranges. In 2015 a female loon chick was translocated from its breeding location of Adirondack Park in

From 2017 through 2019 six adult loons returned to the lake area in Mass to which they were translocated. Overall, 24 loon chicks have been successfully moved from New York or Maine to southern Mass. Similar programs are being conducted in the West (Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho) and also the Midwest (Minnesota).



*Relocation Chambers to house loons being Translocated photo from Biodiversity Website*

New York to Assawompsett Pond in southeastern Massachusetts. That location is off I-495 South about equal distance between Plymouth and Fall River, so that is getting quite southerly. This same loon returned to this region in 2018, formed a territorial partner, nested, and successfully hatched a chick in Fall River, Mass. The identification was made through color banding and marks the first confirmed nesting pair in southern Mass in more than a century.



*Loon Translocation, captive loon being fed fish dropped through PVC pipe to mimic splash of fish hitting water as occurs in the wild photo from Biodiversity Website*

The process of translocation involves multiple teams conducting population surveys, the capture, transport, and safely rearing of the chicks in the new environment. While translocating bird species to recolonize their former range is an accepted conservation practice, this project was the first to be conducted for a loon species.



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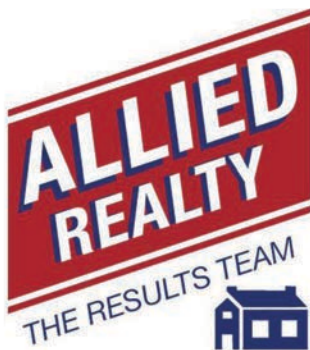
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