



President's Comments – Sandy Muller, President

First, let me thank all you wonderful members who have already renewed your membership in FOWL. We will attempt to enclose a renewal application form for those who have not yet renewed, but the initial response has been most wonderful and appreciated.

In this issue, Wynn continues to address the need for our Watershed Survey this fall. He mentions that the serious disruption of our climate as noted throughout the country requires even more diligence to protect our lake. He mentions that Scott Williams will be speaking at our 35th Annual Meeting on July 21st at the Lions Building and his topic will be "Climate Change and its effect on Maine Lakes".

Wynn also mentions the Maine Lakes and Lake Stewards of Maine joint conference on June 21st being held in Farmington at UMF starting at 8:30 am. I am the "Facilitator" of this conference, so we want to have a great turnout from FOWL. We will provide a reimbursement for your registration at the early registration fee, since they provide considerable lake education to attendees. Here is a link to register for this conference: www.lakeconferencemaine.org The keynote address will update the "Economic Impact of Maine Lakes on Maine's Economy". This is a topic interesting to all. However, the most benefit of this conference is the mingling with other "lake people" to see what they are doing.

You will also find an interesting article on Loons and another on the state's stocking of Wilson Lake over the summer. That is a topic of which I knew nothing but I plan to visit the "Rearing Station" at Embden Pond this summer to check it out. And you will find a revised "Lake Map". These are kept current through the effort of Rob Rogers. Thanks Rob.

Last issue I mentioned the need for adult support for the Courtesy Boat Inspection. You need to commit for only one weekend, and that commitment is only to be on call for the boat monitor for their questions or concerns over that weekend—then you are done! If each of us covers just one weekend, then no one has to be "on call" for the entire summer.

Please phone me at 860-604-0424

or send me an email that you will help at: sandymuller@comcast.net. This is our most visible project and one that we want to continue to display to the town and state. Our use of adult support is unique in the state and one of which I am most proud because it has so many of you involved, even if only in a small way.

Sandy Muller

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

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Sunset on Wilson Lake by Jody Frost

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Watershed Survey

by Wynn Muller



Watershed Survey 2016 Jen Jespersen

In the last issue of this Newsletter, we wrote of a Watershed Survey for 2024 with more information to come with this edition. We explained that a watershed consisted of the area surrounding a lake from which all rain falling within this area will ultimately come to rest in that lake. This is due to the gravitational pull of these waters to its lowest point which happens to be that lake. With Wilson Lake that watershed encompasses approximately 26 square miles primarily in Wilton and Temple but also including area to the north and west of these towns. The watershed areas for Pease Pond and Varnum Pond are much smaller in area.

The purpose of a watershed survey is to identify areas of potential pollution entering the lake that might lead to the growth of algal blooms. Once these areas are identified they can be addressed for remedial actions to correct the concern and hopefully mitigate the problem. Much of the pollution comes from runoff of rainwater as it flows over exposed soil. The mitigation actions generally consist of reducing the exposed land and creating methods of treating the runoff so that it will be absorbed by the land before it has a chance to enter the lake.

The question was asked as to why we plan to conduct another survey since one was just done in 2016. Watershed surveys are only good for a period of time since the nature of the watershed changes over time. Consequently, under recommendations of the Department of Environmental Protection, watershed surveys should be done every 8 to 10 years. Our last survey was done 8 years ago, but it was the first done on Wilson Lake since 1994, or 20 years ago. Also, the current Winter has demonstrated the impact of climate change on the United States throughout the entire country. Maine and Wilton were not left out of this impact of climate change. In Wilton, we have had considerable snow which is normal for Maine. However,

our winter temperatures have varied such that while the lake froze over, the thickness of the ice was of great concern to all potential ice fishing.

In this issue we plan to address the areas of cost, needs for the survey and how you can assist us with the effort. You might want to seek out our last survey. There are copies in the town library, the town office or available through FOWL. The actions needed for conducting a survey are: 1) Form a Steering Committee to determine the focus of the survey and secure the funding, 2) Prepare for the survey by securing and training volunteers, prepare letters to watershed residents and publicize the process, 3) Conduct the survey and compile the data, 4) Prepare reports from the survey and make recommendations, 5) Prepare for the distribution and outreach of the survey.

The previous survey was conducted under the professional leadership of Jen Jespersen of Ecological Instincts. This year we have once again sought the valuable knowledge and assistance of Jen. She has provided projections on the method and cost for us to consider. Under her initial projection, we would conduct the survey in the fall over a three-day period. She would provide us with technical leaders for each of these days and we would need 3–4 volunteers for each of the days. In addition, FOWL would be responsible for providing an updated lake landowner mailing list and the cost of printing and mailing the landowner letters. We are also responsible for providing volunteers as needed. The mailing will target all shoreline residents.

The cost for the survey will be approximately \$13,000 in 2024 with some additional cost in subsequent years for the implementation of the results of the survey. We have received a donation from a member of \$5,000 so we will need to arrange for the remaining cost of \$8,000. That can come from the town, from grant or from member donations. We will find the money over the next summer.

Over the course of this summer, we will need to prepare a mailing list of the residential shoreline addresses for Wilson Lake, Pease Pond and Varnum Pond. Those for Wilson and Pease will be relatively easy since they are all within the Wilton town limits. However, for Varnum, we will need to access the Temple directory as well. If you have access to Temple, let me know as we could use the help. 🙏

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Loons in the News

by Wynn Muller

with help from Maine Lakes and Maine Audubon

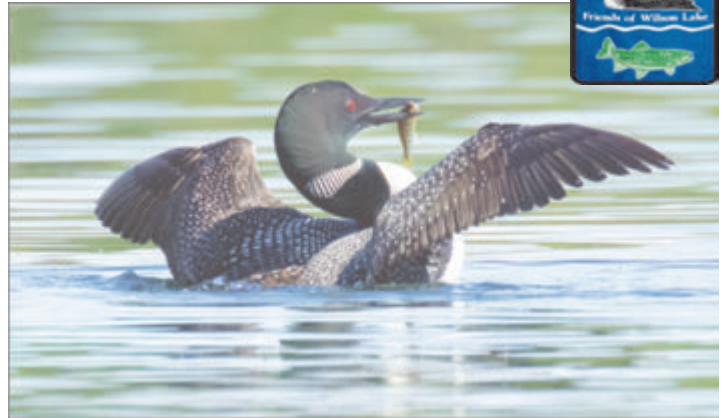
An incident that highlighted how volunteer can help loons survive and thrive occurred on Lake Auburn. As reported by Maine Lakes, some volunteers who paddle regularly on Lake Auburn noticed an adult loon with a problem. The loon was a parent trailing a chick and upon closer inspection, the boater realized the loon had fishing tackle embedded in the web of its foot. They promptly sent word to Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) in Portland. (This is the group that does the Wayne Smith Loons and Lakes Program for our third graders at Academy Hill School.) BRI arrived within 24 hours and promptly captured the loon, removed the tackle, provided a health check and released the loon so she could continue to care for her chick.



Loons with Babies by Wayne Smith

Entanglement from improperly disposing of fishing tackle or monofilament line continues to be a leading cause of death to loons. The fishing line is invisible to loons in the water and too often these incidents with loons go unnoticed. Even when reported, they do not always end happily like this one. The key is to prevent the fishing line or tackle from entering the water in the first place. We have a repository at the town dock for all to place used fishing line so that it will not enter the water. It often is full. Should you notice that it needs to be emptied, please call the town office and let them know.

Maine Audubon reports good news. For many years, lead poisoning had been the major cause of loon deaths. Loons commonly ingest small rocks from the bottom of the lake to aid their digestion. If there happens to be lead tackle also among the small rocks, it is also ingested causing the loon to become poisoned. A bill introduced in 2013 prohibited the sale of small-sized lead sinkers and jigs has had a positive effect over the past 10 years. However, that bill did not apply to painted lead gear which is common. New legislation is needed to expand the coverage to these



Loon with Fish by wayne Smith

painted items. Meanwhile, lead poisoning has dropped to the second most common cause of death of loons behind collision with boats as the present greatest cause. I do not believe this is due to greater impact with boats, but instead due to lower rates of lead poisoning. Looks like we still have a way to go in both fishing tackle and responsible boating. 🎣

Climate Change and Watershed Survey

by Wynn Muller

In the October 2022 issue of this newsletter, I provided an article by Scott Williams, former Executive Director of Lake Stewards of Maine on the impact of climate change on Wilson Lake and what we could do to lessen that impact. I believe we all agree that climate change is occurring when the “Breaking News” each night has weather conditions receiving headlines before wars in the Ukraine and the Gaza Strip. The mud slides, flooding, wildfires, tornadoes and even that atmospheric river have certainly brought the topic to the forefront of our lives. Scott listed a number of things we could do to mitigate this effect. He suggested we continue to use our Secchi Disk to assess water clarity and also continue to monitor the lake temperature and dissolved oxygen levels which we do biweekly. He also recommended we continue tracking ice-in and ice-out dates and keep on with the Courtesy Boat Inspection Program to continue to fight to keep invasive plants from our lake. All of those we do regularly. He also suggested we document extreme weather and also local response to extreme weather and finally that we use tools to record our observations, suggesting the use of the “Field Guide to Aquatic Phenomena” which Lake Stewards have created. This year would be a great time to begin such documentation with this guide. Oh, I should also remind you that **Scott Williams** will be the guest



speaker at our Annual Meeting this year on July 21st at 1:00 at the Lions Hall. (See related article elsewhere)

You might ask how this goes along with a watershed survey. Let's examine some of these topics. First, look at the ice-in and ice-out numbers. As mentioned in the October 2022 newsletter our numbers go back to 1889 and show that the earlier ice-out and later ice-in data have created about one week longer of "growing season" for algae. This is also a week longer for the dissolved oxygen to be used up by the algae and depleted for use by cold water fish. Consequently, we must be much more vigilant in keeping algae from growing and using up this oxygen. The only way to accomplish this is by reducing the flow of pollution and nutrients into the lake over the summer. The survey will identify these sources of pollution so that we can remediate them. The use of Secchi Disk will also show a lesser depth reading (less clarity) if pollution is allowed into the lake. This goes hand in hand with the above cited growth of algae and potential for algal blooms. All in all, with climate change which is creating two items 1) warmer temperature in the lake and 2) more serious storms creating significantly more water running off into the lake, we must take more serious action to avoid its getting into the lake with the pollution it carries.



Scott Williams
by Sandy Muller

However, do not only listen to me. Come to our Annual Meeting on July 21st and hear Scott Williams' presentation on the topic. In essence, like everything lake related, an "ounce of prevention" goes a long way.

How Valuable are Maine's Lakes?

by Wynn Muller with help from Maine Lakes

Maine lakes are credited with being one of the state's top economic drivers, and rightfully so. Tourist dollars are vital to employment and tax revenue and bring an estimated 5 billion dollars to the state each year in direct and indirect sales to the state. Overall, the economic value of the state's Great Ponds is estimated at over \$11 billion annually in today's dollars. But that value is woefully out of date. It was first generated by an economic analysis by the Great Ponds Task Force established in 1995 to develop a strategic management plan that addressed emerging lake issues. In the past 25 years, there have been significant changes on the economic landscape. Climate change, invasive species, property values (and taxes), water clarity, and recreational expenditures all look very different today. The \$11 billion figure has been adjusted from 1995 dollars, but it is built on an outdated economic framework..

A few years back, Dr. Adam Daigneault, Associate Professor of Forest Policy and Economics at the University of Maine, led a new study with his student Melissa Genoter and Susan Gallo, Executive Director, Maine Lakes. That study updated the original study using similar categories allowing for a systemic comparison between the studies. "I'm excited to see how things have changed," said Genoter. "There have been a lot of initiatives over the past 25 years, and I'm curious to see how these have affected water quality and economic value of Maine Lakes." The results are in, but they have not yet been announced. Dr. Daigneault will be a featured speaker at the Maine Lakes and Lake Stewards of Maine joint conference scheduled for the University of Maine at Farmington on June 21st. Please look elsewhere in this letter for more details on this conference.



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Maine Lakes & Lake Stewards of Maine Annual Conference (June 21st)

by Wynn Muller and Sandy Muller, Conference Facilitator

This conference was conducted jointly last year with great success at China Lake. This year it will be much closer at UMF. The day will start with a breakfast mixer at 8:30 with lake activists from many local lakes as well as staff from both organizations. The Keynote Speaker is Adam Daigeault, Associate Professor of Forest Policy and Economics at the University of Maine, Orono and Melissa Genoter, soon to be a graduate of UMO. They will present the results of a three-year study evaluating the role of lakes in our state's economy. (See article elsewhere in the letter). We will also hear from Matt Scott, Plenary Speaker, who is a retired bi-



Adam Daigeault
UMO staff photo

ologist and long-time clean water advocate. Matt will speak about the recent history of our lakes and the ways we can "love them to death".

There will also be many speakers discussing the following topics:

- The new "Lake scorecard" project
- Emerald Ash Borer and its implications for lakeshores
- Management of trees in the shoreland zone, especially after storms and blowdown events
- Ways to strengthen Maine's resilience to invasive species
- Ways municipalities can overcome barriers to water quality protection
- The unique history and relationship between towns and lake organizations
- Folklore, natural sciences, outdoor education and how they weave together

Note: The conference is offered to LakeSmart residents at a discounted rate. Are you LakeSmart yet? If not, you should be. See article on the Watershed Survey above. We hope to see you at this local conference.

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Do We Stock Fish in Wilson Lake?

by Rob Rogers and Wynn Muller

This spring Rob Rogers suggested we provide an article on the fish stocking program for Wilson Lake, if any existed. I must admit that I had never considered that topic and was totally unaware that any state stocking was done. I was wrong. Per Elizabeth Latti, Fisheries Resource Supervisor, “We stock Wilson Pond above the dam. The pond is stocked annually with 1,300 Brook Trout in the spring and 1,100 in the fall. The pond is also stocked annually with 300 Landlocked Salmon.” I have learned that the Department of Inland Fisheries also stock Varnum Pond with Brook Trout and Landlocked Salmon and Wilson Stream with Brook Trout.

The stocking comes from the eight hatcheries throughout the state with those for Wilton most likely coming from the Hatchery at Embden, since it is the closest to Wilton. The Embden Hatchery is not really a “hatchery” since it does not have an on-site capacity to incubate or hatch eggs. Instead, fry or fingerlings



Embden Hatchery ME Fisheries

are transferred to Embden from other hatcheries to be reared at the “Embden Rearing Station”. The facility rears Brook Trout and Landlocked Salmon with an annual production of 260,000 catchable fish (greater than 95,000 pounds). The Embden facility features a “round tank” fish culture pavilion that contains 30



Landlocked Salmon ME Fisheries

stainless steel tanks that are 20 feet in diameter and average just under 3 feet in depth. The station features two supply pipelines, ultraviolet light disinfection of influent water, and micro screen filtration to improve effluent water quality. Water for the rearing station is gravity fed from Embden Pond through dual intakes which allows for temperature control. The station can be viewed by the public but you are advised to call first.

The stocking at Wilson Lake is done by a truck from the shore and anyone who happens to be at the dock is welcome to attend, however, the exact time of the stocking is not exactly predictable. The spring stocking is to support open water fishing and consists of fish averaging 9-10 inches. The fall stocking is to support winter fishing and the fish are somewhat bigger, about 12 inches. The fish stocking is to maintain a healthy number of native fish.

They are intended to provide a supplement for natural reproduction in cases where that is insufficient. This generally occurs when there is not suitable spawning and nursery habit or when there is an overwhelming presence of predator or competitive fish. The state continuously monitors the biological impacts of the stocking and never stock waters that naturally produce healthy numbers of wild fish.



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FOWL 35th Anniversary Meeting (July 21st)

by Wynn Muller

This year represents the 35 year of Friends of Wilson Lake. We were founded in 1989. For this occasion, we plan to have our meeting with a catered meal – so you will not need to bring your “favorite pot luck” as we have in the past. The meeting will be held at the Lions Building (next to the Police and Fire Department) **beginning at 1:00pm on July 21st**. We expect to have many dignitaries in attendance. Our featured speaker will be Scott Williams, former Executive Director of Lake Stewards of Maine. Scott had been the Executive Director of Lake Stewards since it transitioned from state government to become an in-



Kayaks of Wilson Lake by Sue Atwood

dependent nonprofit organization in the mid 1990’s. He is a member of Maine’s Task Force on Invasive Species and has served on numerous technical advisory committees in the development of lake water quality standards. FOWL sends our Secchi readings and CBI plant finds to the Lake Stewards of Maine.

Scott will be speaking on the impact of climate change and the effect it is having on Maine lakes. While many see the impact of climate change on coastal areas and rivers (think of the Mississippi River being so low this past season that boats were unable to dock at their normal sites), Maine’s lakes are also at risk for the warming temperatures. (See article elsewhere in this letter.) Williams will discuss the implication of climate change that may include more frequent algal blooms and proliferation of invasive species amongst other impacts. You will want to hear his talk and ask him your many questions.



Naturally, we will also elect new officers, hear reports from our committees and meet the new town manager as well as our David Prince Memorial Scholarship winner, yet to be determined. I hope you will be able to join us to celebrate our 35th year.

Twenty Years of David Prince Memorial Scholarships, Meredith Fast, 2007

by Holly Windle, FOWL Secretary

FOWL is celebrating twenty years of making an annual scholarship award to a graduating senior at Mt. Blue High School. The David Prince Memorial Scholarship winners are not just names on a plaque at the school, as we showed in the previous FOWL newsletter with an article about Scott Harris, the first winner in 2004.

Of the 21 winners from 2004-2023 (there was a tie in 2017), the gender breakdown is fairly even. Meredith Fast, the fourth winner (2007) was the first young woman to receive the award. Like Scott Harris, she made her career in education.



Meredith Fast McReynolds & family McReynolds friend



Meredith says that, with both parents being teachers, she initially resisted going into that field. She majored in German studies at Colby College, and spent two years in Austria, working as an English Language assistant. She was placed in Denver through the Teach for America program, and worked for nine years with elementary and middle school children. As a science teacher for early grades, she saw the value of nutrition education and food lessons. This led to her current job as a wellness champion, helping Denver schools through “be well Health and Wellness Initiative”, a non-profit organization that helps schools, families, and communities develop healthy activities and policies to support physical activity and better mental health.

Meredith met her husband, Matthew McReynolds, a Colorado native, through their shared educational

work. While Meredith serves as School Wellness Project Manager for “be well”, working outside the school system, Matthew’s work is also focused on childhood nutrition, physical activity, and parental engagement. And parental engagement has become even more important in their lives recently with the birth of their son Nolan.

Meredith and her husband love to escape to the mountains, “among the tall trees.” She adds, “Wooded areas make me feel more at home.” Back in Wilton, Meredith’s mother, Kim Fast, feels she’s lost her daughter to Colorado, but she hopes for frequent visits, letting her grandson see the beauty of Maine. Little Nolan might resist his parents’ educational careers, but presumably not their appreciation of nature. 🍷

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