

Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond Association

WWW.PLEASANTLAKEANDPARKERPOND.ORG

SUMMER 2019 NEWSLETTER

Dear Members of the Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond Association and others who enjoy our lakes:

It was so nice that many of you were able to attend our Annual Meeting last July. Besides getting reports about invasive plants, the new dam, the loons and our new water temperature buoy from our members we heard an interesting presentation by Scott Williams from the Maine Volunteer Lakes Monitoring Program on the state of our two lakes. It is a good sign that the clarity of Pleasant Lake was more than 9 meters all last summer. His presentation let us know that although our lakes are some of the clearest and therefore cleanest in the State of Maine, the environment is fragile and everything could change quickly. We must be careful, active watchdogs for our lakes and continue to monitor them to be sure they stay as pristine as they are now. This will only happen if we all work together to protect Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond.

ANNUAL MEETING

Do come and join others to learn more about our lakes!

WHEN: Saturday, July 20, 2019 at 9:30 am

WHERE: 940 Meadow Road (next to the Casco Post Office)

Speaker: Lee Dassler, Executive Director of the Western Foothills Land Trust

We are delighted to welcome Lee Dassler who will talk about our lakes as part of the region's greater Sebago Lake watershed and the work which is being done to ensure it remains stable.

Lee has been the Executive Director of the Western Foothills land Trust for 25 years. The Land Trust is dedicated to the conservation and protection of nature ecosystems, farm and forest lands, watersheds and scenic landscapes for the benefit of wild and human communities in the Western Foothills of Maine.

Lee, who received her Masters' Degree from Columbia University in Historic Preservation, has many interests including theater, carpentry and architecture. Lee was the founder and Executive Director of the Mclaughlin Garden in South Paris, Maine.

The New Dam

We are pleased to report that the new dam is now in its second full year of operation and is performing as designed. The town of Casco has managed the water flow very competently throughout the year's seasonal water level fluctuations with the objective of maintaining as stable a summer water height as the elements will allow. High water can be damaging and last year's lack of rain was a challenge, but expectations are to keep within a 6 inch tolerance range if nature reasonably cooperates. With the control gate working well, we are off to a good start.



CONTACT and INFORMATION

Here are ways to reach the Pleasant Lake Parker Pond Association:

Mail: PO Box 419, Casco, ME 04015

Phone: Anne Fritts (207) 627-4605, summer and (973) 538-5409 winter

Website: www.pleasantlakeandparkerpond.org

Third Year Readings from the Water Column Temperature Buoy on Pleasant Lake

Our thanks go again to Art LeBlanc and Peter Barber for setting out our temperature buoy in 2018 and removing it in the late fall. They will do the same for the summer of 2019. We continue to monitor the temperature of Pleasant Lake to be sure that warm and cold waters mix to keep it healthy for wildlife which live in the lake. Art and Peter would love other volunteers to help them with this project. Please contact us if you would like to help on this important project which will show trends over the years and alert us to problems in our lake.

ICE IN AND ICE OUT 2016–2019

	Ice In	Ice Out	Total Ice Days
2018–2019			
Parker Pond	Nov. 29, 2018	April 20, 2019	143
Pleasant Lake	Dec. 12, 2018	April 22, 2019	131
2017–2018			
Parker Pond	Dec. 14, 2017	April 22, 2018	130
Pleasant Lake	Dec. 16, 2017	April 22, 2018	128
2016–2017			
Parker Pond	Dec. 12, 2016	April 17, 2017	125
Pleasant Lake	Dec. 18, 2016	April 20, 2017	122

Keeping track of the days the ice is in our lakes is one way to track global warming.



Our Birds on the Lake and Shore

Hopefully we all are familiar with the wonderful Common loons, ever-present and vocal, on both Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond. Fortunately, they have treated us to chicks, with at least 3 nesting pairs over the last few years, in addition to their nighttime serenades.

But did you know that over 50 loons were simultaneously gathered last fall on Pleasant Lake? They were feeding as they prepared to fly south, mostly to the ocean (or any open water) to spend the winter. What a sight! This activity always takes place in late fall before the ice is in on our lakes and is called staging.

Ring-billed gulls (present all summer) and Double crested cormorants also gathered to feed on the small fish abundant in the fall. Other familiar summer waterfowl include Common Mergansers, American Black Ducks, Hooded Mergansers and Mallards. In the fall we see Common Golden Eye, Bufflehead, Scoters, and Horned Grebes returning from their breeding grounds in Canada and the Arctic.

What is interesting about the mergansers (both species) is that they are cavity nesters, which means that they will use large tree trunk holes to raise a family along the shore. They all will also use nest boxes placed along or near the shore to set up housekeeping. Occasionally one will see the stunning Wood duck which also nests in cavities. Other non



waterbird tree nesters are the woodpeckers, of which we have seen 5 species, Pileated, Hairy, Downy, Red-bellied and Yellow-bellied sapsuckers, in the same day along our shore and in the woods raising their families!

The rapid return of the bald eagle has been amazing in the last 5 years and what a treat it is to watch this majestic bird soar around the lake looking for fish or carrion (and sometimes loon chicks!). Eagle nests remain elusive but are certainly nearby if you need a challenge.

If you have had favorite sightings, let us know and we will add to the list and share with others.



*Did you know that many people
call the island in Parker Pond
"Mosquito Island"?*

Loon Count

Last summer was the 35th Anniversary of Maine Audubon's Loon count. 1350 people participated in covering 303 lakes and ponds in southern Maine. From the sightings Maine Audubon predicts a Common Loon population of 3269 adult and 300 chicks. This is up from the last several years. This year the Loon Count will be on Saturday, July 20th. Do contact Maine Audubon if you are interested in participating in this project.



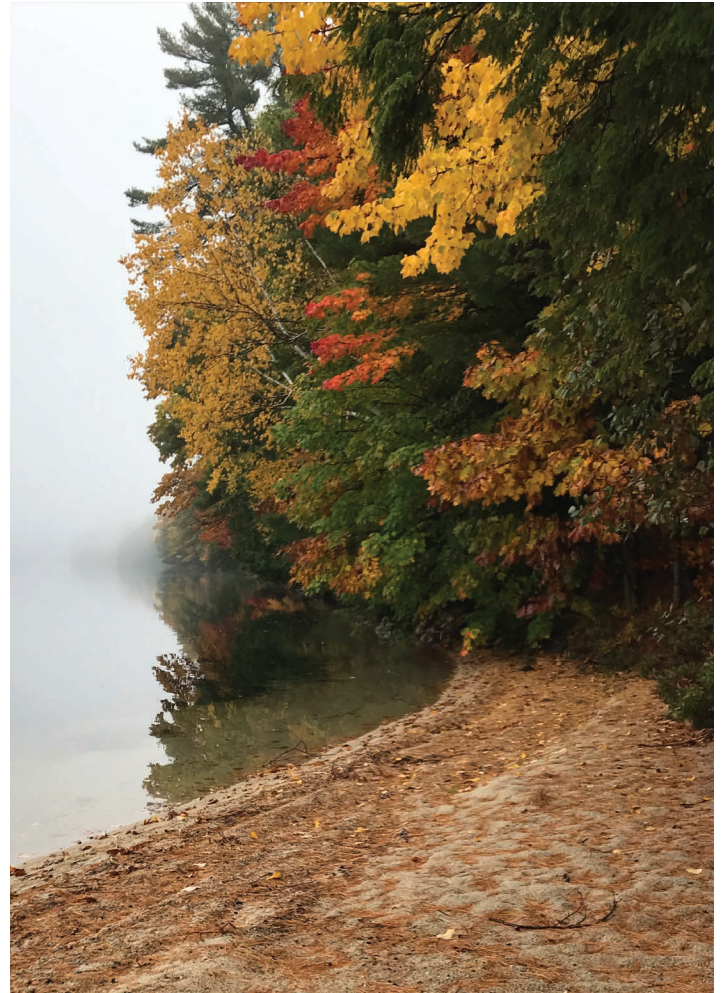
Third Pleasant Lake Swim

Yeah for Deborah Shapiro! What a great event it was last summer for Deborah to swim the length of Pleasant Lake in honor of her 70th birthday. Deborah had a lovely day in August for her long- distance swim. If anyone else you know would like to swim Pleasant Lake and have people contribute to the Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond Association please let us know. This is a wonderful tradition. Let's keep it going!



Snails in Pleasant lake

Snails are being seen on the shores of Pleasant Lake, especially the western shore. They are invasive and if you see some and have the time it would be good to dig them out. However please do not leave them in a pile on a beach or the shore as they have a bad smell. Just bring a shovel, dig a hole in the woods and bury them. That's the best way!



Membership And Donations

Enclosed is an envelope to join our organization by becoming a member or to renew your membership. Support by people who care about our lakes is important as it makes it possible for us to continue to do everything we can to keep our lakes healthy and clean for all to enjoy. Thank you in advance for your interest and donation.