

## About Us

# *Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond*

*Association Website*



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## A Brief History

This organization had its beginning in the 1960s when Dr. Joel Bloom, an educator from New York who had grown up on Pleasant Lake, established the Pleasant Lake Association to deal with a serious problem of receding water level. With the help of Inland Fisheries, better control of the dam soon remedied this problem. In the 1970s the name was changed to the Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond Association (PL/PP/A).

In 1998, when Dr. Bloom moved permanently to his home in Maine, the PL/PP/A's latest president retired and he became president of the association. He heard a rumor that there was Variable Water-Milfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*) growing and expanding in Lilly Brook, the passageway between Parker Pond and Pleasant Lake. At this time most residents of the area had not heard about the hazards of milfoil.



Dr. Bloom promptly contacted Scott Williams, an expert in aquatic plants, and hired him to do a survey of Lilly Brook, Pleasant Lake, and Parker Pond. He found no milfoil in either lake, however, he found a great deal of it in Lilly Brook, the passageway between the two lakes. He reported to Select Persons of both Casco and Otisfield that the milfoil was very rapidly expanding. Dr. Bloom informed Select Persons of both towns that PL/PP/A would immediately begin efforts for milfoil removal. Permission was granted from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection at this time and at all times before a new procedure was introduced.

The first necessary decision was to get Casco's permission to allow galvanized screens to be installed at both ends of the passageway. At a Casco meeting the vote was in favor of a six-month experiment. The PP/PL/A purchased screen and installed it on both the north and south ends of Lilly Brook. These screens have kept milfoil fragments from spreading into Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond.

Fred Cummings found a site on the internet that described the use of Benthic Barriers to kill small patches of milfoil. Taking his suggestion, Dr. Bloom ordered a 400-foot roll of the geotex material and PL/PP/A was off on a six-year crusade to eliminate the milfoil in Lilly Brook. The Benthic Barriers

keep the sunlight from the milfoil plants for a period of 10 to 12 weeks to kill the plants. In the fall of 2001, a group of volunteers prepared four 10 x12 Benthic Barriers from the geotex material and placed them over milfoil in the northern part of Lilly Brook using sand bags to hold them in place. This method of holding the barriers in place was not successful. The next summer the same group of volunteers assembled ten barriers but cable tied six 10 lengths of 1/2 rebar to hold them in place.

The next decision was to hire an experienced scuba diver, Jim Chandler, to place the barriers over the milfoil in a systematic way so that records could be kept as to their location and time installed. The first installation of 10 barriers was accomplished very smoothly in three hours. Because it went so well, Jim Chandler recommended doubling the amount to 20 in the following installation. The second installation went even more smoothly. The group of volunteers became so enthused. There was no holding them back.

Underwater photography verified their success in eradicating the milfoil and they kept doubling the number of barriers until a total of 60 were installed. The barriers are left in place for over eight weeks, then removed and cleaned to allow native underwater plants to regrow. By this process the PP/PL/A proved the effectiveness of the use of Benthic Barriers for milfoil control. This method is now used in varying manner by almost every lake association dealing with this problem.

The next task was to convince both towns to allow the association to hire and train launch site boat inspectors to aid in keeping any new milfoil out of the lakes. Both towns provided some money, DEP provided grant funds and the association added some of their own funds. The PP/PL/A has also overcome the lack of knowledge about milfoil by the public over the past ten years with frequent articles in local newspapers, and position papers directed toward presentations at Town Meetings.

At a recent seminar, the PP/PL/A was presented an award for outstanding proof of successful, permanent killing of Variable Water-Milfoil in the passageway between our two lakes. Credit belongs to the following volunteers whose hard work helped to make this possible: Dennis Bergeron, Elaine Cummings, Fred Cummings, Louise Henderson, Brian Hughes, Steve Jordan, Bob MacGregor, Trevor Tidd, Lew Wetzel, and Pixie Williams. Most of all, credit belongs to Dr. Joel Bloom, ninety-two years young, President of Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond Association, and the spark plug that keeps this effort alive.

In 2007 the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation Agency led our volunteer group in a Watershed Survey for Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond. Phase two of this project with funding of \$139,000 proceeded during the spring and summer of 2009 to correct the non point source pollution found in the survey.