

Friends of Lake Williams News

Summer 2007

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Friends of Lake Williams
P.O. Box 216
Windsor, CT 06095

Message from the President

Becoming the President of our organization was something I never anticipated when I purchased our little summer cottage seven summers ago. When I came to Lake Williams it was with the intention of sitting back and relaxing the summers away. Boating and fishing were my primary goals. Upon my arrival I was asked to become a member of the Friends of Lake Williams and I hesitated because I thought I would just as soon avoid the politics which often accompanies these types of memberships. It wasn't until I was enlightened as to what FLW was all about that I got involved. I realized that it was only with a group such as ours that we could continue to enjoy our few hundred acres of paradise. I would like to remind everyone it takes more than just yearly dues and a couple of meetings to keep things going well. We all have to work as ambassadors of our organization. Each member needs to look to his neighbors and make sure they know what we are all about and encourage their participation. We all need to become instructors in the dangers of invasive weeds and how to combat the growth within the lake. We also need to make others aware of the potential for pollution and the necessity of safe boating. Hopefully with all of us working together we can keep our investment viable for years to come.

Steve Looby

Lake Williams Update s

Milfoil Treatment Status - Another section of the Lake was treated with herbicide by Aquatic Controls on June 20, 2007. On an annual basis the cost of this treatment is split evenly between FLW and the Town of Lebanon. With the help of its members and lake residents, FLW identified the location of the most serious infestation earlier in the spring to help focus where the annual

treatment should be applied. This was followed by a survey of the lake on June 11 by Aquatic Controls, the company hired to apply the treatment.

Annual treatments have been most effective in avoiding the serious infestation that other Connecticut ponds and lakes have been recently reporting. Readers of this newsletter can help in several ways. If you are not a member of FLW, please consider membership as annual membership fees are used to fund FLW's efforts toward maintaining the purity of the lake and warding off threats to its usefulness. Secondly, you can be vigilant about the growth of milfoil while using the lake during the remainder of 2007. Sightings can be reported to any FLW board member and the information will be used to make treatment decisions for 2008. There are many resources on the internet, including our own CT DEP, where you can go to learn how to identify milfoil and to learn more about this nuisance.

Membership — The annual membership drive was conducted during May and June in preparation for the start of the FLW fiscal year on July 1. Membership in 2007 is already increased by nineteen members from 2006. New memberships will be accepted at any time during the fiscal year. Articles were placed in local newspapers and in Lebanon Life to spur the process. A reprint of the article can be found at the end of this newsletter. As always, members are encouraged to recruit new members. Please discuss the merits of belonging to the group with neighbors, visitors or other lakeside landowners. All of these individuals will derive a benefit from maintaining the quality of the lake.

Meetings — The Annual Meeting of Friends of Lake Williams was held on June 9, 2006. The minutes are published on the FLW web site at: www.lakewilliamscampground.net.

Water Quality - The water quality committee tested the water in 2006 and the water quality continues to be good and remains stable. More testing is scheduled for 2007. Results, when received, will be passed on to members at the next FLW meeting. Results will also be posted after the meeting with the meeting minutes on our web site.

Second Annual Boat Parade - Vice President Frank Catalano organized the second annual boat parade that was successfully held on June 30, 2007. This year's theme was "Pirates" and boaters were asked to decorate their craft accordingly. The parade consisted of one lap around the lake starting at the rock pile and ending at the third beach area. Over a dozen boats participated. Brian Rider was at the controls of the winning boat as judged by participants. It is pictured below. He was awarded with the Best Boat Banner that can be proudly



displayed until the next parade.

Boating Guidelines Update— Because navigational hazards exist on Lake Williams, FLW developed a map to point out the danger zones. The map is intended to be beneficial to all lake users, but particularly to first time boating visitors. The map reinforces Connecticut Boating Guidelines and at the same time provides recommendations for safe powerboat operation. A copy of the guidelines and map is posted at boat launches and can also be obtained at the Lake Williams Campground office.

One overlooked hazard when the first map was published is the power lines that cross between the southeast shore and Fox Island. The height of the power lines in unknown

and because of this, sailboats with exceptionally high masts need to proceed with caution. A second map edition is in the works that will add this hazard. The new edition will also recommend strongly that motors not be used in the extremely shallow north end of the lake that contains a large amount of milfoil. Milfoil that is fragmented by motors will migrate and grow in other areas of the lake.

Unidentified Swimmer

By Paul Cote

During the fall of 2006, as the end of the camping season approached, I took my pontoon boat named "Pond Tunes" out on Lake Williams for the last time with my wife Linda, my daughter Deborah and two of my grandchildren. As we motored toward the southernmost island near Route 207, we noticed in the distance a wake in the calm water signifying that some animal was making its way between the island and the mainland. Could it be a snake? No! It was too cold. Could it be a muskrat, otter or beaver? Was it a turtle with its head held above water? None of us could tell what the creature was because of the distance. As we drew closer we could make out a head smaller than we expected. We also saw a skinny furred tail that was thrashing back and forth on the surface, apparently the act of an inexperienced swimmer because the switching did not appear to help generate any forward motion. When the foreign creature finally came into view, we were all surprised to see a waterlogged squirrel. It is not an animal you expect to encounter in the middle of a lake. It probably had tired of its seclusion on the island and was making its way to greener pastures. We followed it to the shore and watched it scurry up the bank and into a tree, a habitat more suitable for the species.

Aquatic Nuisance Species

What can I do to help prevent the incursion of aquatic nuisance species into Lake Williams or any other body of water? The answers can be found on the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection web site. An excerpt follows:

An increasing number of damaging aquatic species are invading the waters of Connecticut. Zebra mussels and Eurasian water milfoil are most familiar to anglers but other exotic species may cause problems as well. You can help prevent the spread of problem species by following these simple suggestions!

Before leaving the boat launch:

Completely drain all water from the boat, including bilge water, live wells and engine cooling systems.

Inspect your boat, trailer, and equipment. Remove and discard all aquatic plants and animals you may have picked up while on the water.

At home:

Rinse boat, trailer and equipment with tap water. A bleach solution can be used to clean live wells. Dispose of all rinse material properly!

Please:

Don't dump your bait bucket or release live bait! Avoid introducing unwanted plants and animals. Unless your bait was obtained on site, dispose of it in a suitable trash container.

Do not transport fish, other animals or plants between water bodies. Release caught fish, other animals and plants only into the waters from which they came from.

Protecting storm drains from pollutants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published a brochure last year that shows how everyday activities can harm waterways. At the annual FLW

meeting, it was suggested that repeating and expanding on this information would be beneficial. The brochure makes people aware of just how much potential pollution goes down the storm drain when certain activities take place. If it goes down the storm drains, chances are pretty good the pollution will make its way to a stream or other waterway and eventually to the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound. What can you do to prevent this pollution? The brochure provides the following tips:

1. Leave grass clippings on the lawn.
2. Wash cars on the lawn or at a car wash.
3. Clean up after pets whether in the park or at home.
4. Clear leaves, road sand and litter from the storm drain.
5. Dispose of household hazardous waste properly at town transfer station or during hazard waste collection.
6. Use gravel, crushed stone and plant buffers in landscaping plans to help absorb runoff naturally.
7. Sweep instead of hosing soil, leaves, grass clipping and fertilizers off sidewalks, driveways and streets.
8. Minimize use of de-icing materials on sidewalks and driveway or use non-toxic substances such as sawdust.
9. Re-direct downspout away from paved areas to vegetated areas.
10. Install gravel trenches along driveways or patios.
11. Pick up litter anywhere and everywhere.

Finally, it was pointed out during the meeting that high levels of phosphorous can reach the waterways as runoff from lawn and garden fertilization and greatly aid the growth and spread of invasive vegetation. In addition to following the guidelines presented in the brochure, FLW recommends that you purchase fertilizers that are lower in phosphorous content. There are three numbers used by fertilizer manufacturers to identify the

chemical content. The second number identifies the percentage of phosphorous and you should purchase fertilizer that has the lowest amount of phosphorous. Another good choice is "All Organic" fertilizers for low phosphorous content. Finally, the following will also minimize the levels of phosphates that reach the lake:

1. Use low phosphate detergents.
2. Do not bath in the lake with soap or shampoo.
3. Ensure that your septic systems are well maintained.

The Beavers of Lake Williams

By Paul Cote

For several years, Lake Williams Campground has had a problem with beavers creating a dam downstream of the brook that flows on the west side of the office. The result has been flooding of the field that is used for visitor parking and for temporary storage of boats and trailers. To prevent the upper portion of the campground from becoming a lake, the dam had to be repeatedly dismantled. The CT Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) states on their web site that this is one way to dissuade the rascals from rebuilding and may cause them to move on. Perhaps it is these same beavers that have moved downstream into Mary's Cove and built their lodge near the campground swim beach. Another theory revolves around the colony habits of beavers. When a beaver pair breeds, they typically give birth to two to six kits that remain with the parents for about two years. In the second year of the colony's existence, the same pair will have another litter of kits. At this time there is a possibility that two adults, two to six young adults from the first litter and six newborn kits will be living in the same lodge. When the young adults are about two years old, the parents drive them from the lodge and their territory. It is possible that the new lodge in

Mary's cove was built by the offspring of the pair that floods the campground parking lot each year. In any event, these new marauders have slowly but surely felled many trees in Mary's cove and along the Campground waterfront throughout the summer and fall of 2006. During the winter freeze of late 2006 and early 2007, one was able to walk the shoreline and observe the beaver's work everywhere. One example is a tree that existed just to the right of the ski beach that served as a casting obstacle and plagued all who fished from the shore for many years. The evidence of the tree's effectiveness as a nuisance could be seen annually because fishing floats, lures and hooks glistened in the sunlight from



every limb. Fishermen can now rejoice because the beaver has apparently relished the thought of serving this tree to his family for dinner and while doing so has eliminated a fishing obstacle. Just like the annual Christmas tree castoffs, down came the tree with its ornaments of fishing lures, hooks and floats.

Unfortunately, all of the beaver's work is not welcome or productive because it may damage the landscaping of shoreline property owners. For example, trees chosen by the beavers for lodge building or for dining can be your favorite shade tree, may be the tree that secures your floating dock or boats, or may be needed to prevent erosion of the lakeside banks near your property. The DEP says the aspen, willow, birch, ash, alder and apple are the preferred diet of these industrious rodents, but if these tree types cannot be found, they will eat almost any tree. If your favorite tree is near the shoreline and is one of the beaver's

preferred flavors, you had better take action. Beavers do not hibernate and are predominantly nocturnal; therefore as soon as the ice starts to break up, they become active. The beaver below was photographed in early spring of 2007 returning to the same tree pictured above to eat some of its bark.



The DEP is a proponent of tolerance and provides the following on their web site: "In many instances, people experience relatively insignificant beaver damage, such as the cutting of trees around a pond or lake or the flooding of an existing wetland area. The beavers are simply doing what is natural and tolerating that activity is part of coexisting with wildlife. The changes that occur when beavers flood an existing wetland, dam a stream or flood standing trees may be aesthetically unpleasant to landowners. However, people should realize that wetlands are dynamic systems that change over time. The Wildlife Division encourages landowners to develop a tolerance and appreciation of beavers and the benefits they provide for wildlife and humans alike." Some Lake Williams shoreline owners have already adopted the tolerance approach and have taken action to preserve some of their trees by wrapping the bottom with sheet metal and using various forms of fencing.

If you want more comprehensive information about beavers and how to protect your trees, check out the DEP web site at www.ct.gov/dep. They report that the annual removal of beavers during the regulated trapping season is the best long-term solution to maintain a balance between beaver populations, suitable beaver habitat throughout the state and human land uses.

According to the DEP, relocating them is expensive for the state and only moves your problem to someone else. The trapping season is Dec 1 through Mar 15 of every year and you can get more specifics from the CT Hunting and Trappers Guide that is also available on the DEP Web Site.

Join FLW

Thanks to our members for their support over the past year. Please renew your membership, and if you are not currently a member, please consider joining this worthwhile organization. If you are a member and are aware of other members who have not renewed, please remind them. Lets all work toward maintaining a strong, viable and successful FLW.

For the 7/1/07 – 6/30/08 fiscal year:

- \$30 Individual Membership (1 person)
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FLW Web Site

The FLW web site space is made available courtesy of Lake Williams Campground. It can be viewed at www.lakewilliamscampground.net. FLW is currently investigating establishing a web site that can be accessed directly. Additional information will be provided in the next newsletter.

Discarded Fishing Line Is Dangerous to Wildlife

A Connecticut Wildlife Newsletter article reprinted with permission by the Connecticut Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division.

The DEP Wildlife Division is asking all anglers to keep fishing areas free of debris and fishing line, and to take particular care in disposing of monofilament fishing line. Carelessly discarded fishing line can seriously harm wildlife. Animals can become entangled in, or ingest the line, whereby starvation, strangulation, or deep wounding are possible.

Ospreys and gulls, as well as other birds, collect line for nesting material, causing hazards for their young and themselves. The prevalence of monofilament fishing line can be seen in osprey nests throughout Connecticut. Most nests contain monofilament, balloon ribbons, and/or plastic that has been scavenged, and the birds can easily be entangled in it.

Most monofilament line is non-biodegradable and can persist in the environment for up to 600 years. Because it is thin and often clear, it is difficult for birds and other animals to see and they can easily become entangled in it. Most often, wildlife cannot survive the injuries they sustain from the entanglement.

To dispose of fishing line, cut it into strands about six inches long

before depositing it in a secure garbage container (it's a good idea to also cut up plastic six-pack rings, which are another danger to wildlife).

Although monofilament line is the greatest hazard, hooks, lures, and weights are often left behind at fishing sites and consumed by fish and wildlife, causing serious injury or illness. Help protect wildlife and keep your favorite fishing area clean by properly disposing of your trash. And if you spot some that others have abandoned, properly dispose of that, too. It's the responsible thing to do.

Friends of Lake Williams Volunteer of the Year Award

John Burrell from Columbia Lab was selected as volunteer of the year. Steve Looby is shown displaying the award plaque during the FLW annual meeting.



John was unable to attend the meeting so the award will be presented to him by Penny Hermann at a Connecticut Federation of Lakes Board Meeting. John was selected because he has never charged FLW for lab testing and has also donated equipment needed by FLW to conduct water quality testing.

The Newsletter Committee needs your help

The Newsletter Committee requests your help in producing this newsletter. Articles containing lake

stories or information relevant to our mission will be welcomed. You don't need to write the article. Just provide the facts from which news stories can be developed. Committees are also requested to provide input after completing any significant activity such as identifying where invasive weed infestation is located on the lake, the results of water quality testing, interesting stories related to the water treatment activities, etc. Please send your input, articles or suggestions to:

Paul Cote
70 Pruett Place
Oakdale CT 06370-1819
E-mail: cotehome@snet.net.

The following is a reprint of an informational article published in Lebanon Life and in some local newspapers in the spring of 2007.

Friends of Lake Williams seeks new members

In the fall of 1997, invasive aquatic vegetation called milfoil was discovered in Lake Williams in Lebanon. Milfoil infestation has a negative effect on the aquatic life in the lake and affects people's ability to enjoy swimming, recreational boating, and fishing. At that time, it was estimated that only 3 to 5 acres of this 272 acre lake was affected but the milfoil spread rapidly to cover approximately 35 to 40 acres in just one year. Based upon the existing sediment and depth of water, the CT Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) advised that if left untreated, milfoil would continue to spread very rapidly and eventually consume the lake.

In response to this growing problem a group of concerned lake residents formed Friends of Lake Williams (FLW) in 1998, incorporated and obtained non-profit status. Members began to educate themselves about milfoil and other invasive plant species, various

treatment options and about lake management through seminars, membership in the Connecticut Federation of lakes, discussions with consultants, the DEP and with residents of other lakes who are facing the same problems.

FLW members used the new knowledge they acquired to inform and educate lake residents, town officials and local residents of environmental issues, particularly as they affect the lake. FLW and the Town of Lebanon have shared the annual cost for the milfoil infestation treatment. FLW purchased equipment and supplies necessary to conduct a comprehensive water quality monitoring program that has been ongoing since the spring of 2002. Significant progress toward the organization's mission to preserve the lake's economic and recreational value would not have been possible without the help and support of its members, the community and the Town of Lebanon.

FLW currently enjoys a strong membership of approximately 128 people. To apply for membership, please obtain an application on line through the Lake Williams Campground web site at www.lakewilliamscampground.net.

Bald Eagle Spotted on Lake Williams

In late fall of 2006, Frank Catalano observed a bald eagle pair perched in a tree at the north end of Lake Williams. Later, possibly one of the pair was seen to fly across the north end of the lake to a tree near Frank's camp that is located to the west of Fox Island. Frank was able to grab his video camera and capture some excellent video of the bird in flight and the birds perched. Frank brought the video camera to the January 2007 board meeting for all to enjoy.

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