

LAKE GROTON ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual Meeting - August 30, 2003

Handouts: Agenda, Minutes of the 2002 Annual Meeting, 2003 Species List, Water Quality Results, Stillwater Launching Survey, Rules for Use of Boat Launch at Stillwater, 2003 Fireworks Fund Donors, Eurasian Milfoil Watch Card

President John LaRosa called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. The meeting was declared legal with at approximately 90 members present. The meeting began with members introducing themselves; it was noted that all new members who had been contacted by the Membership committee were present. The Minutes of the 2002 Annual Meeting were approved as written. The Financial report was read by Mary Ann DeBouis. The report included income of \$2,993.55, expenses of \$3,108.20, with a balance in unrestricted funds of \$2,079.83; the CD balance as of 6/30/03 was \$2,029,84; with total Lake Groton Association Funds of \$4,109.67. The report was accepted.

A moment of silence was held for deceased members Margaret Coons, Beverly Rossi, and Fran Edwards.

David Donath was reelected Trustee and Jim Soutar was elected Trustees for three years to replace Mary Ann DuBois. John LaRosa requested that anyone who was interested in serving as a Trustee contact him. Joyce LaRosa was elected as Clerk for one year to replace Dede Rudd.

As recommended by the Trustees, it was voted to give the Groton-Ryegate Fast Squad a \$350 donation. It was also voted to keep the dues at \$5.00 with a warning of a potential increase in the future.

Jim Soutar reported that 4 people (all from the lake or friends of lake residents) successfully completed the **Young Boat Drivers Certification Course** held July 5th & 6th (12 had preregistered) bringing the total to 241 completing the boat course to date. Jim again reminded everyone that anyone born after 1974 must take the boat course and should be at least 10 years old when taking the course. The 2004 boater safety course is scheduled for Saturday, July 3rd and Monday, July 5th. Jim reviewed the options available to take the course and reciprocity with other states. Preregistration for the Groton course is required and the lake course is free. Interested participants are encourage to get the material at least two weeks before the boat course begins. Contact Jim Soutar for more information. John thanked Jim for his dedication to this annual project which he has been doing for more than 13 years. In response to audience questions it was noted that there is no speed limit, the noise limit is 81db, and only a uniformed officer can enforce the laws.

Dave Spencer reported on the **Federation of Vermont Lakes & Ponds Meeting** held July 28th at Vermont Technical College in Randolph. He reported that a fishing tournament was cancelled this year because of the concern of transporting milfoil from infested to non-infested lakes. This was an economic concern to the local Chamber of Commerce, but the Federation of Lakes & Ponds felt the issue of milfoil warranted their decision. Dave also reported that there are 6-8 topics in committee in the VT Legislature regarding lake issues. He also reported on Act 480 (a revision of Act 60) which breaks the grand list into two categories: primary residence and other (second home) with two separate tax rates which would most likely decrease Groton residents' taxes. Act 480 is effective in 2004.

Jim Soutar and Milt Lamberton, members of the **Welcoming Committe**, reported that they have continued to visit new lake residents and were pleased to see all the new residents they had contacted at this year's annual meeting. Jim reviewed the procedure of contacting new residents and leaving information inviting them to join the Lake Association. Members are encouraged to let them know about any new neighbors.

Milt Lamberton takes care of removing the planks at the **dam** at the south end of Lake Groton in the fall and replacing them in the spring and reported no problems this past year. In response to a question regarding the possibility of a drawdown, Milt and Jim Soutar noted the volumes of paperwork and time involved in the application process which has prevented the Lake Association from pursuing this issue.

John LaRosa reported on the **2003 Fourth of July** celebration which was very successful. Twnty-five boats participated in the parade; the winners were 1st Place-Coxon Camp; 2nd place-Fred Fitzgerald; 3rd Place-Clarks on West Shore Road. Thanks to the Forest Store for providing 1st and 2nd prizes and to

the winners. The Soutar camp was the winner of best shore decorations; thanks to the DuBois family for providing a prize for that. It was agreed that the fireworks were spectacular, and John reported that this year we received a \$3500 display for \$2500 and recognized North Star's generosity. He also thanked Dale Sorenson & Cindy Spoor for the use of their lawn for the display. The 2004 July 4th activities are scheduled as follows: Fireworks the night of July 3rd and boat parade at 1 PM on July 4th. Funds collected this year totalled \$1,558.95. While there is a surplus in the Fireworks Fund due to the North Star donation in 2002, there will continue to be a requested for donations for future displays.

Dave Spencer reported on the results of the **survey** which was mailed to Lake Association members in the late Spring. Approximately 27 responses were received with 50% interested in an early summer informational meeting in addition to the Annual Meeting and approximately 40% interested in social events, Eight members offered assistance with environmental monitoring. In response to a request to poll attendees at the meeting, the responses were similar. Several suggestions were included with the questionnaires which will be reviewed and used.

Darlene Sprague reported on the **loon activity** this year and her participation in the Vermont Loon Recovery Program. As the loon steward, she is responsible for maintaining and placing the loon nesting platform at the south end of the lake, caring for the floating signs, and keeping records. She reported that during the third week of June two chicks hatched; one has reported to survive. There have been nine loons reported on Lake Groton, and the results of the June 19 statewide loon count recorded 180 loons in Vermont. Darlene reminded everyone of the importance of keeping a safe distance and asked anyone interested in helping with this project to contact her.

David Donath reported on the **water clarity testing** which the lake association has been doing since 1979. The Donath family did clarity testing eight times this year and it was noted that the clarity seemed to be better this year with more consistent readings at each of the three location. Results will be sent to the State for interpretation.

John LaRosa reported on the **Eurasian Milfoil Detection Grant** which was awarded this year as proposed by Jim Soutar last year and applied for by Jonn. The survey was done throughout the summer by volunteers from the lake. The list and location of plants identified were included as a handout. While several different species of milfoil were found, it was reported that none were Eurasian milfoil. John presented a visual report showing the increase of growth in aquatic plants, including new species. All lake residents were reminded to check their areas and report any unidentified species to John or the state. Sketches of new plants were included as handouts, and members were encouraged to add them to their copies of the *All About Lake Groton Book*. Vigilance in early detection of nuisance plants is imperative to control any problems, especially in the care of washing boats before launching them. John reported that the cost of controlling Eurasian Milfoil is approximately \$1,000 per acre. Lake Groton is reported to be 4,040 acres. Increase in plant growth can be attributed to fertilizing and bring in sand which increases the nutrients which feed the plants. Lake residents were reminded to limit the use of fertilizers and addition of sand to prevent this problem.

A report on the **E Coli Water Testing Grant** was presented by John LaRosa. As indicated on the handout there has been an improvement in water quality since the 1970s. This appears to be consistent with the other grant projects in the State due to upgraded septic systems. It appears that the majority of the E Coli bacteria in the lake is coming from the tributaries, since increased levels appeared after significant rainfall. John is hoping to continue this monitoring and include phosphorous counts. There are hopes to develop a history of weed growth through photographic monitoring.

John reviewed the **Agreement between the Lake Association and Stillwater State Park** regarding boat launches. The agreement allows four free uses after which the \$15 campsite fee will apply. It was agreed that Lake Association membership is for lake property owners only and not strictly for boat launches. Everyone was encouraged to check in at the Contact Station at Stillwater to let them know who you are and wash your boat before launching. Stillwater is keeping records and has a visual monitoring system in place to assure that boats are being washed.

Susan Bulmer, District Manager, Department of Forest, Park & Recreation, was introduced as a guest speaker. This was Susan's first attendance at the Annual Meeting since assuming her duties in 1998 and she was pleased to be able to attend. She commended the Lake Association on their proactive approach. As a follow up to the boat launch agreement she will clarify "boat launch use" (does it mean launch and retrieval counted as one launch?). She reported on the long range planning project for the four areas included in the Groton State Forest and encouraged members to complete a questionnaire which she had available. The State is looking for public involvement in the long range planning process and is gathering public input through surveys. There have been two public meetings to date which have been attended by several lake residents. Planning information updates are available on the website listed on the questionnaire for anyone to keep posted on the process. She reported on the current plans for adding lean-tos, converting campsites to cabins, replacing trail and information signs, and multi use trail enhancements.

Susan recognized and congratulated Ray MacIntire on his retirement, and the Lake Association members applauded his support and efforts on behalf of the association.

Audience questions included state laws regarding use of ATV's on multi use trails - Susan reported that it is illegal to use ATV's on state land but difficult to enforce.

It was suggested that a donation box be available at the campground for the July 4th Fireworks display since many campers have voiced their appreciation for the displays - Susan was not opposed to the suggestion.

Boating Safety Concerns - the issue of speed, noise, and unsafe boating practices was brought up by a concerned lake resident and the possibility of petitioning the Water Resource Board for a speed limit on Lake Groton. Susan suggested gathering information, including boat surveys, documenting problems regarding endangerment and safety before approaching the Water Resource Board. It was noted that it may be easier to control the size of motors rather than speed. A suggestion was made to try to resolve any problems with an individual(s) before proceeding with a petition.

Lake Association members were reminded that Revisions to *All About Lake Groton* Book were available, and members were encouraged to take a copy to include in their book.

With no further business brought forth, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane K. Rudd, Retiring Clerk