

The Hancock & Sand Ponds Association Newsletter

May 2020

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Annual Meeting

Postponed to possibly August
Date and Location TBA



Hancock & Sand Ponds Association

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Becky Clements - President

Sue Neily - Vice President

Joe Nagy - Secretary

Ben Peierls - Treasurer

President's Message:

Dear Hancock and Sand Ponds Association members and all residents on the ponds,

I'm grateful to be able to communicate with you this May, as the world confronts the challenges presented by the coronavirus. Ben, Joe, Sue, and I send our love to you all and hope that you and your families are staying safe and well. Some of us live full-time on Hancock and Sand Ponds, and are following the guidelines given to local residents by the town managers in Denmark and Sebago. A brief version of these guidelines are included in the newsletter. Many people live most of the year in other towns and cities all across the United States and return every summer to their camps in Maine. You have, no doubt, been following the various guidelines required by your home states for your protection, and that of your neighbors.

The Governor of Maine, Janet Mills, has extended her "Stay Healthy At Home" directive to be in effect through May 31, 2020, while beginning a modest "Restarting Plan" that allows for the limited re-opening of a few small businesses. Individuals "must wear cloth face coverings in public settings where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain." Maine also requires that "those entering Maine from another state should self-quarantine themselves for 14 days (driving, flying, train, or by bus)." This is a difficult thing to ask when some of us come to Maine for just a weekend over Memorial Day, but this policy has helped to keep the number of deaths in Maine as low as possible. Of course you may enjoy your camp with your family - fish, hike, swim, and take your boats out, but you will have to wait for a visit with friends until after those first 2 weeks or risk paying a hefty fine. To read the latest guidelines in Maine, please go to www.maine.gov/covid19.

On a happier note, the ponds are beautiful and the loons are calling. The Wabunaki Public Boat Launch has been successfully repaired. L.E.A wrote to tell us that boat inspectors have been designated as "essential workers", so our work to protect our ponds from the spread of milfoil and other invasive plants will continue.

We are not sure of a date for our Annual Meeting, but are going to reserve a date at the Denmark Town Hall for early August. One of our members suggested we hold our meeting outdoors, which is another possibility. It is hard to know when it will be safe to gather together, but the Executive Committee thought that we should postpone our meeting for at least a month, and try to plan for a late summer meeting when many of our members would still be in Maine. Of course, we will follow the laws of our state and local governments to avoid any risks to our health. If we need to conduct our business by telephone conference call or Zoom, we can arrange that kind of meeting. We have three important positions to fill:

1. Chairman of the Buoy Committee. This person works with the Navigational Aids Program of the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands to place 34 navigational buoys in Hancock Pond. The buoys are placed in the pond every spring to alert boaters to hidden rocks and shallow waters that can damage boats if not avoided. The Bureau provides the numbered buoys, cinder-block anchors, and chains to connect them. They also provide maps and a GPS locator for use in placement of the buoys. After the buoys are in place, the head of the Navigational Aids Program, Tim Thurston, visits the pond to check on their placement. In the fall, the Buoy Committee removes the buoys from the pond, cleans them off, and stores them on land for the winter. If left in the water, the buoys could be damaged, and provide a hazard for snowmobilers and ice fishermen. Dick Johnson has generously allowed H.S.P.A. to store the buoys on his beachfront property during the winter. An old boat with a motor is needed for this work, as the rusty chains and heavy cinderblocks would damage a newer boat. If anyone has an old aluminum fishing boat or pontoon boat that they would like to sell or donate for this work, please let us know.

2. Secretary. When we met last July, there was no election of a replacement for Bob McKeagney, who had to leave the office due to an automobile accident. Within a couple of weeks after the meeting, Joe Nagy volunteered to perform the duties of Standing Secretary until a new election could be held. Joe has done

an excellent job this year. If he is willing to continue in the office, the Executive Committee recommends that Joe be nominated and elected to continue in that office.

3. President. It is hard for me to tell you that I have decided to step down as President of the Hancock and Sand Ponds Association. My dear husband, Andrew, passed on in November, and I am assuming new responsibilities at home and with his work. I have loved working for HSPA. It is good work - acting with LEA to preserve the health of the ponds, partnering with the Town of Denmark to make sure the boat launch is in working order, getting the families on Hancock and Sand Pond together to meet each other and share their love of this very special place. The best part of being President is getting to meet so many wonderful people. Yes, we come from different backgrounds and have had different experiences, but we also have much in common. So many of you have helped me to learn what needs doing, and how to do it. Thank you so much, Jerry and Alice, Bob and Clare, Ben, and Sue, Ed and Carole, Will and Mary, Carl and JoAnne, Bob and Rhonda, Amy, Jesse, Mike, Bill, Joe, Milo, Michael and Genie, David, and Kevin, and many more. I wouldn't have met most of you if you had not sought me out with questions and suggestions and support. Please give some thought as to who might serve as President in the coming year.

Thank you again, and I look forward to seeing you at our Annual Meeting. We will let you know the date and time when things are settled. In the meantime, take care of yourselves and your families. And please call if you have any questions. I will try and help.

With love,

Becky Clements 1-508-335-1453

Local Town Covid-19 Guidelines (most recent updates)

Denmark (www.denmarkmaine.org)

THE TOWN OF DENMARK WILL DO IT'S BEST TO FOLLOW THE GRADUAL OPENING PLAN SET FORTH BY GOVERNOR MILLS.

Town Office (207)452-2163: Tentative re-open is JUNE 2, 2020. Guidelines posted on the door and website prior to opening day, please follow them in order to keep our staff and community safe.

Transfer station, public parks, and the beach are open to the public, please follow the guidelines set forth by the Governor's Order.

Sebago (www.townofsebago.org)

Sebago Town Office will begin to assist customers who are not able to conduct municipal business online, through the mail and drop box, or on the phone BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. Please call 207-787-2457 to schedule an appointment.

Customers will be required to wear masks and be limited to no more than 1 person at a time. All others will have to wait outside or in their vehicles.

CLOSED To the Public: Town Office (Limited access after May 19th), Town Hall, Public Works, EMS, Fire Stations, School playground, basketball courts, ball fields.

OPEN To the Public: Town Beach and Douglas Mountain. Maintain social distancing, gathering or loitering is not allowed.

*We still have several copies of **The Lake Book**, published by The Maine Lakes Society. It is a slim, but very informative, coffee table-size, spiral-bound book about the biology of lakes and what each of us can do to keep them healthy. It has lots of pictures and diagrams and would be an excellent book to share with children. The lake association bought enough copies for every camp on Hancock and Sand Ponds to have one, so if you didn't receive your copy when we delivered them door to door, or pick one up at last year's Annual Meeting, please call me at 508-335-1453 or write me at 53 Weeman Road, West Baldwin, ME, 14091, to give me your mailing address and receive your free book.*

Treasurer's Report 2019:

A combination of some large, planned projects and some unexpected expenses meant a significant deficit for 2019 (see the table of bank balances and changes). The biggest planned expense was our donation to the Town of Denmark to help with the Wabunaki Road public boat launch repairs (see separate article). We also purchased enough copies of the Maine Lake Society's "The Lake Book" for every property around both ponds. A mix up in scheduling led to a large increase in hours of boat inspections (for milfoil and other invasive species) at the boat ramp. More inspection time was probably a good thing, though it cost us more than usual because of the increase in hours and hourly rate. Last, we had an unexpected moose carcass in the lake that needed removal (categorized as miscellaneous).

For income, our annual dues were down a little bit from last year's participation rate of 54%, but still reasonable with 119 out of 258 owners on file contributing dues or about 46%. A few owners paid dues for 2020 and several made donations beyond the standard dues amount. A grant from Maine Department of Environmental Protection (ME-DEP) helped offset the cost of boat inspection time.

Looking ahead to this year, we can be certain our expenses will be less. Mike Gately reports that we were awarded a \$1700 grant from ME-DEP for boat inspections. I also am pleased to announce that we just received an anonymous donation of \$1000. So if we continue with the same rate of dues payments, our finances for 2020 should be more in balance.

Dues to HSPA go towards supporting boat inspections for invasive milfoil, water quality monitoring by Lakes Environmental Association (LEA), loon protection, safety buoy placement and removal each summer, and dam and launch expenses. I encourage you to maintain your membership and send in your dues today. If you haven't given to HSPA before, I ask you to please join us in protecting the health and quality of the treasures we call Hancock and Sand Ponds.

--Ben Peierls

2019 Opening Balance:	\$17,854.82
Income	
Dues	\$6,050.00
Donations	\$425.00
Total Grants	\$1,500.00
Total Income:	\$7,975.00
Expenses	
Fees, Printing, and Other Costs	-\$1,055.42
Boat Ramp Contribution	-\$5,000.00
Other Contributions	-\$1,050.00
Courtesy Boat Inspections	-\$5,824.00
Pond Monitoring	-\$2,050.00
Education (Lake Book)	-\$1,299.75
Miscellaneous	-\$1,127.68
Total Expenses:	-\$17,406.85
2019 Year End Balance:	\$8,422.97

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE

Please enclose your \$50 check payable to the Hancock and Sand Ponds Association and mail by June 30th to:

Hancock & Sand Ponds Association

P.O. Box 856

Denmark, ME 04022

Thank you for your support!



Loon Committee Report:

We are happy to report that the loons on Sand and Hancock Ponds are back, loudly expressing their claims over territory and, we hope, building nests in anticipation of mating season. Needless to say, the coronavirus has not deterred them at all. In fact, they will probably appreciate less human activity on the Ponds. Maybe we will see more wildlife this summer as people have in other places!

Last summer's Loon Count - thanks to Joanne Web and her team on Hancock and Judy Coleman and Glen Gerrish on Sand - confirmed five adults and no chicks on Hancock and two adults and no chicks on Sand. Remember, a pair of loons averages one successful chick every two to three years. The loons on our ponds are reproducing well. More successful chicks might cause an overpopulation problem!

As always, the greatest threat to loons is humans! So we are counting on working with HSPA members to continue to educate folks who come to the Ponds. We are particularly concerned about:

1. Dogs allowed to roam freely near nesting sites May 1 - Aug 1. Last summer there were several instances of dogs near nesting sites. Please remind your neighbors about the leash laws in both Denmark and Sebago requiring dog owners to keep their dogs on a leash when they are off their property.
2. People getting too close to chicks in the nest or on the water. Loon chicks can't dive for several weeks so observe them with binoculars. Although loons are generally unperturbed by boats and people, they become very agitated and aggressive if they are protecting their young. Please ask boaters to stay away.
3. Lead fishing tackle, especially sinkers, are ingested by loons. Although there is a ban on lead tackle, lead poisoning is still the leading cause of death for adult loons. Throw out your old tackle!
4. Climate change and pollution in our ponds. Until we can better control these threats loons are at risk.

The loon raft is doing well in Loon Cove, thanks to repairs by Larry and Ann Clark. We are hoping for "tenants" this year! The Loon Committee will continue to post signs to remind people about staying away from nesting loons. We will also participate in the 2020 Audubon Loon Count if it is held this year.

We are hoping that you will be able enjoy the Ponds this summer!

--The HSPA Loon Committee.

If you would like to join the Loon Committee (we have met once each summer) join our email list, or have concerns/suggestions you would like to share with us, please contact Amy March, amymarch@mac.com, 207-452-2493.



Dam Committee Report:

- Kept lake at requested levels last summer, thanks to the due diligence of Mr. Robert Remick.
- Opened the gate all the way in early October to facilitate work on the boat ramp. The lake level was low then, and dropped to spillway level.
- Gate open all winter until May.
- Two loose wooden swim floats found at the dam this spring, one jammed in the gateway. I removed them both and tied them off to trees on the shore. **Come get them please!**
- A large amount of timber became lodged in the culvert/bridge below the dam this April. I freed it up and allowed it to float downstream.
- The lake is high still, due to many big rains. The gate is wide open, but it will take awhile to drop down to its normal level. Can't do any more than that, folks!

Happy Summer!

--Bill VanVoorhis



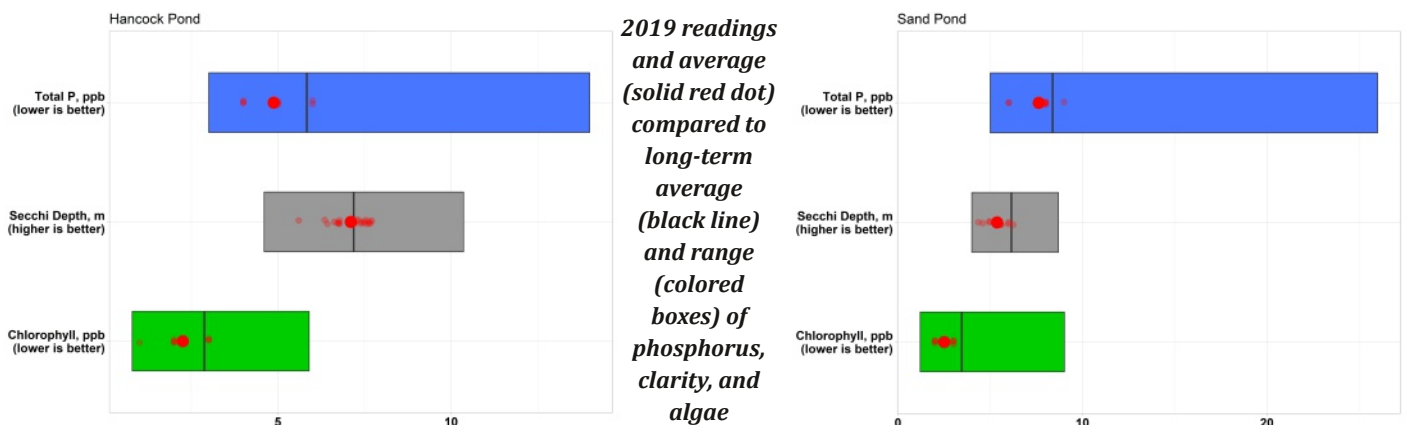


Lakes Environmental Association – Water Quality Report :

The Lakes Environmental Association (LEA) monitors water quality in 41 lakes and ponds in southern Oxford County and northwestern Cumberland County. The Hancock and Sand Ponds Association has been a member and financial supporter of LEA since its founding in 1970. For nearly fifty years, LEA has produced annual reports summarizing and interpreting critical indicators for each of the water bodies it monitors.

On average in 2019, 30% of lakes had deeper (or similar) clarity (measured by Secchi depth), 76% of lakes had lower surface layer phosphorus (P), and 86% of lakes had lower or similar chlorophyll concentrations (a proxy for algae) when compared to long-term averages. Because of this, the three indicators either stabilized or improved over time for many of the lakes.

LEA reports that moderate clarity and chlorophyll values and low P concentrations, along with no change in clarity and P and decreasing chlorophyll over the long-term trends, means that Hancock Pond maintained good water quality in 2019. Sand Pond improved in 2019 with moderate values for all three indicators and stable trends (i.e. no long-term change). On the other hand, oxygen depletion and elevated P concentrations in deep water is still a concern and will be monitored. The absence of oxygen at depth eliminated suitable fish habitat by mid-August for Sand. Full reports for both Hancock and Sand Ponds are accessible at the Lakes Environmental Association website (mainelakes.org/water-testing-report/).



LEA Measures of Water Quality						
	Oxygen Depletion	High P at Depth	Clarity Trend	Phosphorus Trend	Chlorophyll Trend	Cold Water Fish Habitat
Hancock	<i>Present</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Decreasing</i>	<i>Suitable</i>
Sand	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Mix</i>

Boat Launch Renovations Complete

The town of Denmark completed renovations of the Wabunaki Road public boat launch in November. At the May 2019 annual town meeting, the town voted to allocate \$5,000 to rebuild the boat launch, and to apply for a \$15,000 state grant from the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands.

At the HSPA annual meeting in July, members voted to donate \$5,000 towards the boat launch repairs, giving the town a working budget of \$25,000.

According to Town Manager Bert Kendall, the town worked with Hancock Pond resident Frank Verhoorne, a retired architectural draftsman who was in charge of constructing the Fryeburg Middle School and Lewiston High School, to create a blueprint for the improvements. The plan included replacing the concrete slabs and dredging and grading the launch area.

Kendall said that before the ramp was repaired, large bass boats and pontoon boats would kick up dirt and create a hole at end of the ramp, and behind that were large rocks. When launched, smaller boats would sink in the hole and damage their motors on the rocks.

The state suggested putting in a 12-foot by 12-foot concrete shore block mat under water at the end of the ramp to prevent erosion. The mat weighs 4,000 pounds, and the Public Works Department did not have the equipment to take it off the delivery truck. Also, the four-person Public Works crew was busy preparing equipment for winter.

The town therefore contracted with Starrett Landscaping in Raymond, Maine, to do the job. The old concrete slabs were removed, the ramp was graded to the state-required 12 degrees, and 55 new interlocking concrete slabs weighing more than 500 pounds each were installed on a gravel and stone bed. Boulders were placed on either side of the slabs to create a curb to prevent launches from veering off the ramp. Town trucks brought in the gravel and stone, and graded the access road.

Finally, a new dry hydrant was installed nearby so that fire trucks could pump water from the lake in case of a fire.



Meet Your Neighbor:

Last year we introduced a series of sketches of Hancock and Sand Ponds' neighbors. We enjoy a community environment that brings us into close contact with a select group of people. Nevertheless, the seasonal nature (not to mention weekly commutes) of most of our lives means that we miss opportunities to become more well-acquainted with most of our fellow pond residents. As it turns out, our "neighborhood" is populated with a great many interesting and accomplished individuals. We can't introduce everyone to everyone, but the Association is taking a modest step toward greater familiarity with our neighbors continuing this series of "Meet Your Neighbor" profiles.

Joe Nagy of Hancock Pond

I was raised and educated in Connecticut, but as soon as I graduated from college I headed north. My first job in 1972 was as a reporter for the weekly newspaper in Berlin, New Hampshire, a paper mill town in the White Mountains. My love of the outdoors began there, hiking, camping, kayaking and canoeing in the summer, and skiing in the winter.

My introduction to Maine came in 1977, when I took a job as editor of the weekly Skowhegan Reporter, in Somerset County. It was the home of Margaret Chase Smith, and as a young woman she had worked at the paper. I got to interview her in her retirement.

I took a break from journalism to work as a VISTA volunteer in a non-profit community- development project in Starks, Maine, for one year. I stayed with the organization for four more years, working in rural communities in the United States and in Hong Kong.

It was in Hong Kong that I reconnected with journalism. I worked as an editor for fourteen years with the English-language newsmagazine Asiaweek. There I married my wife Myung-Hee, from South Korea, and there our son was born.

We moved to the United States in 1997 and settled in my hometown, Fairfield, to be near my aging mother. At that time I switched careers and for the next 20 years taught journalism, academic writing, and English literature at a local university.



My wife and I both love the outdoors, and have close friends in Maine, so we began searching for a lakeside second home there. After a year-long search, in 2008 we were thrilled to discover the Rev. Harrington's "round house" on the east shore of Hancock Pond. Actually it is has sixteen sides, and lots of windows. It was built by one of the early residents of Hancock Pond, the Reverend Donald Harrington, who was senior minister of the Community Church in New York City, a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

Rev. Harrington, who died in 2005, was one of the early leaders in the U.S. civil rights movement. He championed racial integration and opened his congregation to Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist faith traditions. In addition, he was deeply involved in New York state politics, serving as chairman of the state Liberal Party for twenty-six years. In 1966 he unsuccessfully ran for Lieutenant Governor with Franklin Delano Roosevelt Jr.

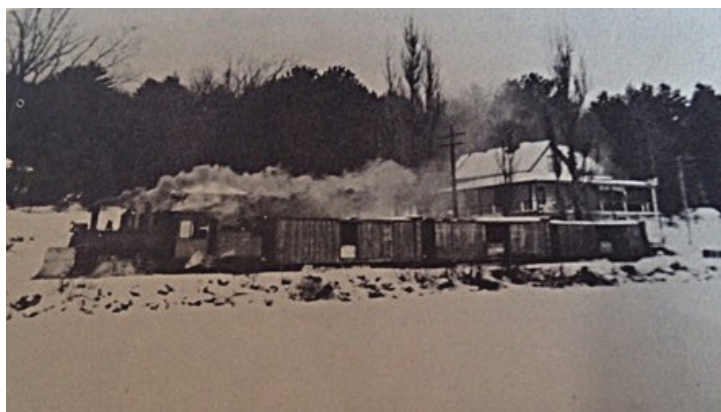
In retirement, my hobbies include renovating the outlying studio where Rev. Harrington wrote his sermons, and competing in an annual two-person bass tournament with my best friend from college.

The Neilys on Hancock Pond

Back in the 1930s, the first of us came to Hancock; my mother, Eleanor, as a camper at Wabunaki. In 1956, as a family now numbering eight, we stopped by to see where Mum had gone to camp. My parents asked about any camps for sale on the lake, and we bought what is now Legaults'. At this time, Camp Wabunaki was still open, and owned most of the Western shore. All baths were in the lake, and my mother and sisters remember the local fishermen trying to be down near the camp during those hours. There were only 3 camps at the end of what is now the Wabunaki Road, on the Southern shore: Harrington, Neily, and Parsons. The road in was a narrow 2 rut one. One winter, we snowshoed in to shovel the flat roof of the camp. My father had his six children doing road work in the summer. In 1958, two of my sisters went to Wabunaki, which closed a few years later. Everett Parsons was still blowing open the Dugway with TNT! In 1966, we bought the Parsons' camp. My parents put the camp in trust to their children and grandchildren (numbering 20) and there are now also 13 great grandchildren of my parents continuing to enjoy the wonderful place.

--Sue Neily

Top: Neily family at camp around 1984. Bottom: Eleanor Bisbee Neily, the one who landed us on Hancock!



Hancock Pond tank, No. 8 takes on water, with a trio of coal-filled cars in tow, during a February day of 1941



Memories

In the late summer of 1969 we came to the pond to visit a friend. At 30 years old and with two children, I was not looking for lake property. But you all know what happens when you get here. So now we have lakefront property. In 1970 we built a house on land we had justified by saying, "Well, we can camp on it."

Now move ahead. We met an older gentleman known as Grampa Merle Douglas who lived on Hancock Pond Road on Loon Cove with his wife Doris. Meeting Grampa made everything here easy. He was always there when you needed something. He passed on his local knowledge. When we moved up full time, our children had to snowmobile out to the school bus. Grampa set up a place in his woodshed to hang up their heavy coats and boots and watched them get on the school bus. Merle and Doris had been married on New Years Eve. On their 50th wedding anniversary they each snowmobiled in to our house to celebrate and left after midnight in an ice storm. In the winter he provided a spot to park next to the main road. He made life great.

Also at that same time, in the summer, once a week a bakery truck and a fresh fish truck would come through. A small store on the pond called "Picks", owned by Ann and Pick Pickering, covered most items needed, including Sunday newspapers. The bread and fish and Picks are gone, but I think if Grampa were here now, he would not feel out of place - of which we are very glad.

--Carole and Ed Cooper



This picture, showing the old, railroad track, running near "The Sunshine Cottage" or "Pickering's Store" was found in my grandmother's pictures, from years ago. The area is where the Earle and Devey cottages are today. I believe the woman, second from left, to be my grandmother, Lucy Irish. She was postmistress of Hillside, Maine for 30 years, relying on the train for delivery of the mail. If anyone recognizes this picture and anyone in it, contact Mary.

The Train That Was

--Mary Sitzell

*Hancock Pond, and the train that was
All those years ago,
Looked forward to by many--
By some, especially so.*

*My nana was postmistress
For those around our lake.
Twice daily stops were then the norm,
The tiny train would brake.*

*Mail bags off and mail bags on,
And passengers gone forth.
Especially, campers from the south,
To favorite camps up north.*

*For me, the lake has always been
A place of peace and rest.*

*And, of all my favorites, round the world,
Hancock Pond, for me, is best.*

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