

The Hancock & Sand Ponds Association Newsletter

May 2021

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Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 17, 2021, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Denmark Town Hall

Please help us reach and update you more easily!
Send us your email address by including it with your dues or
sending a message to hspamaine@gmail.com



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Chris Perrin - Secretary
Ben Peierls - Treasurer

President's Message:

Let me introduce myself. After the 2019 Annual Meeting, I volunteered to be secretary of the Hancock and Sand Ponds Association, taking over from Bob McKeagney. At last year's Annual Meeting, which was held online because of the COVID-19 virus, I was elected president, replacing Becky Clements, who was retiring from that position after four years. Becky was a model leader: patient, always ready to listen, always quick with a smile, and persevering when there was work to be done. Thanks to Becky's initiative, we have a renovated public boat launch on Wabunaki Road. She set a high standard for me to follow.

When my wife Myung-Hee and I bought our place on the east shore of Hancock Pond in 2008, we quickly discovered what makes Hancock and Sand Ponds so special: clean water, friendly neighbors, memorable sunsets, soaring eagles, singing loons. That's why we all keep coming back, year after year.

The mission statement of the HSPA states that our goal is "to protect and preserve the pristine waters of Hancock and Sand Ponds as a treasured natural resource for today and for future generations." Since joining the executive committee, I've been impressed by the scores of people who volunteer behind the scenes to keep our ponds clean and safe for swimmers, boaters, and wildlife. Two of them are featured in the Meet Your Neighbor section of this Newsletter: Amy March, who chairs the Loon Committee, and Andrew McClean, who stepped up last summer to head the Buoy Committee.

In addition, we owe thanks to Bill Van Voorhis and Bob Remick, co-chairs of the Dam Committee, who oversee the operation of the dam on Hancock Pond; Dave Rogers, who is the liaison with bass tournaments on the ponds; and Mike Gately, who heads the Milfoil Program, liaising with the Lakes Environmental Association (LEA) to set up boat inspections at the public boat launch. Thanks to Mike's initiative, the HSPA received a \$2000 grant this year from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to help pay for milfoil inspections. And there are dozens of other volunteers who participate in the annual loon count, set up the loon raft, and watch for invasive species. We are a very active group!

How You Can Help

There are important ways that you can help to keep our ponds healthy. Mike Gately would like to set up a class to train volunteer boat inspectors, so that we can expand boat inspections to include Fridays and Mondays, beyond the weekend inspections arranged by the Lakes Environmental Association. He would also like to train volunteers as pond watchers to keep an eye out for invasive plants on both ponds. If you are interested, you can email him at mgately84@gmail.com.

The threat that milfoil will invade our ponds is real. Last year the LEA removed 500 large bags of milfoil from Sebago Cove, and there are significant infestations at Long Lake, Songo River, and Brandy Pond. They are only about 15 miles from us. On July 4th last year, milfoil fragments were discovered and removed from a pontoon boat at Denmark's Moose Pond.

At last year's annual meeting, a motion was passed to establish a stand-alone fund separate from dues to pay for additional milfoil boat inspections. If you would like to contribute to this fund, you can write a check payable to the Hancock and Sand Ponds Association, with a note designating it for boat inspections, and send it to Hancock and Sand Ponds Association, P.O. Box 856, Denmark, ME, 04022.

Your annual dues also help keep our ponds healthy. Last year the HSPA contributed \$1,510 to the Lakes Environmental Association for water quality testing, and \$2,762 for boat inspections.

In 2019, about 50% of property owners on the ponds contributed HSPA dues, but last year participation dropped slightly to 48%. The Covid-19 pandemic has certainly hurt people's wallets in the last year, but it would be great to increase dues contributions and even greater still would be to surpass 50% participation.

(cont.)

Annual Meeting

Because of Covid restrictions, we decided last summer to postpone the July annual meeting to October, and when the virus remained a threat, we decided to hold the meeting online, using Zoom.

This year, the virus remains with us, but more and more people are getting vaccinated, and in May, Maine increased the indoor meeting capacity to 75%, and eliminate the quarantine requirement for visitors.

Therefore, pending any changes in state policy, we think it safe to hold our annual meeting in the town hall, as usual, on Saturday, July 17, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. We will follow all safety protocols, including requiring face coverings and spacing seating.

We hope as many of you as possible can join us. We look forward to the opportunity to once again meet face to face and share our passion for Hancock and Sand Ponds.

**HSPA Mission Statement**

The Hancock and Sand Ponds Association exists to protect and preserve the pristine waters of Hancock and Sand Ponds as a treasured natural resource for today and for future generations. The Association strives to promote conservation and a healthy ecosystem within the boundaries of the ponds and adjoining watersheds by

- Promoting continuing partnerships with organizations that share common ecological values and goals;
- Promoting actions that ensure the healthy environment of the ponds;
- Respecting the interests of property owners by providing a conduit for member concerns while working cooperatively with landowners, visitors, and compatible organizations in promoting the safe enjoyment of our surrounding woodlands and cherished ponds.

Treasurer's Report 2020:

An uneventful 2020 (financially speaking) meant that the HSPA account was in the black by a bit over \$1100. Larger donations than usual and a lack of unexpected expenses helped us keep our finances stable.

We received dues from 116 members for 2020, about 48% of shorefront properties or 46% of the names in our list. This is down slightly from last year's participation of about 50%. A grant from Maine Department of Environmental Protection (ME-DEP) helped offset the cost of boat inspection time. Expenses were limited to donations to LEA, support for advanced water quality monitoring, courtesy boat inspections, and printing and other miscellaneous costs.

Looking ahead to this year, Mike Gately reports that we were awarded a \$2000 grant from ME-DEP for boat inspections, so our costs may end up lower depending on total inspection hours. As long as we can keep up the rate of dues payments, our finances for 2021 should remain 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 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.

New Milfoil Fund

At last year's annual meeting, the membership voted to establish a stand-alone fund separate from dues to pay for extra milfoil boat inspections at the Wabunaki Public Boat Launch. The motion was approved by a vote of 26 yes, 1 no.

Currently the Lakes Environmental Association arranges for inspections on weekends throughout the summer.

Mike Gately, who heads the Milfoil Program, said that the fund would pay for more inspection hours, with the option of adding inspectors on Fridays and Mondays. It would also allow us to be better prepared to handle mitigation costs should invasive plants be discovered in our ponds.

The motion included an option to return the money to the general fund by majority vote of association members at an annual meeting.

To donate to the fund, you can send a check, payable to the Hancock and Sand Ponds Association, to P.O. Box 856, Denmark, ME, 04022, with a note stating that it is a donation to the milfoil fund.

1/2020 – 12/2020

Opening Balance:	\$8,322.97
Income	
Dues (incl. 2019 received in 2020)	\$5,890.00
Donations	\$1,385.00
Milfoil Inspection Fund	\$100.00
Total Grants	\$1,700.00
Total Income	\$9,075.00
Expenses	
Fees, Printing, and Other Costs	-\$972.79
Contributions	-\$1,000.00
Courtesy Boat Inspections	-\$4,462.50
Pond Monitoring	-\$1,510.00
Total Expenses	-\$7,945.29
Year End Balance:	\$9,452.68

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

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:

At the 2020 annual meeting, Amy March, chair of the Loon Committee, reported on the results of the 2020 loon count. On Hancock Pond, there were six adults and no chicks; on Sand Pond, there were two adults and no chicks. In addition, there were three loons flying toward Hancock Pond that were not counted.

A pond resident said there was an abandoned loon nest on a small island on Hancock Pond near the Dugway, and it contained an egg.

The Committee learned that loons do not have successful chicks every year – the loons on our ponds are reproducing at an average rate.

Larry Clark and Bill Van Voorhis found a wounded loon on a beach on Hancock Pond. They called the game warden, who took it to Avian Haven. Its leg had been severed, probably by a snapping turtle. The vets were unable to save it.

The Loon Committee will continue to put up warning signs at Loon Cove and on Sand Pond islands to discourage people and dogs near loon nests.

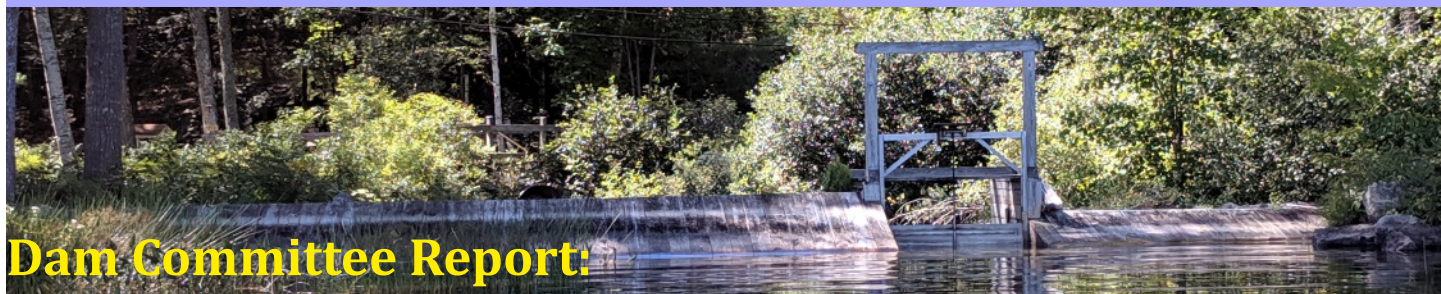
Amy was contacted by Lee Attix, who was referred to us by Colin Holme at the Lakes Environment Association. Lee has worked for over 20 years on various loon conservation projects in the northeast. He wants to gather data, train citizen scientists and encourage conservation efforts and education. He is looking for partners on the various ponds. Amy gave him the names of people on her committee. The Loon Committee is hoping to work with him to gather more data this summer.

The Committee invites all Sand and Hancock Pond residents to urge fisherpeople to use only lead-free tackle, since lead is still the leading cause of death for loons. Also, watch loon babies from a distance. The babies can't dive for the first couple of weeks, so boats coming close are very threatening to the parents.

If you are interested in joining the Loon Committee or including your email in our list for loon updates, please contact Amy March at amymarch@mac.com.



Larry Clark put out the loon raft on Hancock Pond April 10



Dam Committee Report:

State Inspects Hancock Pond Dam

Last summer the Executive Committee asked State Dam Inspector John Skelley to inspect the outlet dam on Hancock Pond to assess its condition and advise us on how best to maintain the dam. Skelley works with the state's Dam Safety Program.

Skelley inspected the dam on Aug. 27, 2020. Present were Ben Peierls and Joe Nagy of the Executive Board, dam committee co-chairs Bill Van Voorhis and Bob Remick, and Peter Bragdon, who was responsible for operation and maintenance of 32 Central Maine Power dams.

Background

The dam was renovated in 1990, replacing the wooden gate with a new aluminum gate. The gate has an aluminum screw mechanism that raises and lowers the gate on aluminum tracks. When raised the gate lets water out from the bottom of the gate. Normally the gate is kept open about two inches, but in spring runoff it is opened more, and during droughts it is lowered to one inch, so as to maintain some stability and consistency of the water level. Historically, the water level measured at the dam gate can range from 22-25 inches during spring runoff, and 6-8 inches during September and October.

In the past, some residents had expressed concern about high water that increased shoreline erosion, flooded beaches, and threatened loon nests. Conversely, boat owners have said that low water makes docks inaccessible and increases hazards from submerged rocks. So in 2014 a specially appointed water level committee studied historical water level records, consulted with landowners, state officials, and the Lakes Environmental Association.

At the July 2015 annual meeting the committee proposed a policy that the water level be maintained within a range of 12 inches to 18 inches, as measured at the outlet dam. This was unanimously approved by membership.

The co-chairs of the Dam Committee, Bill Van Voorhis and Bob Remick, keep a record of water levels at the dam, and open and close the gate as needed to keep the water level within those parameters. Van Voorhis has installed about 30 gates in dams around Maine, and Remick has had a family camp near the dam since the 1950s.

Skelley's Report

Skelley said our dam was a low-impact dam, which means that if it failed it would cause minimum damage. He said that if the dam failed, the road bridge behind the dam and the culverts would function as a secondary impoundment.

He took numerous measurements and closely examined the dam, and said it was in good shape. He noted that there was some seepage on the far bank, but it was not severe, and he could not tell exactly where it was coming from. Given that the dam is earth and rock on either side of the aluminum gate, it would not be unusual for some water to find its way through. But there was not any standing water, just dampness. He said it was worth keeping an eye on it.

We asked Skelley whether frequently opening and closing the gate would cause damage to the gate. He said the gate was designed to open and close to adjust the water level. Furthermore, he said that letting the lake level rise would cause the greatest threat to the integrity of the dam, because as the water rose, hydraulic pressure would build up. Skelley said that "The best thing to protect the dam's integrity is to keep it open" during times of high water.

Guarding Against Invasive Species

Mike Gately, chair of the Milfoil Program, reported that our grant application to Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to help pay for milfoil boat inspections was approved. The DEP awarded HSPA \$2,000 for boat inspections in 2021. This is \$300 more than last year.

The Lakes Environmental Association (LEA) organizes boat inspections at the Hancock Pond public boat launch on Wabunaki Road. The LEA trains boat inspectors and pays them \$15 an hour. The total cost last year for Hancock Pond boat inspections was \$4,380. The HSPA paid \$2,762 out of its dues, and the remainder was covered by the state grant.

Mike reports that this summer boat inspections will take place Saturdays and Sundays from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day, from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m., and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Last summer inspections were expanded to Friday and Monday the week before the 4th of July through Labor Day.

Summer Jobs Available

According to Mike, the LEA has a hard time finding inspectors to work at our pond and at Peabody Pond. He asks that association members contact him if they have children or grandchildren who might like a part-time job for the summer doing inspections at our launch.

Time slots that are not filled by paid inspectors are covered by volunteer inspectors from the HSPA. Mike is working with the Lakes Environmental Association to set up free training for volunteer boat inspectors so that we can once again expand boat inspections to include Fridays and Mondays. Training usually takes place in July, but this year the timing depends on Covid-19 restrictions.

Last year there were 292 inspection hours, with 451 boats inspected. No invasive plants were found at Hancock Pond. However, there was one invasive plant found on Moose Pond, so milfoil is in our area.

Pond Watchers Wanted

Mike is also seeking to expand the number of volunteer pond watchers for both ponds to look for invasive plants and species by canoe and kayak. Last summer 15 HSPA members put in 200 volunteer hours patrolling for invasive species.

Free training for pond watching will be offered through the Maine Lake Society, and will likely be online. Mike points out that volunteers' pond watching hours are required as support for the DEP grant application.

Those interested in being trained as either a boat inspector or pond watcher can email Mike at mgately84@gmail.com.

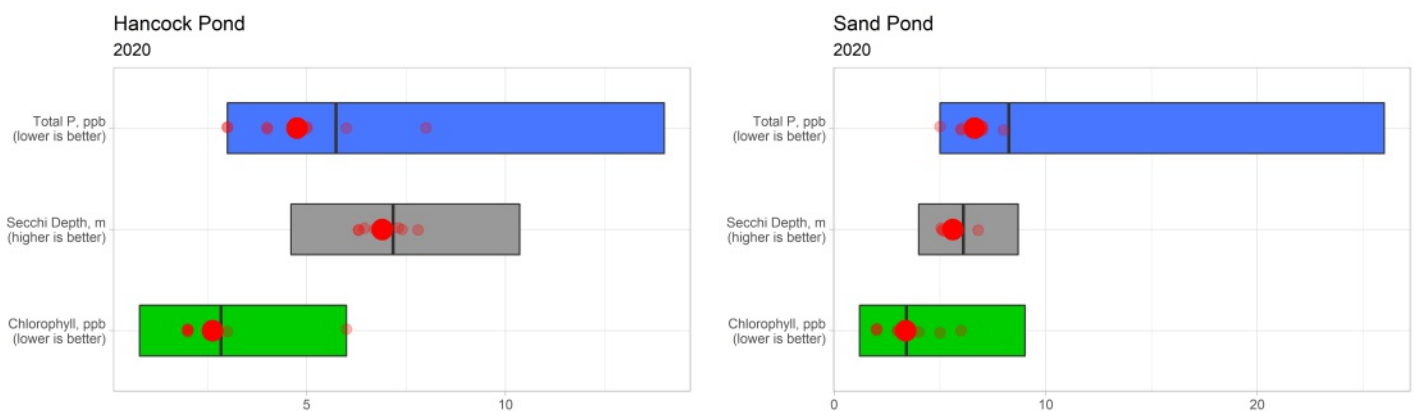


Lakes Environmental Association – Water Quality Report :

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 fifty years, LEA has produced annual reports summarizing and interpreting critical indicators for each of the water bodies it monitors.

Relatively warm and dry conditions in 2020 led in part to generally good water quality conditions in lakes monitored by LEA. Only nine lakes had water clarity, phosphorus (P), or chlorophyll values that indicate lower quality. When looking over the long term, 84–85% of lakes had increasing or stable water clarity trends (measured by Secchi depth), 89–96% of lakes had decreasing or stable P trends, and 95–96% of lakes had decreasing or stable chlorophyll concentration (a proxy for algae) trends.

LEA reports that moderate clarity and chlorophyll values and low P concentrations, along with increasing clarity, stable P, and decreasing chlorophyll over the long term, means that Hancock Pond maintained good water quality in 2020. Sand Pond had moderate values for all three indicators and stable trends (i.e. no long-term change) except for clarity, which now shows a slight decrease. On the other hand, oxygen depletion in deep water is still a concern and will be monitored. The absence of oxygen at depth eliminated suitable cold-water fish habitat by mid-August for Sand and September for Hancock. Full reports for both Hancock and Sand Ponds are accessible at the Lakes Environmental Association website (mainelakes.org/water-testing-report/).



2020 readings (light-red dots) and average (large solid red dot) compared to long-term average (black line) and range (colored boxes) of phosphorus, clarity, and algae

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>Increasing</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Decreasing</i>	<i>Mix</i>
Sand	<i>Significant</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Decreasing</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Mix</i>

Legislature Kills Bill to Drain Boats

The Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee of the Maine legislature rejected a proposed bill that would require boat owners to drain their boat, “including live wells, ballast tanks and bilges,” when the boat is removed from a body of water.

The purpose of the bill was to prevent invasive aquatic plants and species from hitchhiking on boats and being introduced to other bodies of water.

A public hearing on the bill was held on Feb. 10. After hearing testimony, the committee concluded that the bill “ought not to pass.”

Afterwards, the chairman of the committee, Sen. James Dill, said “The committee felt that the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife already had an educational program in place on invasive species, and this bill would be an added burden.” There was also a concern that out-of-state boats “could actually dump holding tanks on boat ramps and create a bigger problem.” Another concern was that live wells and bait tanks were not addressed in the bill.

Maine Lakes and the Lakes Environmental Association both supported the bill. The Executive Committee of the Hancock and Sand Ponds Association also sent a letter of support, as did several individual members.

Maine Lakes pointed out that “more than 30 Maine lakes and rivers are infested with six different invasive species.” Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York already require that boat owners remove drain plugs from their boats before transporting.

The LEA says that courtesy boat inspectors will continue to ask boaters to “clean, drain, and dry” their boats after removing them from the water. According to the LEA, “Draining standing water from a boat can help reduce the spread of invasive animals like Zebra Mussels and Spiny Waterfleas.”



Denmark Town Newsletter

The Town of Denmark is building an email list of town residents. The Town will periodically send out newsletters and updates about Town business and activities.

You are invited to add your email to the list. Please go to the Denmark Town website: www.denmarkmaine.org. The Town Newsletter Signup is at the top right.

The Town will not share your contact information with anyone else.



Meet Your Neighbor:

In 2019, 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.

Andrew McClean of Hancock Pond

When Andrew McClean volunteered last spring to take over as chair of the Buoy Committee, he wanted to give something back for all the summers he and his family have spent on Hancock Pond. "We've been using the lake our entire lives and it seemed like something simple we could do," said McClean.

The job of the Buoy Committee is far from simple. McClean supervised installing 34 navigational buoys, connected to cinder-block anchors by chains, to exact GPS locations provided by the Navigational Aids Program of the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. He later removed them in the fall.

McClean and his two older brothers grew up on Hancock Pond. His mom first bought a camp on Shore Road as a vacation home when she was a 25-year-old bank examiner living with her parents. Four years ago, Andrew's parents sold that camp and purchased their current house on Wabunaki Road. "I've been coming up to the pond since before I was born," said McClean.



Andrew McClean aboard the 74-ft ketch Dragonera, firing a signal cannon at the start of a yacht race in Antigua

Nowadays McClean is used to navigating bigger waters. After graduating from Montana State University in 2008 with a degree in land resource analysis and management, he was hoping to find a job in the Forest Service or in land management, but jobs were scarce, so he took another tack. He signed up for a semester abroad with the Sea Education Association, which is affiliated with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. He spent half the semester on shore at their campus Falmouth, Massachusetts, and the second half on the ocean, sailing from Hawaii to Tahiti.

To qualify for a captain's license, he then completed 120 days at sea, working on a tour boat in Alaska and in Camden, Maine, on the windjammer fleet, sailing traditional schooners and ketches. This qualified him for

a 100-ton U.S. Coast Guard master's license, which allows him to captain boats up to 130 feet.

He now lives in South Portland, and has his own yacht management business. He looks after boats ranging from a 40-ft power boat to a 70-ft. sail boat. In the summer he plans trips for clients, mostly up and down the Maine coast, selecting the routes, provisioning the food, and serving on board as navigator. "My primary goal is making sure we don't hit any rocks," he said with a smile.

When he is not working, he spends 10 days in the summer, and a week in fall and spring, on Hancock Pond.

Amy March of Sand Pond

Anyone who has met Amy March knows that she gets things done. As chair of the HSPA Loon Committee, she has built up a mailing list of some 46 people. Members volunteer for the annual loon count, look after the loon raft, and put up warning signs around nest areas.

Amy comes by her leadership skills naturally. Her father was a career diplomat in the foreign service of the State Department, and she grew up all over Asia. She lived in Hong Kong and India, among other countries, and went to high school in Nepal.

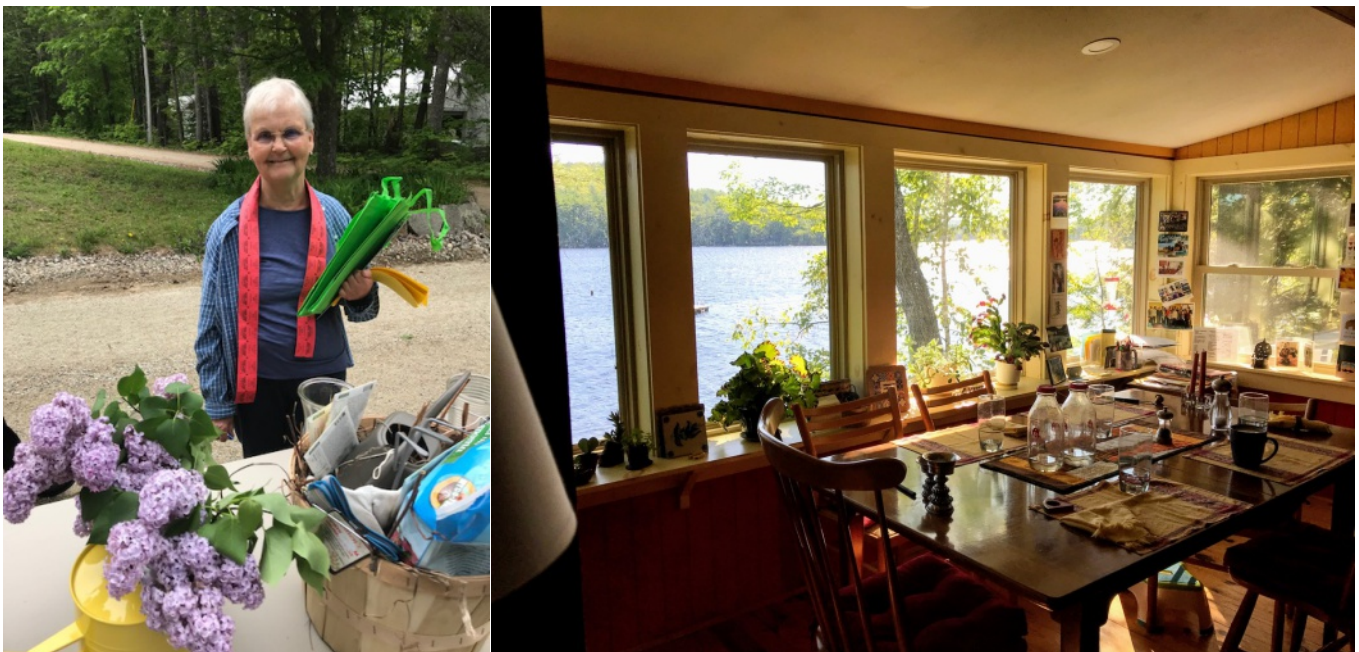
Her uncle, Ken Forman, bought a camp on Sand Pond in 1963. He worked for Save the Children. He and his wife retired to Sand Pond in 1987. Ken was a founding member of the Lakes Environmental Association. He was very concerned about the preservation of our natural resources, and hearing him speak passionately about the health of the ponds summer after summer encouraged Amy to get involved.

Amy started coming to the camp in the 1970s, arriving for the summers. For 30 years, she was a teacher in New York City, the last several years of which she supervised Pre-K programs in the South Bronx, and directed a family literacy program for immigrants.

She inherited the camp from her aunt and uncle, and in 2012, she moved into it as her year-round home. After living in rental apartments in New York City, this was her first house. Neighbors took bets that first year on whether she'd last out the Maine winter. Happily for us, she did, and continues to thrive and love being here.

In her retirement, Amy initiated the Loon Committee out of concern for the loon population. She recruited members, initially through the Hancock and Sand Ponds Association, but she also opened it up to interested people who do not have property on the ponds. The committee educates people about loons, and members talk with friends and neighbors, and information is spread. She's discovered that the loon population is doing fine, but new people who come to the ponds need to be made aware of the danger of lead fishing tackle, and cautioned to avoid disturbing nesting sites, especially by dogs and motor boats.

In addition to her work with the HSPA, Amy is president of the Denmark Public Library Board and represents the Library on the Denmark Broadband Committee. She also serves as a volunteer navigator for the Affordable Care Act, helping people enroll in health insurance.



Amy at the Denmark Library annual plant sale (left) and the view from her cabin on Sand Pond (right)

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