
May 2024

HANCOCK & SAND PONDS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter

Required Boater Safety Course

The Maine legislature has passed a law requiring recreational boaters under age 25 to pass a boater safety course before they can operate a motorboat or personal watercraft on Maine waters.

Beginning January 1, 2024, a person born on or after January 1, 1999, may not operate a motorboat of 25 horsepower or greater on Maine's inland or territorial waters unless that person is 12 years of age or older and has completed a boater safety and education course.

In addition, a person born on or after January 1, 1999 must be 16 years of age or older and have completed a Boater Safety and Education Course to operate a personal watercraft such as a jet ski on inland waters of the state.



More information is available at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife web site, under *Educational Programs*.

Operators must possess and present a boater safety and education course certificate for inspection upon request to a law enforcement officer. Those without the

See **Boaters** - Page 3

Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 13, 2024

9 am. to 11 am.

Denmark Municipal Building



President's Message

By Joe Nagy

There is no task more important to us than protecting the water quality of Hancock and Sand Ponds. The greatest threat we face is milfoil infestation. The risk is real. Lake Arrowhead, Songo River, Sebago Lake, Brandy Pond, and Long Lake - all in our vicinity - are battling milfoil infestations. Many boaters who visit those lakes also visit ours.

For this reason, Courtesy Boat Inspections at the Hancock Pond boat launch is a vital deterrent. In the past, paid inspectors checked boats on weekends from Memorial Day through Labor Day, with Mondays and Fridays added during holiday weekends.

Last year, the Invasive Species Committee (Mike Gately, Chair, and Dave Rogers) learned from the Lakes Environmental Association (LEA) that continuing boat inspections between Labor Day and the second week of October is a smart investment, as boat traffic continues to be heavy and invasive plants continue to grow. Mike and Dave tried to cover boat inspections through volunteers last year. However, they found it to be difficult to find volunteers after Labor Day.

This year, Mike and Dave propose adding paid boat inspections for five weekends beyond Labor Day. The LEA recruits and trains the inspectors, but we pay their salaries.



We are pleased to report that Mike has successfully secured a 2024 grant from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) of \$3,000, up from \$2,530 last year. That is a major accomplishment given the stiff competition for those funds. This year our proposed cost for expanded boat inspections, after the DEP grant, will be \$5,510, an increase of \$1,874.

Our projected income from dues and donations, based on last year's figures, will not cover the increased cost. Therefore, the directors propose increasing the annual membership dues from \$50 to \$60. We will introduce a motion to increase dues at the July 13 Annual Meeting.

Membership dues have not been increased since 2018, and the directors believe that it is in everyone's interest to increase dues now. We hope you agree.

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Message *continued from Page 2*

Since dues will remain \$50 until after a vote at the annual meeting, we strongly encourage members to continue to make an additional contribution to the Milfoil Fund, which is used to offset the cost of boat inspections not covered by the grant.

That fund was started only three years ago and last year you contributed over \$2,500, which is great news! You can pay dues

and contribute to the Milfoil Fund on our website, hspmaine.org. Just select JOIN US at the top of our home page.

If you mail in your dues in the self-addressed envelope provided in this newsletter, please add an extra donation with a note specifying that it go to the Milfoil Fund.

We hope you have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Boaters *continued from Page 1*

certificate are liable for a fine between \$100 and \$500 for the first offense.

There are currently three vendors that provide Maine online boating education courses. Once you have successfully completed this self-paced online course you will immediately be issued a boater safety and education course certificate. The online courses are:

BoatUS Foundation: This foundation is a nonprofit organization that promotes boating safety. This is a free online course that requests a \$10 donation.

Boat-Ed: This online course costs \$34.95.

Boattests101: this online course costs \$24.95.

New Aquatic Invasive Law

Another new law introduced last summer makes it illegal for boaters to “drain or release water held on or within a watercraft, allowing that water to enter any inland water body of the state.”

The law is designed to prevent boaters from introducing invasive aquatic plants into Maine waters. Water must be drained from the boat or equipment in a spot where it won't go into lake water.

There are 11 invasive aquatic species that are illegal to import, sell or transport. Those can disrupt or displace native plants and animals and cause irreparable harm to water bodies.



Loon Committee Report: Loon Death

By Amy March

Stephanie Payne found a dead loon on Hancock Pond last summer. With the help of Micah Miller, who works for the Biodiversity Research Institute, we learned that the loon died of lead poisoning. According to Micah, "Loons and other birds regularly pick up small stones to help break up their prey in the gizzard, but sometimes they mistake fishing equipment for small stones and ingest them. Lead fishing equipment is now illegal for use in Maine, but many people still have lead-based fishing equipment." This is an important reminder that we must continue to encourage all fisherpeople to get rid of old lead tackle!

Loon Count

Each summer the Loon Committee does a loon count on Hancock and Sand Ponds. The results from the 2023 count: There were six loons on Hancock Pond, and no chicks. There were four loons on Sand Pond, and no chicks.

The loons on Hancock Pond built two nests but both were abandoned. One egg was discovered in a new place, disappeared and then strangely reappeared. The loons built a dyke in front of one nest, probably to protect from rising water.

The loons on Sand Pond also built one nest which was abandoned. The loons at the south end appeared to be looking for a nest site but did not build one.



Photo: Gayle Dangers-Meusel

Nesting in Loon Cove, Hancock Pond

Judy Coleman expressed concern that the loon pair at the south end of Sand Pond, who had previously been productive, have produced no surviving chicks for the last four years. We don't know what caused the nests to be abandoned, but severely rising water following several storms and increasing numbers of bald eagles are probably factors. Also, Micah Miller added: "Human disturbance cannot be discounted."

LEA Loon Project

Maggie Welch, who heads the Lakes Environmental Association's Loon Project, reported that a loon raft was placed on the west side of Sand Pond, where loons tried to nest the last two years, and a second raft was placed near the islands at the south end, where a loon pair has traditionally nested, but not successfully in the last four years. Neither raft was occupied over the summer.

See **Loons** - Page 6

Invasive Species Committee Report

By Mike Gately

With support of the pond association funds, along with our annual grant from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the expanded days and hours of our Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) program at the public boat launch was a great success.

The expansion started in 2022 and continued in 2023 with an increase from three days to four days on all three holiday weekends, and expansion of eight-hour days to ten-hour days. This will continue in 2024. We also plan to expand paid CBI coverage in the fall on Saturdays and Sundays through mid-October.

In 2023 the CBI program inspected 521 boats at the public boat launch. This was an increase of 35 boats over the 486 inspected in 2022. No plant fragments were found in 2023.

Although pond association members have requested increased inspections, our attempts to attract volunteers from Labor Day through mid-October has been limited.

If you know of anyone looking for a part-time job over the summer that gives you some time to soak up the sun and keep your feet in the water when not inspecting boats, please have them submit an application directly to the Lakes Environmental Association (LEA). The application can be found on the LEA website, Mainelakes.org.



Brittle Naiad

Dave Rogers will be coordinating our volunteer efforts for both pond watching and boat inspections. We plan to have sign-up sheets for pond watchers at the July annual meeting.

The danger of invasive species entering our ponds is very real and our pond continues to be on the high-risk listing for the state. Shown above is a photo of Brittle Naiad, which was found in 2022 at Sokokis Lake (Limerick) and is of particular concern, as it is new in Maine and can spread quickly.

I'm pleased to report that the Maine DEP increased our grant this year from \$2,530 to \$3,000. I think the DEP is supporting our efforts for several reasons. Our ponds are at high risk based on other area lakes having milfoil already. Also, we have an active association that is engaged with LEA to monitor and prevent invasive

See *Invasives*- Page 6

Loons *continued from page 4*

On Hancock Pond, one nesting platform was placed at Loon Cove. Several members of the committee suggested that the raft be placed near the small islands close to the dugway, where there have been nests in the past.

We were very pleased to welcome Micah Miller to our September meeting. He has a camp on Sand Pond, and is willing to receive calls about injured and dead loons. His organization does avian rescue work for the State of Maine. He can be reached at (618)-353-4910, or on email at micah.miller@briwildlife.org.

It was suggested that we place a webcam near an active nest this summer to increase positive interest in the loons and discourage people from getting too close. Anyone interested is encouraged to do this and let us know.

Finally, we should record the numbers on boats that resist suggestions to stay away from loons. This may serve as a deterrent. Boaters who harass loons can be reported to the Maine Warden Service at 207-624-7076.

If you would like to be on the HSPA Loon Committee email list, please email Amy March at amymarch852@gmail.com.



Photo: Gayle Dangers-Meusel

Hancock Pond's mysterious disappearing egg

Invasives *continued from page 5*

species from entering our ponds. Finally, we are actively trying to expand monitoring through paid inspectors and volunteer monitoring.

We ask for your financial support of the inspection program to help keep our ponds free of invasive species. Donating is quick and easy and can be done electronically by clicking on the link in the pond association website or by mailing a check made payable to Hancock & Sand Ponds Association, attention Ben Peierls,

Treasurer, PO Box 856, Denmark ME 04022.

Please let Dave Rogers or me know if you spend time pond watching checking for milfoil and other invasive species. This information is needed for my mid-summer and end-of-season reports to Maine DEP.

If you have any questions don't hesitate to email, text or call:

Mike Gately, 207-751-9730
mgately84@gmail.com

Dave Rogers, 207-452-4105
davidrogers7648@verizon.net

Lakes Environmental Association Water Quality Report

By Ben Peierls

The Lakes Environmental Association monitors water quality in 41 lakes in southern Oxford County and northwestern Cumberland County. Record summer rainfall in 2023 impacted water quality for those lakes – lake waters were noticeably less clear. But over the long term, the rain had minimal impact: 74% of lakes had increasing or stable water clarity trends (measured by Secchi depth), 93% of lakes had decreasing or stable phosphorus (P) trends, and 93% of lakes had decreasing or stable chlorophyll concentration (a proxy for algae) trends.

Hancock Pond maintained good water quality in 2023, despite the lower than average water clarity and higher than average P levels (red symbols in chart).

Long-term average water clarity remained high and stable (i.e., no change), while P and chlorophyll concentrations were moderate, with either stable or decreasing trends over time.

Sand Pond's condition was similar, with moderate long-term averages for all three indicators and stable long-term trends for P and chlorophyll. Water clarity decreased slightly over the long term, but was still greater than the threshold for low clarity (3 m). Deep-water P concentrations for both lakes suggested limited internal P recycling, which is good.

Water testing reports for all LEA monitored lakes are accessible at the LEA website (mainelakes.org/water-testing-report/) and information for each lake is available at mainelakes.org/lake-information/.

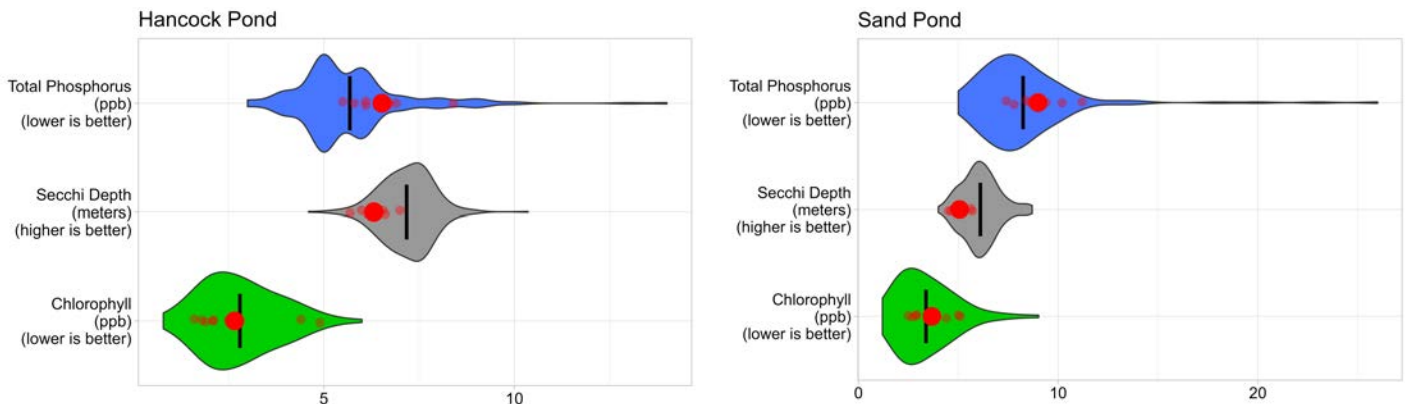


Figure Legend: 2023 water quality data (light-red dots) and average (large solid red dot) compared to long-term average (black line) and distribution (colored areas) of phosphorus, clarity, and chlorophyll (algae) data. Colored area thickness indicates the number of measurements at each value (e.g., thin colored area means there are few measurements at extreme values). Note different x-axis scales.

Lake	Clarity Long-term		Phosphorus Long-term		Chlorophyll Long-term		Deep Phosphorus
	Average	Trend	Average	Trend	Average	Trend	
Hancock	High	Stable	Moderate	Stable	Moderate	Decreasing	7.4 ppb
Sand	Moderate	Decreasing	Moderate	Stable	Moderate	Stable	9.5 ppb

Treasurer's Report 2023

By Ben Peierls

HSPA ended the 2023 fiscal year with a positive net cash flow of \$844.59.

We received dues from 117 members for 2023, about 52% of shorefront properties and a bit more than last year's rate. A grant of \$2,530 from Maine Department of Environmental Protection (ME-DEP) helped offset the cost of courtesy boat inspection time, as did over \$2,500 in donations to the Milfoil Fund. We received several generous donations to that fund and more in honor of Richard Johnson. Our expenses included the boat inspections, support for LEA and advanced water quality monitoring, newsletter printing, our website hosting, and miscellaneous fees.

Our biggest expense is the cost of courtesy boat inspections for invasive species. Mike Gately has secured a \$3,000 grant for 2024 from the ME-DEP Invasive Species Program, which will help offset the cost for those inspections.

If we maintain the same rate of donations to the Milfoil Fund, along with the DEP grant, we should be able to increase the number of inspections at the boat launch and help keep the lakes free of milfoil and other invasives. Please consider an additional donation if you can.

HSPA Cash Flow		
	2022	2023
Opening Bank Balance:	\$12,641.68	\$13,014.18
Income		
Dues	\$5,600.00	\$5,811.50
Donations	\$650.00	\$0
Donations-Richard Johnson	\$135.00	\$150.00
Milfoil Inspection Fund	\$1,555.00	\$2,525.42
DEP Invasive Cost Share Grant (CBI)	\$2,200.00	\$2,530.00
Total Income:	\$10,140.00	\$11,016.92
Expenses		
Fees, Printing, Postage, & Other Costs	-\$954.76	-\$1,143.33
Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI)	-\$5,670.00	-\$5,976.00
LEA Advanced Testing Initiatives	-\$1,800.00	-\$1,800.00
Donation (LEA)	-\$1,000.00	-\$1,000.00
Donation (other lake organizations)		-\$203.00
Hall Rental	-\$50.00	-\$50.00
Website and domain	-\$342.74	\$0
Total Expenses:	-\$9,817.50	-\$10,172.33
Net Cash Flow Balance:	\$322.50	\$844.59
Ending Bank Balance:	\$13,014.18	\$13,858.77

To donate to the Milfoil Fund or renew your membership, send a check payable to the Hancock & Sand Ponds Association to PO Box 856, Denmark, ME 04022. Please specify what the money is for and your camp address as well. We also accept donations and membership dues paid online—look for the “Join Us” link on our website.

Dues and donations to HSPA go towards supporting all we do to help protect the health and quality of Hancock and Sand Ponds. I encourage you to maintain your membership and send in your dues today. If you haven't given to HSPA before, please join us!

Important Phone Numbers

- **Oxford County Sheriff: 207-743-9554**
- **In case of Emergency, dial 911**

- **Maine Warden Service (24-hr): 207-624-7076 (State Police Dispatch).** The Game Warden is responsible for laws and rules pertaining to inland fishery and wildlife resource management and protection, watercraft, and all-terrain vehicles. They also investigate hunting-related shooting incidents and recreational vehicle crashes. If you witness a violation, please call the above number.

- **Denmark Town Office: 207-452-2163**
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- **Sebago Town Office: 207-787-2457**

- **Bridgton Hospital: 207-647-6000**
- **Emergency number: 207-647-6070**

- **Micah Miller, Biodiversity Research Institute: (618)-353-4910, micah.miller@briwildlife.org**
If you see a loon injured or in distress, call Micah for advice.

Annual Membership Dues

Your membership dues support our work to protect the future of our beautiful lakes. Please pay \$50 by check or online by June 30th.

To pay online, go to our website: hspmaine.org, and select JOIN US at the top of the home page. You'll find a link to pay dues and to make a contribution to the Milfoil Fund.

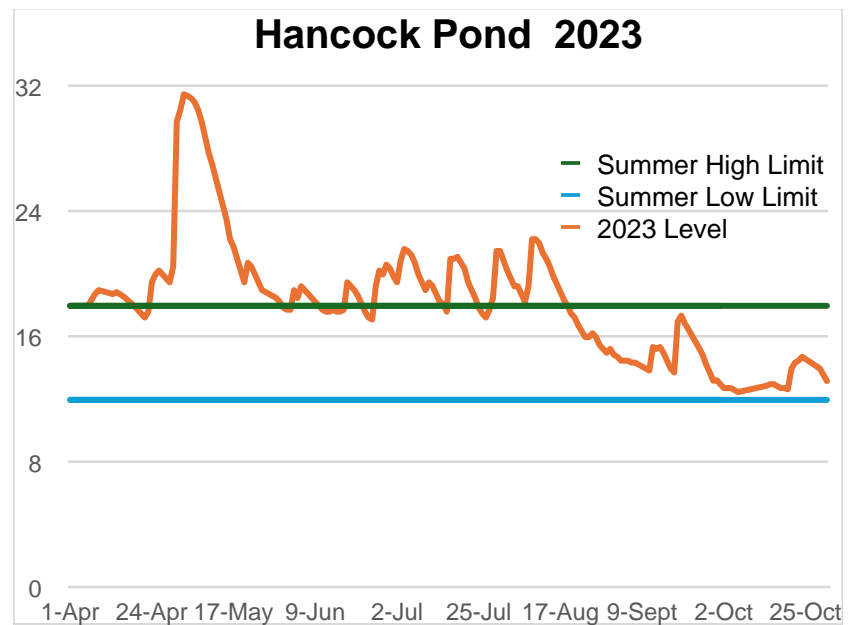
You can also mail your \$50 check payable to the Hancock & Sand Ponds Association to:

Hancock & Sand Ponds Association
PO Box 856
Denmark, ME 04022

Dam Report: A Wet Summer

By Larry Clark

Rains came with unusual frequency last summer. Even with the dam sluice fully open for much of the summer, water levels stayed near or over our target into late August (see Peter Bragdon's graph). Water levels returned to normal through the fall. One week before Christmas 5 inches of rain plus melting snow in 24 hours brought the lake way up so water was going over the low side of the dam.



Graph: Peter Bragdon

The Lake normally freezes in December. This year after starting to freeze, rising temperatures or high winds broke up the ice. After New Year, temperatures turned a little more winter like. The lake finally froze over during the first week of January. In early March unusually warm temps, rain and melting snow got the brooks flowing again and the water came back to a very high level by first day of spring.

Despite snow storms the week of March 17th this must have been one of the shortest winters on record. I don't think the snow pack or ice on the lake ever exceeded 12 inches, very unusual. The local deer herd must have benefited from the shallow snow depth, half what it was last year.

A related observation: the wet summer last year probably benefited our White

Pine trees. Why? White Pine seeds require two years to mature, pollinated one year and mature into cones the next. In addition, White Pines have very big "cone years," roughly six or seven years apart. Late summer of 2023 saw the branches of many White Pines bowed under the weight of new green cones, a "cone year." This spring we are seeing many fallen spent cones.

One consequence of this "feast or famine" cycle is that the creatures that rely on pine seeds maintain a population that consumes much of the between "cone years" crop. But they are overwhelmed on the big "cone years," so that many more seeds survive. We should see more tiny White Pines sprouting this summer. Producing a big cone crop is stressful for the trees. So plentiful water last summer was undoubtedly helpful to them.

Meet Your Neighbor: Judy Coleman

In this issue we interview Judy Coleman. For more than three decades, Judy has been a guardian of loons on Sand Pond.

Tell us about yourself.

I grew up in Needham, Massachusetts, and went to Bates College, where I met Phil, my husband of 55 years and counting. During the Vietnam War, Phil joined the Navy, and while he was in training in Newport, Rhode Island, I went back to Bates and got my degree in English Literature. Then he got stationed in Hawaii. Our first son was born there. We finally settled in Standish, Maine, with our two sons. When they were in school I went to USM to study piano performance and piano pedagogy, music history, and theory. I later taught piano lessons and played for performance groups in Portland.

When did you get your place on Sand Pond?

In 1992 we looked for a small cabin on a lake near our home, and chose our present spot on Sand Pond. We love it here and have been able to be here a lot, even during working years. The original camp was very small, basically a covered tent platform. We re-built in 2005. It is still small, but at least the bathroom is inside!

Amy March calls you the “Loon Mom.” How have you looked after the loons on the pond?

We have been watching the loons for 30 years. I have kept a journal here, with random notes about the loons. Often the pair at our end would bring their newly



Judy Coleman on Sand Pond

hatched chick into our cove for its first days before heading out to deeper water. What a joy!

What inspired you to join the Loon Committee?

When Amy March organized a loon committee, of course I wanted to be involved. Our number one purpose has been to educate people about loon behavior, and important human behavior for co-existing with these magnificent birds. Top of the list is keeping far away from loon nests and loons with chicks.

We feel very fortunate to be a part of this semi-wilderness of Maine, and to enjoy the wildlife and wonderful people on Hancock and Sand Ponds.

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Sue Neily - *Vice-President*

Chris Perrin - *Secretary*
Ben Peierls - *Treasurer*
Rebecca Gould - *Webmistress*

Check Out Our Website!

Go to hspamaine.org to find out about our programs
and sign up for email and our annual newsletter.