
May 2023

HANCOCK & SAND PONDS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter

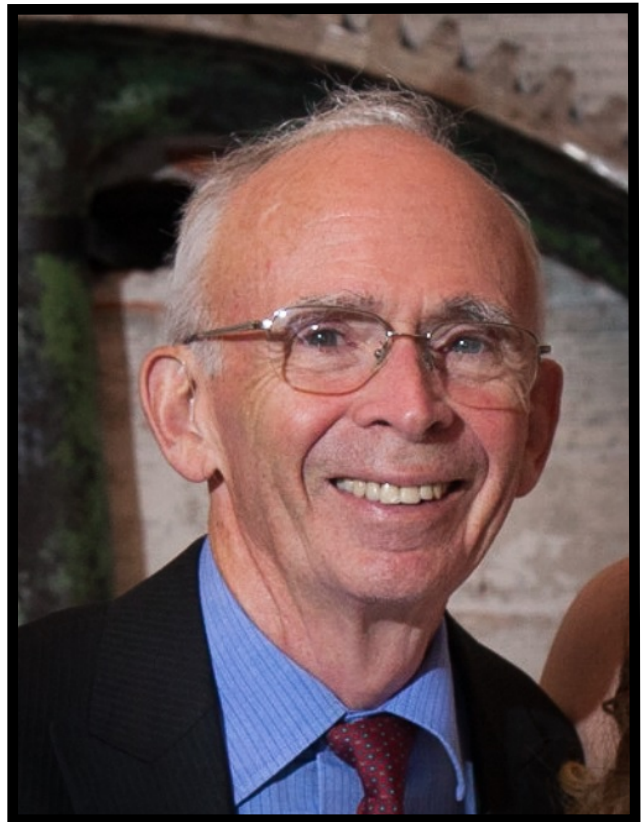
In Memoriam

This winter we lost a beloved member of our community. Richard Johnson, the founding president of the Hancock & Sand Ponds Association, died on Dec. 8, 2022, at his home in Scarborough. He is survived by his wife Sheila.

Johnson registered the Hancock Pond Association as a nonprofit corporation in 1986 and served as president for 23 years, establishing many of the programs that we have today.

Here are some tributes from friends on the ponds:

Dick Johnson certainly deserves the accolades written about him. My first contact with him was about 1989 when we still were overseas. I received a letter requesting support for the new dam construction. I did so but did not meet Dick for many years at the pond until we retired, around 2000. When we met he recalled the letter and said that he enjoyed my reply since it was the first and last letter he ever received from Kathmandu. After retirement I got involved with the Milfoil control and gave Pond Watcher/ID classes for Milfoil and other invasive plants.



Richard Johnson
1940-2022

See *Memoriam* - Page Four

Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 15, 2023

9 am. to 11 am

Denmark Municipal Building

Guest Speaker: Roy Lambert, LakeSmart Representative



President's Message

Nowadays it's easy to be cynical about human nature, but in fact there are hundreds of quiet heroes who go about their lives making their communities and the world a better place.

One such person was Richard Johnson. Richard Johnson died on Dec. 8, 2022, at his home in Scarborough. (See *his obituary on our website, hspamaine.org.*) Johnson established the Hancock Pond Association (later to become the Hancock & Sand Ponds Association) in 1986, and was its first president.

Following Johnson's example, dozens of people in the past 37 years have given their time to protect our ponds for future generations. One such person is Mike Gately. Mike has coordinated the Milfoil Program, recently renamed the Invasive Species Committee, for the last 10 years. Mike is profiled in "Meet Your Neighbor" on page 10.

Call for Volunteers

This winter, after a call for volunteers to join Mike on the Invasive Species Committee, Dave Rogers stepped up and will be joining the committee. We are seeking a third volunteer to join Mike and Dave. No special expertise is required, just an interest in keeping our ponds environmentally sound. If you have an interest in environmental protection, please email Mike Gately at mgately84@gmail.com.

LakeSmart Program

Also featured in this issue is an interview with Roy Lambert, the volunteer coordinator for the Lakes Environmental Association's LakeSmart Program (see *facing page*). Roy will be the guest speaker at our July 15 Annual Meeting.

The LakeSmart program advises property owners on the best ways to reduce soil erosion, which leads to phosphorus runoff and contributes to algae bloom.

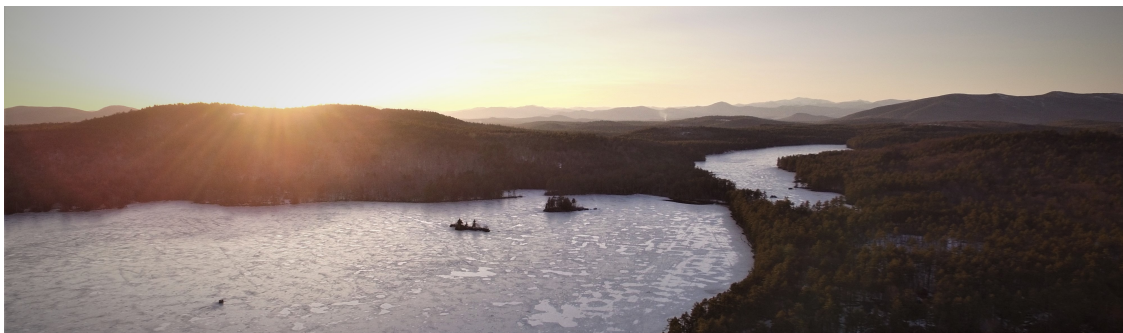
Evaluators Wanted

Roy would like to recruit LakeSmart evaluators on Hancock and Sand Ponds. Roy says, "The formal training takes about three hours, followed by teaming with me for your first several evaluations while you gain experience and confidence."

Having a team of evaluators on the ponds greatly increases the opportunity for participation. Roy says, "Hancock and Sand Ponds have had only three owners request LakeSmart evaluations, with two awards made, over the years, while Moose Pond, which has a LakeSmart program, had 15 evaluations in 2022 alone, with 10 awards made." For more information, Roy can be reached at rdl.lambert@gmail.com.

So if you want to give something back to our lakeside community, please consider getting in touch with Mike Gately or Roy Lambert.

- Joe Nagy



Be LakeSmart

Roy Lambert is the volunteer coordinator for the Lakes Environmental Association's LakeSmart Program. He has served as the chair of the Maine Lakes LakeSmart Committee and currently advises the LakeSmart program manager about policy and evaluation matters. He started a LakeSmart program on Woods Pond in 2015, and remains the coordinator of that program. We asked him to explain how the program works.

What are the benefits of participating in LakeSmart?

LakeSmart educates property owners as to ways their property can be more "lake-friendly" by reducing or eliminating erosion on the property and storm water runoff into the lake. The runoff carries soil particles, and these particles carry phosphorous. Phosphorous feeds algae. Increasing phosphorous levels can result in catastrophic algae blooms.

Unfortunately, Maine has had several lakes suffer catastrophic blooms, including East Pond, Georges Pond, Auburn Lake, Sabattus Pond, and Cross Lake.

LakeSmart also educates property owners as to "best management practices" (BMPs) targeted to whatever challenges exist on their property. This education includes guidance as to how to implement those BMPs.

Participation in LakeSmart (1) is free; (2) does not obligate an owner to undertake any suggestion made in their evaluation report; and (3) does not involve any regulatory risk (i.e., that anyone at LakeSmart will report any shoreland zoning violation, should one be observed). There is nothing to lose in participating in the program.

Participants may receive a LakeSmart Award when the property is particularly lake friendly. If awarded, two distinctive award signs are provided, with the expectation that the owner will display one at their shore and one at the



Roy Lambert

road. Prominence of award signs around a lake help establish a community standard of lake stewardship. Woods Pond, for example, now has 26 awards, so other property owners are increasingly aware of lake stewardship.

How can a homeowner arrange for a site visit?

Property owners arrange for an evaluation through their lake coordinator if their lake has a LakeSmart program. There are currently area LakeSmart programs on Woods Pond, Keoka Lake, Moose Pond, Kezar Lake, and Trickey Pond.

For lakes without LakeSmart programs, evaluations are arranged through the Lakes Environmental Association. Typically, a request comes to Lauren Pickford on its staff (647-8580 or lauren@mainelakes.org). Lauren then directs the request to me. Currently Hancock Pond and Sand Pond each have one property which has received a LakeSmart Award.

Boating Safety Regulations

Two new safe boating regulations are on the horizon in Maine. On March 22, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife held a public hearing on a bill which would prohibit boats from wake surfing within 500 feet of shore and in waters less than 20 feet deep.

Wake boats are designed to create large wakes for the purpose of wake surfing. The large wakes created by these boats allow people to surf behind them without tow ropes.

According to the Lakes Environmental Association, which is a sponsor of the bill, the prop thrust of wake boats can disturb the lake bottom, churning up phosphates into the body of the lake. The wash of water can spread aquatic invasive plants, and the large surface wakes erode shorelines and threaten loon nests.

The Hancock & Sand Ponds Association directors submitted written testimony in support of the bill. Hancock and Sand Ponds

See **Boating Safety** Page 7

Memoriam

continued from page 1

Dick encouraged me and was a very strong supporter. He was always ready to help with a smile and even did boat inspections at the Denmark landing. Dick's dedication to the ponds and HSPA was legendary. May he rest in peace.

- Jesse and Gloria Dubin

Dick was one of my uncle Ken Forman's very favorite friends. They worked together on the Hancock & Sand Ponds Association during the early years and Ken especially appreciated Dick's easy-going nature and his passion for preserving the health of the ponds. Ken greatly enjoyed Dick's company and they often went hiking together. In his later years Ken's knees gave out. When he finally got them replaced the one thing he wanted most to do was to climb Pleasant Mountain with Dick. They did it!

- Amy March

Dick Johnson had a way of making people feel valued. He had plenty of time for you even if you couldn't extend the same courtesy to him. In his role as president of Hancock & Sand Ponds Association he would often expand a five minute topic into 20 minutes just to make sure we all understood!

Dick was generous with his time and wisdom and readily made himself available to following presidents of the Ponds Association. Dick was genuine. I am convinced he was a charter member the What You See is What You Get club.

- Jerry Holt

My impression from the few contacts I had was of a good, caring, unselfish person. After talking to Dick I think I always felt better about things: the pond, the world, myself - I don't know, things seemed more positive. Dick probably got satisfaction from encouraging and empowering others rather than himself. Very much the opposite of many in public life today who use others to empower themselves.

- Larry Clark

From the moment he saw it in 1967, Dick loved everything about Hancock Pond. Especially its size, easy canoe and kayak navigation, loon family, sandy beaches, small islands, and undeveloped shore front. He was deeply committed to preserving the ecology and wilderness aspect of the pond. This led to his founding of the original Hancock Pond Association, and later inviting Sand Pond to join. I was fortunate to be with him on this amazing journey, and share so many wonderful pond memories.

- Sheila Johnson

Invasive Species Committee Report

The expanded days and hours of our courtesy boat inspection (CBI) program at the public boat launch last summer was a great success.

In 2022 the CBI program inspected 486 boats at the public boat launch. This was an increase of 197 boats over the 289 inspected in 2021. We will continue with the same CBI inspection schedule for 2023, which will include holiday weekend coverage for Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day weekends, from Friday to Monday. The remaining weekends between the holidays will be Saturday and Sunday coverage with two shifts, 7 am to 12 noon and 12 to 5 pm.

LEA will continue to hire, train, and monitor the paid courtesy boat inspectors. Our cost to LEA per hour is \$18.00 in an effort to attract and retain boat inspectors. This includes an administration fee to process the payroll and oversee the program.

LEA continues to be a great resource to us, providing assistance if plants are detected on boats or in our lakes that need to be identified. The CBI program is typically staffed with students. If you know of anyone looking for a part-time job over the summer please have them submit an application directly to LEA. The application can be found on their website mainelakes.org.

Dave Rogers will be coordinating our volunteer efforts for both pond watching and boat inspections. Volunteers are needed to inspect boats on weekends during the September/October weekends. We hope to have sign-up sheets at the annual meeting for volunteers.

The danger of invasive species entering our ponds is very real and our ponds continue to be on the high-risk listing for the state. I have included some photos of Milfoil and other invasive species that have been found in



Eurasian Milfoil



Brittle Naiad

Maine. The photo above described as Naiad was found last year in Sokokis Lake (Limerick) and is of particular concern as it is new in Maine and can spread quickly. 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.

Thank you all for the continued support of this program. Please consider a financial donation for 2023 to the Milfoil account. It is quick and easy with the new electronic donation link. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact Mike (mgately84@gmail.com) or Dave (davidrogers7648@verizon.net).

- Mike Gately

Treasurer's Report 2022

HSPA ended the 2022 fiscal year with a small positive net cash flow of \$322.50. We received dues from 112 members for 2022, about 47% of shorefront properties and roughly the same as last year's rate. A grant of \$2,200 from Maine Department of Environmental Protection (ME-DEP) helped offset the cost of courtesy boat inspection time, as did donations to the Milfoil Fund. We received several generous donations, including some in honor of Richard Johnson (*see story page 1*). Our expenses included the boat inspections, support for LEA and advanced water quality monitoring, newsletter printing, our website hosting, and miscellaneous fees. For 2023, Mike Gately reports that we were awarded a \$2,530 grant from the ME-DEP Invasive Species Program for courtesy boat inspections, a small increase over last year. We still encourage additional contributions to the Milfoil Fund, which also help offset those inspection costs.

To donate to the fund or renew your membership, send us (PO Box 856, Denmark, ME 04022) a check, payable to the Hancock and Sand Ponds Association and with a note specifying where it goes. Or, we now accept donations and membership dues paid online.

HSPA Cash Flow Jan-Dec 2022	
Opening Bank Balance:	\$12,641.68
Income	
Dues	\$5,600.00
Donations	\$650.00
Donations-Richard Johnson	\$135.00
Milfoil Inspection Fund	\$1,555.00
DEP Invasive Cost Share Grant (CBI)	\$2,200.00
Total Income:	\$10,140.00
Expenses	
Fees, Printing, Postage, & Other Costs	-\$954.76
Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI)	-\$5,670.00
LEA Advanced Testing Initiatives	-\$1,800.00
Donation (LEA)	-\$1,000.00
Hall Rental	-\$50.00
Website and domain	-\$342.74
Total Expenses:	-\$9,817.50
Net Cash Flow Balance:	\$322.50
Ending Bank Balance:	\$13,014.18

Look for the "Join Us" page on our website. As long as we maintain our dues participation rate, our finances for 2023 should remain stable. Dues 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! - Ben Peierls



Boating Safety *continued from Page 4*

are too small and shallow for unregulated operation of wake boats. Hancock Pond has a mean depth of only 17 feet. Sand Pond is even shallower, with a mean depth of 12 feet. Many residents have already expressed concern about shoreline erosion. They have lost beaches, and trees on their shore are threatened by a receding shoreline.

The bill would not ban wake surfing, but it would ensure that these specialized boats operate only in deep water sufficiently far from shore to prevent damage to the lake environment.

Boating Safety Course Requirement

Last April the Maine legislature passed a bill that would require boaters under age 25 to pass a safety course before January 2024. Maine currently has no boating license requirement.

The new law requires individuals born after January 1, 1999 to take a mandatory boating safety course in order to operate boats propelled by motors over 25 horsepower. The requirement would go into effect Jan. 1, 2024. The new law establishes a minimum age of 12 for operation of a motorboat propelled by machinery over 25 horsepower.

The law also requires anyone born after January 1, 1999 to take a mandatory boating safety course in order to operate personal watercraft such as jet skis. The minimum age to operate a jet ski will be 16.

Failure to have a boating safety certificate will result in a fine.

State-approved boater safety courses are listed on the webpage for the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

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:

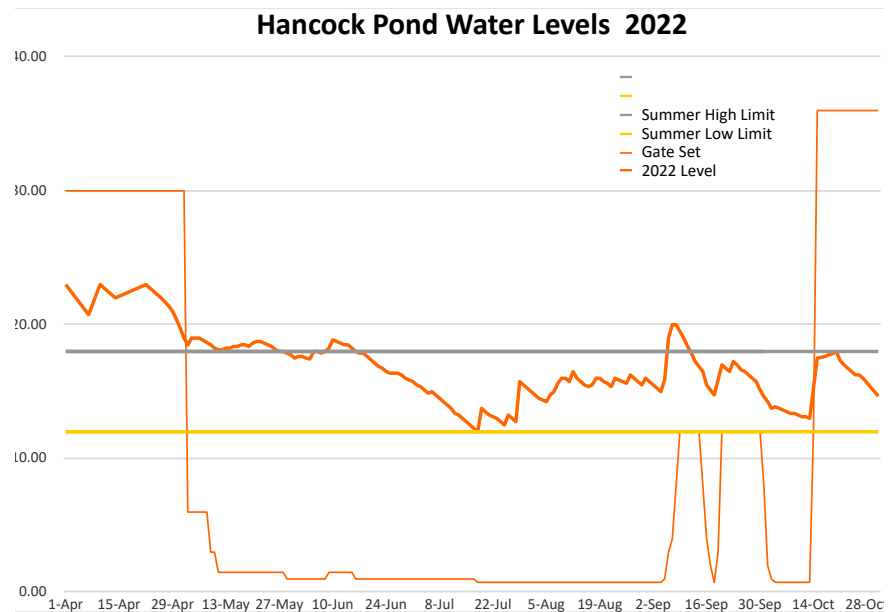
Hancock & Sand Ponds Association

PO Box 856

Denmark, ME 04022

Dam Committee Report

The dam for Hancock and Sand Ponds is normally kept open for the winter season. In early January when we hadn't received very much snow, someone emailed the dam committee that maybe we should restrict the flow through the dam to preserve water for the following summer. This is a reasonable thought and many dammed water bodies are managed in this way, especially where power generation or public water supplies are involved. However, there are a couple of obstacles for us to do this type of management.



First, our dam isn't close to being adequate to hold the amount of water needed from winter/spring run off to make a significant difference in late summer when we really need the water. Our dam isn't designed to hold back high water levels. As it is, rapid run-off events sometimes cause water to flow over the top of the dam.

Second, raising the water level by even a couple of feet (which even if we could might not be enough) would lead to significant erosion problems and kill trees on low lying shorelines. Loon nesting would also be endangered.

Our dam has a gate that is raised or lowered to control the flow of water through the spillway. This system allows for more fine tuning of the flow, but also requires much more intensive management. During the summer the goal is to keep the water level between 12" and 18" as measured from the spillway. Six inches is a pretty tight range, but we have been pretty successful in keeping within this range (see *chart*) in spite of the droughts and deluges that

Mother Nature throws at us. However, Mother Nature is ultimately in command and we can't control every extreme she can come up with.

From November through April the dam is wide open with hundreds of times more water flowing through the spillway than in a typical July and August. Two things contribute to the difference. First, the trees and other vegetation which are dormant in winter, suck up tremendous quantities of water in the summer. Second, evaporation is astronomically greater in the heat of summer than when most surface water is locked up in ice and snow.

We don't have the capacity to dramatically change the natural rhythms of Mother Nature, nor should we. Hancock Pond isn't the Colorado River or a reservoir in California. In Mid-March the water level was normal, neither too high or low. However there is about 18" of fairly dense snowpack around the Ponds waiting to melt. After the spring runoff and ice out we will again start managing the gate to keep the water level in the summer range.

- Larry Clark

Lake 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. Overall water quality conditions were relatively good in 2022 for lakes monitored by LEA. Only ten lakes had water clarity, phosphorus (P), or chlorophyll values that indicate lower quality. When looking over the long term, 73-74% of lakes had increasing or stable water clarity trends (measured by Secchi depth), 95-96% of lakes had decreasing or stable P trends, and 90-92 % of lakes had decreasing or stable chlorophyll concentration (a proxy for algae) trends.

LEA reports that Hancock Pond maintained good water quality in 2022, with water clarity registering as high and increasing over time,

and P and chlorophyll registering as moderate and decreasing over time. Sand Pond's condition was similar, only with moderate values for all three indicators and stable long-term trends (i.e., no change) for P and chlorophyll. Water clarity showed a slight long-term decrease, but it remains greater than the threshold for low clarity (3 m). Oxygen depletion at depth combined with warm surface waters can reduce or eliminate suitable cold-water fish habitat, though there were less of these conditions than the previous year.

Full testing reports and additional advanced monitoring results for both Hancock and Sand Ponds are accessible at the Lakes Environmental Association website (mainelakes.org/water-testing-report/).

- Ben Peierls

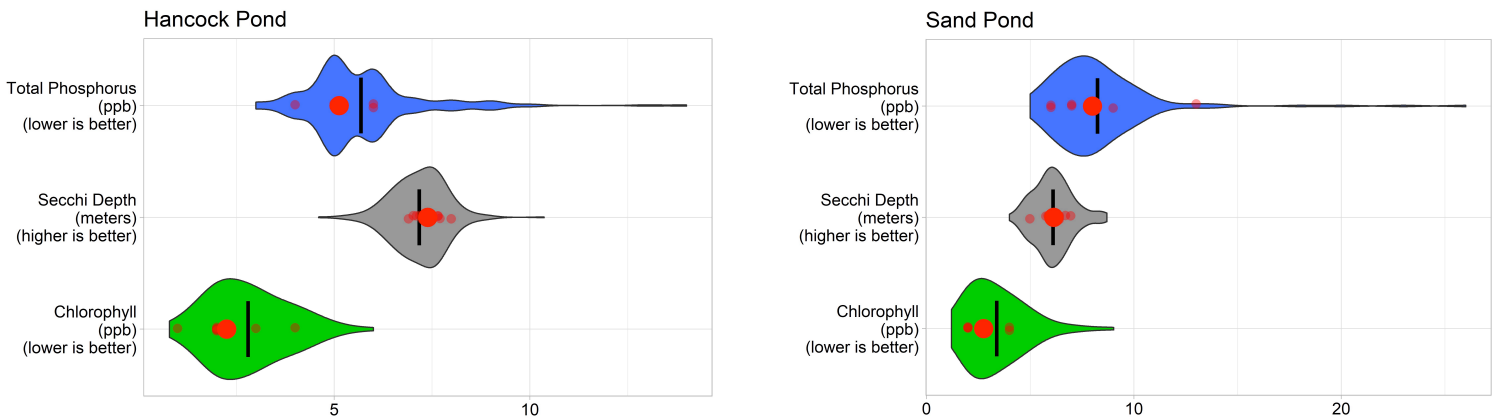


Figure Legend: 2022 water quality data (light-red dots) and average (large solid red dot) compared to long-term average (black line) and distribution (colored areas) of phosphorus, clarity, and algae data. Colored area thickness indicates frequency of measurements at each value (e.g., few measurements at extreme values). Note different x-axis scales.

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>Decreasing</i>	<i>Decreasing</i>	<i>Marginal by September</i>
Sand	<i>Present</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Decreasing</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Gone by mid-August</i>

Meet Your Neighbor: Mike Gately

In 2019 we introduced a series of articles on Hancock and Sand Ponds' neighbors. In this issue we interview Mike Gately. For more than ten years, Mike has run the milfoil program, now renamed the Invasive Species Committee.

What do you do for a living?

In April I celebrated 30 years with State Farm Insurance as a Claim Manager supervising homeowner claims in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. My wife Sonja works for Lucas Tree Experts as their Accounting Manager.

How did you come to get your place on Hancock Pond?

We purchased our camp in December of 2010 from Gordon Stuart and are only the second family to own the camp in its nearly 100-year history. The Bridgton and Saco River Railroad ran through the middle of the property when it was built by Gordon's parents in 1930.

We met Gordon at Prides Corner Church in Westbrook in 2001, after moving back to Maine from New Hampshire. I remember Gordon asking if we would be interested in renting his camp on Hancock Pond and we jumped at the chance, knowing our two boys would love to spend summer vacations at a lake.

I grew up in Connecticut and spent all of my summers on Little Sebago Lake with my grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Sonja's family spent summer vacations on Indian Lake in Whiting, ME and we both wanted that same experience for our boys. Our son Joe was three and Jake was just over a year when we first rented Gordon's camp. In 2010 we purchased the camp and our boys were able to spend their entire summers on Hancock Pond and have made life-long memories of their own.



Mike and Sonja with sons Jake and Joe

How often do you come up?

From May to October we are at the lake almost every weekend and enjoy our summer vacations on the pond. In recent years with advances in technology I have enjoyed working from camp as much as possible. Nothing better than ending a stressful day with a swim in the lake and a sunset boat ride. We are fortunate to live in Westbrook which is only 40 minutes from the lake and enjoy snowmobiling and ice fishing during the winter months at camp.

Why did you volunteer to work on the Invasive Species Committee?

I always felt it was important to give back any chance I could. Shortly after purchasing the camp my neighbor Jerry Holt, who was then president of the association, asked if I would be willing to work on milfoil prevention. I didn't know much about milfoil at the time, but felt compelled to assist in any way I could. It has been a wonderful experience getting to know some great people who are also very committed to preserving the water quality we all enjoy.



Loon Committee Report: Loon Restoration Project

Last summer the HSPA Loon Committee enthusiastically supported the new Lakes Environmental Association Loon Restoration Project. The LEA received a five-year grant to research whether the number of loon chicks hatched would increase through the placement and monitoring of nearly 100 loon nesting rafts in Maine. Members of the Loon Committee worked closely with Maggie Welch, LEA Staff Researcher, to construct and place a raft and report loon nesting behavior. We look forward to working with Maggie again this year. Here is Maggie Welch's report:

Last summer a raft was placed in the north end of Sand Pond. While the raft went unused, Sand Pond began the season with two natural nests. The northern nest failed mid-season, most likely due to predation. The southern nest survived the season but failed to produce chicks.

While the lack of chicks this season may feel disappointing, this was a great first year for Sand Pond. Not only were two natural nests located, dedicated volunteers provided a full seasons worth of data. Loons often need a few years to get used to an artificial raft. It's not unheard of for a raft to go unused for three years before loons are willing to give it a try. With this in mind, I would like to deploy the

Sand Pond raft again, this time pushing it a little further towards Hancock Brook, at the north end of the Pond to the right of Walden Camp.

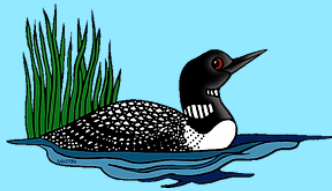
A raft was not placed on Hancock Pond this year. However, a dedicated group of volunteers provided invaluable data regarding the two natural nests located in Loon Cove. After the first one was abandoned the Loon pair built a second nest. Unfortunately, the nests did not survive the season. However, enough data were collected to determine that between animal predation and human disturbance, the Loon Cove pair had a lot to contend with.

I would like to try placing a raft near Loon Cove this year. I have arranged for Tracy Hart, Loon Biologist from the Maine Audubon, to assess the Loon Cove area with me soon after ice out. Tracy will offer advice as to the best location for a raft and, potentially, signage to alert lake goers of the loons presence.

If you are interested in joining the HSPA Loon Committee or learning about what we are doing, please email: amymarch852@gmail.com.

- Amy March

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Ben Peierls - *Treasurer*
Rebecca Gould - *Webmistress*

Check out our New Website!

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