

Spring 2018

# Keoka Lake Association Newsletter

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# Keoka Lake Association



Waterford, Maine

Volume 10, No. 1

Spring, 2018

## **President's Message:**

Happy Spring! A new season is upon us, and I have some exciting and some challenging 'headline' news to share with you.

First, the exciting news: We are officially a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, meaning all donations to KLA are tax-deductible to the extent of the law.

On a more challenging note, our lake's water quality "level of concern" has been raised to HIGH from MODERATE/HIGH, given the trend of certain water quality data points. This change reflects mostly deepwater oxygen depletion and high phosphorus, poor cold-water fish habitat, and high gloeo algae. More information is available in the Water Quality section of the newsletter.

And a bit of a mixed bag: The Milfoil Summit article in this newsletter contains an update on milfoil in Maine. The good news is that Keoka's milfoil vulnerability index is relatively low compared to many Maine lakes. The bad news is that we have two large causal factors that correlate with milfoil infestations. See the article below for more details.

We need to continue boat inspections, plant patrols as well as our ongoing financial preparation.

See you on the lake!

Charlie Tarbell

Please note: The annual Meeting of the Keoka Lake Association (KLA) is Saturday, July 14, 2018 at the Wilkins House. Coffee, donuts and socializing at 8:30 a.m.; the meeting begins at 9:00 a.m.

## **ICE OUT!**

Just when you thought neither winter nor 'sprinter' would ever end this year, the lake went from total white ice to open patches and Ice Out in about a week. The last ice disappeared from in front of Charlie's house on April 26th, just a week after the average Ice Out date. Check out the website (under the Lake tab) for an historical look at Keoka Ice Out dates for the years 1938-2017 with a rolling 10-year average. Thanks to Joan Fillebrown for continuing the Fillebrown tradition of keeping records for all these years.

## **18<sup>th</sup> Annual Maine Milfoil Summit**

On March 2, Charlie Tarbell attended the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Milfoil Summit in Lewiston. Keynote speakers, from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), presented a new lake vulnerability index and a predictive model showing which lakes were most likely to get infested. According to their analysis, the main causative factors in milfoil infestations were 1) volume of use, 2) proximity to infestations, and 3) potential for colonization. Of the 2,614 Maine

lakes that were analyzed, 57 had infestations. The analysis: the range of the index runs from 11-90, with a mean score of 26. The higher the score, the more vulnerable the lake is to an infestation of milfoil. There were 147 high scoring lakes. Happily, Keoka was not among them. The mean score for non-infested lakes is 25.5; Keoka's score was 43 (nearly double the mean score!), reflecting its exposure to two of the biggest factors influencing the index: 1) proximity to infestation and 2) presence of a public boat launch.

Practical implications of this analysis for our lake are not much changed. We must remain vigilant on prevention (boat inspections) and detection (plant patrol). What is new (and may be an issue for us) is that because we are not among the most vulnerable lakes (according to the index), the Maine State DEP grant, which helps us fund inspections, may be at risk if the State intends to use the index to prioritize grants. Historically, our DEP grant has averaged \$1,400. Together with the Waterford Town grant of \$3,400, it funds most of our inspection costs.

The other major message from the Milfoil Summit is that inspections are the most cost-effective method to address the milfoil threat. Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI) cost KLA about \$6,000 per year, but eradication is extraordinarily expensive – from tens-of-thousands of dollars for small patches into the hundreds-of-thousands of dollars per year on some of the larger lakes. If we were to be denied the DEP grant, the monies would need to be replaced.

Per the “best practice” presentations at the summit, KLA’s current programs are among the best. Keoka’s CBIs log over 500 hours each summer through a program that is professionally managed by Lakes Environmental Association (LEA). Additionally, our Plant Patrol is among the more thorough out there. One way we can expand our effectiveness is to get all KLA members to pay attention to what is growing in/on your waterfront and report anything which looks new or suspicious to our Plant Patrol captain, Arne Klepinger, or to Charlie Tarbell.

The summit concluded with an update on last year’s infestation in Long Lake. The Mast Cove infestation was a disappointing surprise, in that it had been allowed to grow, unchecked, into a large mess. As you may know, eradication by LEA began last summer. At the same time, LEA initiated plant inspections throughout the lake, and another smaller patch was discovered at Salmon Point. In both cases, the infestations were at busy campground marinas. The infestations have been a wake up call for residents of Long Lake, who were not very well organized prior to these incidents. Last fall’s removal went well, but eradication will be a multi-year process and vigilance for new infestation will need to be vastly increased. KLA already has in place the CBI and Plant Patrol programs, positioning us well should an milfoil be discovered in Keoka, but vigilance and being proactive is key to prevention.

### **Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI)–Year 17**

Once again, the CBI program at the town-owned public boat launch by the town’s swimming beach will be overseen by Lakes Environmental Association (LEA). They are our ‘back room’, so to speak, as they hire, schedule and do payroll for the boat inspectors that are present Friday afternoons and both days on the weekend. The CBIs are also on duty during the week of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Many boat owners have learned over the years how to inspect their own boats, but it only takes the tiniest piece of milfoil coming in from another lake to put Keoka at risk. Likewise, a

piece of the Keoka curly-leaved pondweed leaving Keoka can lead to an infestation in another lake. Anyone launching a boat on Keoka, whether there is a CBI present or not, should be inspecting the boat, or jet ski and trailer to be sure nothing foreign is coming into or leaving Keoka.

At the 2018 annual Waterford Town Meeting, the proposal to support the Courtesy A grant of \$3,400 for boat Inspections was again approved. KLA has also been awarded a \$1,400 grant from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. The remaining funding for the CBI program comes from KLA.

### **Plant Patrols**

Plant patrollers are the Early Detection part of the fight against a milfoil infestation in Keoka Lake. Arne Klepinger has organized a group of volunteers who inspect the flora and fauna in front of a defined piece of shoreline (usually in front of their individual properties). He is looking for some help!

If you enjoy being in or on the water and are willing, you could become a volunteer plant patroller. Responsibilities are to become aware of the flora/fauna in the water in your designated patrol area. If, when you are enjoying the lake, you happen to see something that doesn’t ‘look right’, you would have the tools to identify flora/fauna that is invasive and a team to call for confirmation.

The ideal ‘patrol area’ would be about 200’-500’ of lakefront. Currently, some patrollers are covering multiple sections and there are some longer sections that need to be broken up. Please contact Arnie, Tom Stockwell or Charlie if you’d like to lend a hand.

### **LEA is monitoring....**

The 2017 Water Quality report is now available and is posted on the website. The temperature sensors are at varying depths and are attached to the buoy located off the Kokosing shoreline. It is monitored by LEA and we ask that everyone respect the buoy and give it a wide berth – in other words.... Leave it alone!!

### **Water Quality**

In the 1970’s, LEA classified Keoka Lake as a HIGH concern lake due to poor water quality. The problems stemmed from many sources: storm runoff from camps and roads, over-fertilization of yards, failed septic systems, and farms operating beside streams, all draining into the lake. The obvious symptoms included poor water clarity,

algae blooms, and fish population declines. Over the course of the ensuing decades, KLA took many actions, the sum total of which helped to improve water quality and earned us a MODERATE concern ranking from LEA.

With the publication of last year's water quality report by LEA, Keoka was once again thrust into the HIGH concern category. LEA's findings were based on several factors: 1) consistently low oxygen and high phosphorus in the deep waters during the summer that leads to poor cold-water fish habitat, and 2) high gloeotrichia algae (gloeo) counts for several years running. Despite the fact that our trend in clarity, phosphorus, and chlorophyll at the surface is stable, the other factors paint a challenging picture for the health of our lake. The Board of Trustees has been discussing the potential for this outcome for the past several years and has begun taking further actions to address water quality as a foremost issue for the Association. In 2018, our focus will include:

- working closely with the Waterford Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) to step up protection of the delicate 100-foot lakeside buffer zone, including up the feeder streams that flow into the lake,
- KLA's LakeSmart team will be adding new members to address several of the larger properties around the lake. Please volunteer your property for a LakeSmart review. And please join the LakeSmart team!
- designating a liaison from the KLA Board to work with the Waterford Public Works Commissioner to ensure that issues with public roads, culverts & ditches get addressed,
- reviewing Waterford plumbing permits to identify old septic systems (pre-1973) for further investigation into whether they may be polluting the lake.

While the casual observer may not notice a drastic change in Keoka when they come up to their camps this summer, the news beneath the surface (literally) is nevertheless not good. We all have a part to play in addressing this growing issue. Please work with your KLA Board of Trustees to help to mitigate this situation. In particular, we all need to be better stewards of the 100-foot buffer zone. See the following article for more about this.

## The Dam

This is a 'lubrication year' for the dam, meaning all moving parts get a 'lube job'. Additionally, the dam was inspected by the state as part of the 12-year inspection cycle and judged to be Low Hazard. The dam operated as it should over the winter, however, the heavy rain of the January thaw caused a deluge that raised the lake to a high level.

## Shore Land Zoning Update

In 2016, the Town of Waterford adopted a new Shore Land Zoning Ordinance. If you are building near the lake, or have built recently, you know this. But if you have not needed to pull a permit, you may be unaware of some of the particulars of these revised ordinances. For one, they change the requirements when you take down trees or clear vegetation in the 'buffer' zone.

One of the key elements of shore land zoning is protection of the delicate 100-foot buffer zone along the lake. This buffer zone is the primary defense for the lake in protection against phosphorus-laden storm water runoff. The buffer zone needs to contain canopy trees, understory trees, and duff along the forest floor in order to hold the soil and effectively absorb storm water runoff. One of the key zoning changes that support the protection of this buffer zone is the requirement that **ALL** trees which are taken down or fall down in the buffer zone, whether dead or alive, **MUST BE REPLACED**.

It used to be that property owners could remove any dead trees along the lake without issue or further action. Starting in 2016, zoning ordinances now call for any tree removal to be followed by 1) leaving the stump in place to retain the soil and 2) replacing the removed tree with a new native species. We are asking KLA members around the lake to please adhere to these requirements and, further, to be vigilant for others who are removing trees. Report them to the CEO in Waterford if you believe their actions may violate shore land zoning regulations. We need to view the 100-foot buffer zone as an area about which all those with properties on the lake should be concerned – as the protection offered by the buffer zone protects the quality of ALL of our lake water.

## LakeSmart

Since 2011, KLA has sponsored LakeSmart – a program whereby property owners can have reviews done of their lakefront property with an eye to helping keep Keoka Lake's water quality at its highest possible level. Common concerns are

for run-off whereby phosphorus might be getting into the lake or where the shoreline is being eroded. As part of the review, mitigation measures may be suggested. The review is voluntary and designed to be educational – there are NO downsides to the program! If the property tallies sufficient ‘points’, a LakeSmart award is presented.

To date, over 25 properties have been inspected and 19 LakeSmart Awards have been granted. If you are interested in having your property ‘LakeSmart inspected’, please sign up at the Annual Meeting on July 14<sup>th</sup> or call Jim Flynn (813.416.3009) or Charlie Tarbell (207.671.6962). Please leave a VM with a number that you will answer.

### **Do you paddle board??**

The Second Annual Maine Lakes Open Paddle Battle is scheduled for Saturday, July 7<sup>th</sup> at Tarry-A-While Resort on Highland Lake. There will be 2K and 5K courses for men and women (age 15 and up) as well as a Grom race for kids in the cove. Registration is now open and advanced registration is required (<http://www.mainelakes.org/educationevents/paddle-battle/>). The Paddle Battle is a fundraiser for LEA. Additionally, if you raise funds through sponsorships for LEA’s lakes protection work, there will be additional medals and prizes. Support LEA by competing – or joining those at Tarry-A-While Resort who are cheering them on!

### **Water Safety**

The navigational buoys were installed over Memorial Day weekend. Thanks to Andy Tabor for braving the cold water temperatures! The town arranges for the installation of the swim docks as well as the dock that separates the swim area from the boat launch area. Boaters should be mindful of the navigational buoys that are set to state standards.

### **The Warden Service IS watching.....**

As a reminder to all, 2017 Boat Registrations now include the Milfoil Sticker and can be purchased at Town Hall during business hours. The Warden Service ranger, whose jurisdiction includes Keoka, lives in Albany and frequents our town boat launch. He’s been observed on Keoka at least once a year.

### **Loon Update**

The loon nest was ‘launched’ on May 5<sup>th</sup> and as of June 4<sup>th</sup>, the pair was seen exchanging

positions on the nest, so there are eggs. Fingers are crossed for a successful hatch of the loon chicks and that they are allowed to grow up, but 4 bald eagles have been sighted at Bear Pond, so the loon family faces challenges. While viewing the loons on the nest can be exciting, all boaters, kayakers, paddleboarders and jet ski operators are reminded to PLEASE STAY AWAY FROM THE NESTING PLATFORM that is located off the in Stone’s Cove. Coming too close to the loons (on or off the nest) can be stressful and affect the survival of the chick(s). Watch for Facebook news of baby loons – hopefully the week of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

### **Education Initiative and Outreach**

The 2018 KLA Annual Education/Outreach Event is scheduled for Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Entitled, “HOW DEEP IS YOUR LOVE?”, the event will present an interactive program highlighting hands-on topographical maps and models for understanding local watersheds, depth studies on Keoka Lake, best practices to maintain health and wellness of lakes and artifacts and information on loon health and populations. Representatives from LEA, Maine Audubon and KLA Board members will be present to answer questions and present new material. The event will be held at Good Health is a Habit (formerly Round’s General Store) in Waterford Flats. No RSVP is needed – just come and check it out!

### **Fundraising**

Screen printing and embroidery are the key words for the merchandise for 2018. Stop by the KLA table at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade, the KLA Annual Meeting, the Wilkins House Breakfasts this summer and the Fall Foliage 5k on Columbus Day weekend. New colors! New styles! New looks! And all proceeds go to help fund the good work that KLA is doing – be it funding for the CBIs, outreach and education or lake monitoring and testing! Raffle details are also available! Check it out!

### **Fireworks in Waterford**

A group of concerned citizens gathered together last fall to discuss the merits of adopting a fireworks ordinance. The goal was to address the dangers of wildfires and to provide an online system that would provide advanced warning to people with animals that needed to be managed, humans that are highly sensitive to noise such as veterans and autistic children and others who may

be negatively impacted by the noise of an unexpected fireworks display. Many small towns around us have such ordinances. ( e.g., Greenwood, Andover, Harrison and Norway).

Significant discussion occurred, and the review of other successful town ordinances were combined to create what the people of Waterford feel is the most effective way to mitigate the negative effects of fireworks while allowing people the freedom of expression to use them.

Many pets, livestock and humans are sensitive to the noise of most fireworks as well as being considered a nuisance by those in the surrounding area. Those who live or visit here, do so because we expect the peace and quiet that comes with living away from urban areas. Having the permit system in place provides a way of alerting neighboring families that a display will occur.

As means of providing notice, here is what you need to know if you plan to use fireworks in Waterford:

- A permit is NOT required on July 4<sup>th</sup> and the Saturday prior to, and just after the 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Displays must end no later than 10:00 PM.
- All other days of the year a permit **is required**.
- Permits can be requested both online ([www.waterfordme.org](http://www.waterfordme.org)) & at the town hall.
- Date, time and location are required to obtain a permit.
- A permit will not be approved if the fire danger is 3 or higher.
- There is no fee for permits.
- If you wish to be alerted when a fireworks permit is issued all you need to do is provide an email address to the town clerk's office and you will automatically be notified when a display will take place along with the general area of the display.
- If you hear / see a display that is not approved on the website, you may contact the Oxford County Sheriff at 207-743-9554 or 1-800-733-1421.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using fireworks.

### **KLA is EVERYWHERE**

Do you 'Like' us? Have you 'Googled' us? Did you know you could 'upload' to us? KLA's

website is: <http://www.keokalake.org> - check it out! Our web-master, Joe Abbiati, is always updating and improving the look and content of the website. A new feature in the Gallery section allows anyone to upload pictures for the website. Check it out! And please share some of your pictures of Keoka and the surrounding area.

And for those who use Facebook – 'Like us' at Keoka Lake Association and stay up-to-date on news from Waterford! Check it out!

Going forward, KLA will be utilizing the Internet and social media to disseminate information, important announcements and invitations – Check 'us' out!

### **Membership**

2018 dues are now due! A Dues Notice is included with this newsletter. Consider making an additional donation to the Milfoil Reserve Fund or the Educational Initiatives. With graduations upon us, a gift membership to KLA is always a welcome thought – see the Dues Form for instructions!

### **It's Official!!**

Last fall, David Johnson took responsibility for applying to the IRS for 501(c)(3) status for KLA. As background, we have always been a public benefit corporation under Maine law, but KLA's small-time finances, together with the paperwork challenges presented by the IRS never seemed to auger for official IRS designation. That changed in 2014 with IRS 501(c)(3) Easy. I am happy to report that on November 27, 2017 we were granted this IRS tax-free status. If, like me, you have been deducting your dues and donations as long as you've been a member, then the good news is that you are now actually legal. But for KLA, the really good news is that we are now well-positioned to seek larger donations (and grants) if and when we ever get into a milfoil eradication situation.

### **KLA - Being Environmentally 'Correct'**

Going forward, we will be looking to deliver newsletters via email as the US Postal Service seems to be increasing costs for slower service. Please note your email address on your dues form so we can keep you informed in a timely manner. Get the KLA news faster – and save a tree (or two)!!

### **INCLUDED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER:**

2018 Dues Form

### **Dates to Remember - 2018**

- July 7      Maine Lakes Open Paddle Battle 2017, Tarry-A-While Resort on Highland Lake (advanced registration required)
- July 4      Wilkins House Community Breakfast  
July 4      Waterford 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade
- July 14     KLA Annual Meeting – Wilkins Community House  
Coffee, donuts & socializing @ 8:30 a.m.; Meeting starts @ 9:00
- July 18     Wilkins House Community Breakfast
- July 28     Annual KLA Education/Outreach Event – 11a.m – 12:30 pm  
Good Health is a Habit (formerly Round's General Store)
- July 28     4<sup>th</sup> Annual Bud Lazott Memorial Regatta – registration @1; race @2  
(Raindate: July 29) – Chadbourne's Beach
- August 1    Wilkins House Community Breakfast
- August 15   Wilkins House Community Breakfast
- October 5   Fall KLA Board Meeting
- October 7   Fall Foliage 5K/Festival – and Raffle Drawing



2016 Keoka loon baby - Photo by Bill Colbath

#### **KLA Board of Trustees**

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