

BOB MOORE

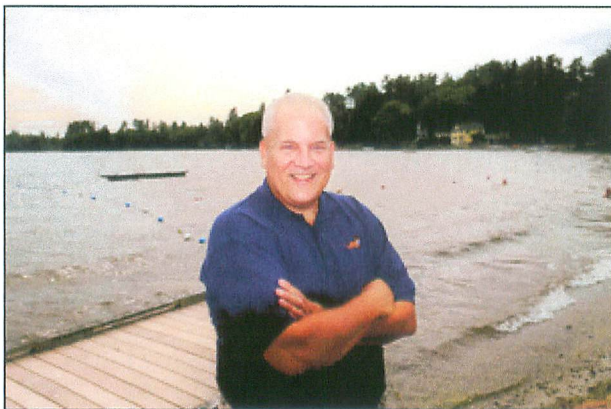
August 21

## [Pioneering Friend heads to Thomas College](#)

**He was instrumental in group's explosive growth, successful ventures**

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Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- Friends of the Cobbosee Watershed needs a new friend to lead them.



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**ON THE GO:** Friends of Cobbossee executive director Bob Moore is departing after seven years to join the staff of Thomas College.

Staff photo by Andy Molloy

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The group is losing Executive Director Bob Moore -- its first employee, some 7 1/2 years ago - - who has accepted a position as vice president of institutional advancement at his alma mater, Thomas College, in Waterville.

Under Moore, the Friends, a nonprofit corporation that aims to maintain and improve water quality in lakes, ponds and streams in the Lake Cobbossee watershed, has exploded -- from 71 to 7,000 members.

Moore follows a simple formula for success: Remove the barrier. The group dropped a membership fee and the signups skyrocketed.

"You have to think out of the box a little bit for how you get your audience," Moore said.

Jeff Timm, president of the Friends board of directors, gives Moore lots of credit.

"He's built it up and made it what it is today: a tremendously strong organization, both financially and with a strong board of directors," Timm said.

Timm, an Augusta dentist who has a home along Lake Cobbossee, says the results are quite visible.

"The water in Cobbossee Lake is the clearest I've seen it (in August)," Timm said.

The Friends group is based in Augusta and was founded in 2001 by Ken Smith and Jay Snider, former president of the NHL's Philadelphia Flyers, who has a summer home on the lake's Ballards Bay.

Snider, concerned about the lake quality, recruited people from the lake area and from the chain of lakes in the watershed.

Under Moore's stewardship, the group has raised its profile by moving into education programs for shoreland owners, school children and boaters, and is now readying a "diver-assisted suction harvesting" boat to remove invasive milfoil from waters upstream from Cobbossee.

The Friends group was recognized earlier this year with a community service award from the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce. Moore was the named Le Club Calumet's outstanding citizen of the year in 2007.

"Bob has been a workaholic," Timm said. "He literally works day and night for us, and I'm sure he'll continue to do that for Thomas College."

Timm said the search committee has met to discuss replacing Moore but is under no pressure to fill the job immediately. The group has another fulltime employee, education director Tamara Whitmore.

Most of the seasonal employees -- up to 35 -- when the youth conservation corps and the courtesy boat inspectors work in the summer -- will be leaving by the end of the month.

The Friends have an operating budget of about \$450,000, with \$300,000 of that in cash and the remainder in in-kind services.

Moore points to the growth of the education program, which runs year-round, offering free programs in classrooms during the school year and then bringing some of those same children out on the water in the warmer months. It now reaches 1,400 children a year.

"By teaching the kids, they become great stewards, and they're more successful telling mommy and daddy about protecting the watershed," Moore said.

Moore started a "Friends on the Fourth" annual 5-K run, jog, walk, which attracted a record 562 entrants this year. He said he'll remain as coordinator of that event.

Moore credits the Friends' success to a supportive board, grants from the Unity Foundation, private contributions and a big boost from AmeriCorps and the National Civilian Community Corps, which provided workers for shoreline erosion projects.

He's excited about the new challenge at his old school. A Massachusetts native, he was headed to Bentley College in Waltham, Mass., when he got a letter from the Thomas basketball coach.

"I wasn't going to play basketball at Bentley," Moore said. So he came north.

"Thomas was great to me," he said. "I almost quit school when I became a father at 19, and they really worked with me."

Moore earned an accounting degree, then worked for Central Maine Power Company prior to joining Friends.

Moore, 53, and his wife Susan live in China and have four children.

He said he had not been an "engaged alumni" until a couple of years ago.

Dr. George Spann, president of Thomas College, said the school is "absolutely delighted" to welcome back Moore.

"We went through a national search, looked at a lot of good people, interviewed a lot of good people, and Bob was the best," Spann said.

Spann said Moore will work on advancement and development, including fund-raising and grant proposals.

"He's a very dedicated man; when he takes something on, he just does a wonderful job," Spann said. "We're very fortunate."

Moore will start at the college Sept. 27; he's replacing Fran Day who retired and now lives in Atlanta, Spann said.

"I've loved every minute" at Friends, Moore said. "It's been my life for eight years.

"Seven years ago, nobody knew who we were. I know they do now."

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