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*Tacoma Lakes Improvement
Society Newsletter
September, 2010*

Welcome to the new and improved Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society Newsletter! We hope you like the new look and the new content. We're here to serve our members, please let us know what you think.

SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE

The Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society will be holding a special membership meeting on Sunday September 26, 2010 at 1:00pm at the Sportsman's Club in Litchfield. The sole business at this meeting will be voting on new bylaws for the society. Only paid members in good standing will be allowed to attend the meeting and vote. Members will be sent a copy of the current by laws and the proposed new bylaws before the meeting.

**Note our new mailing address.
All correspondences should go to:**

**Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society
P O Box 293
Litchfield, ME 04350**

DO WE HAVE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS?

We have e-mail addresses for about 60% of our members so far. Those members were the first to know about the milfoil infestation in Purgatory Stream. By using e-mail we can keep our members informed of issues facing our lakes quickly and at no cost to the Society. If you have not been receiving our e-mail, please send your e-mail address to us at: memberservice@tacomalakes.org

METAPHYTON

Have you noticed all the green algae in the shallow areas of our lakes this summer? This alga is called Metaphyton. Metaphyton is a wispy, filamentous form of algae that grows in shallow areas near the shoreline. In appearance, it is sometimes called "green cotton candy." This algae often forms large billowing clouds in the water. But there is little substance in the clouds, as anyone who has tried to pull them from the water can attest. Phosphorus stimulates the growth of algae such as Metaphyton.

Do you fertilize your camp's lawn? If so, you are likely introducing a great deal of phosphorus into the water. Runoff from lawns fertilized with common lawn fertilizers are loaded with phosphorus. **PLEASE USE ONLY PHOSPHORUS FREE FERTILIZER ON YOUR LAWN!** What is more important, a green lawn or a clean lake? Thank you for helping to protect the Tacoma Lakes!

ANNUAL MEETING

Thank you to everyone who attended our annual meeting on July 10! We had another excellent turnout and another wonderful breakfast prepared by Society volunteers. We wish to especially thank our speakers Bob Moore and Robert Van Riper. Please visit our website to see photos of the event.

Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society
Officers and Directors
July 1, 2010 —June 30, 2011

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DAM KEEPER

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VOLUNTEER INSPECTOR and TRAINER

Buffy DeMatteis
buffythelobsterslayer@yahoo.com

TLIS would like to thank the following businesses for their generous donations used as raffle gifts at our annual meeting.

Nadeau's Marine
The Meadows Golf Course
Gowell's Store
Litchfield County Store
Litchfield Building Supply
Country Cafe
Roaring Brook Nursery
Cobbossee Colony Golf Course
Nelly's Tractor Works

The Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society would like to thank former directors Judy Bourget, Roger Champagne and Dian White for your years of service to the Society.

ANNUAL DRAWDOWN

The annual drawdown of the Tacoma Lakes will begin on October 15. Please be sure to remove your boats before this date.
Thank You.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The year 2010 continues to be a very busy for the Society as we continue to deal with significant changes in the way that your Society functions and serves our members. The well attended and successful breakfast and annual meeting held in July resulted in some new officers and directors. They have agreed to a busy slate of duties to occupy the rest of the summer.

Major initiatives currently being undertaken by your Board of Directors are:

1. A revamping of the current bylaws to better reflect the needs of the Society and to allow the Board the flexibility to adjust to changing times and needs.
2. An effort to locate and update our mailing list as the current mailing list is badly outdated resulting in numerous newsletters being returned as non-deliverable.
3. An effort to switch to some extent to an electronic delivery of news to members to both save costs and to be able to deliver news and updates in a timely manner.
4. Coordinating with local town officials any work needed to keep the dam in good functioning condition and to keep backup gates on hand should any damage occur to the existing gates.
5. Moving our financial record keeping to software driven program to produce both timely and accurate records to include a monthly balance sheet and profit and loss statement.
6. A shift of responsibilities for managing the weekend milfoil inspection program to Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed, although your Society will continue to fund the inspectors at the Purgatory Board Landing.
7. An increased emphasis on the volunteer inspection program in an effort to provide more manpower to conduct inspections of boats using the boat landing during the week.
8. A continued effort to use the Society's website as a conduit for information to both members and others wishing to learn more about the Tacoma Lakes watershed.

These are just a few of the projects being undertaken by your Board of Directors. Your board dedicates untold hours of unpaid volunteer service to help maintain the Tacoma Lakes Chain of lakes as a valuable resource to be enjoyed by both members and non-members!

Not a member? Why not? Our annual dues are only \$15.00. As you will see throughout the newsletter, the Society is very active on your behalf. Your financial support is critical as expand our mission. We need every lakefront owner to be a member of your Society. Please join today!

I encourage you to continue to support your Society both financially and as a volunteer. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us at any time either by phone or e-mail.

Thank you,
Bruce G. Doyle

Please note that membership dues only cover about 1/3 of our costs. Our biggest expense is the cost of the inspectors at the boat launch. Their work is essential if we are to prevent invasive weeds from infesting our lakes. The officers and directors thank the following for their donations in 2010:

Terry Averill
Michael & Janet Dana
Mildred Donahue
Chuck & Gloria Earley
Daniel Fortin
Mark & Susan Harriman
Kristie & Donald Rowell
Gerard & Theresa Samson
Claudette Simard
Claudette Simard- In Memory of
Nick Chacos and Dick Hebert
John Story, L-A Harley Davidson
Lorraine Szykiewicz & John Morgan II
Don & Evelyn Waterman

BOAT INSPECTORS NEEDED

Currently, we staff the Woodbury Pond boat launch on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from Memorial Day until Labor Day with Certified Boat Inspectors. Their job is simple—to check boats and trailers entering or leaving Tacoma Lakes to be sure no invasive aquatic plants are hitch hiking a ride and to educate the boaters to check their own boats. Transferring plants from one water body to another by boat or trailer is the most common way milfoil and other invasive plants get started in new areas. We need to create a culture where everyone checks for plant fragments before leaving a lake or river.

Training is quick and easy; it usually lasts about an hour. Job requirements include good eyesight, the ability to bend and see below boat trailers, and the ability to talk kindly with boaters. The boat launch is a great place to spend a few hours a week with a thermos of coffee and a good book. Boating continues for some folks 7-days a week until the water level drops in mid-October. Teens through senior citizens are welcome this

fall and beginning next summer! Contact Buffy DeMatteis for more information at buffythelobsterslayer@yahoo.com or call 352-422-3929 and leave a message.

A LAKER'S DOZEN

13 Ways You Can Help the Lake

- 1. Always check boat, trailer and equipment for plant fragments** before launch and after take-out.
- 2. Respect Shoreland Zone Regulations.** Before making any change on your land, check with your town code enforcement officer to see what's permitted and what's not in the shoreland: 250' of the lake and 75' of streams.
- 3. Control storm water run-off** from buildings, paths, driveways and road. Check your property on a rainy day and fix run-off sites by planting vegetation or constructing swales to direct water flow away from the lake.
- 4. Cultivate a wooded buffer.** Trees, shrubs and grasses slow the flow and filter soil and pollutants from rainwater before they end up in the lake.
- 5. Limit lawn size,** mow less often, and don't rake duff within 75 feet of shore.
- 6. Limit fertilizer,** herbicide and pesticide use. Long lasting residues in these chemicals can turn lakes green and harm aquatic life. **Never use fertilizers containing phosphorus!**
- 7. Don't stress the septic system.** Inspect the system yearly. Pump the tank regularly. Systems 20 years and older should be inspected by a specialist. Use phosphorus-free cleaners, and detergents. Stagger laundry loads. Minimize water use. Don't put grease or toxics down the drain.
- 8. Construct docks and floats with lake-friendly materials.** Choose cedar, cypress, plastic, or aluminum over wood that's pressure-treated with arsenic.

9. Dogs, humans and boats should never be washed in the lake!

10. Observe headway speed within 200 feet of shore. Boating in shallow water disturbs fish habitat and stirs up sediment.

11. When you replace a boat motor, choose a clean 4-stroke engine.

12. Preserve wildlife habitat on land and underwater. Lake shallows and shorelands are home to many native species and nurseries for young.

13. Support your Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society!

LITCHFIELD PROPERTY EVALUATIONS

By Charlie Manchester

Litchfield lake shore property owners are concerned about the impact of the increases shorefront property evaluations. This is true across the state as well as in Litchfield and Monmouth. The evaluation of property is directly linked to the amount of property taxes paid. The actual amount of taxes paid by town property owners is determined by voters at the annual town meeting when the municipal budget is approved.

The key issue in property tax evaluation is the equity of the evaluations. Town residents recently voted down an \$185,000 proposal to have a professional evaluation of all residences over a two or three year time period. The last comprehensive evaluation was done over sixteen years ago (1994 by O'Donnell Associates). Things have changed dramatically since that time. Lake property values have increased dramatically.

Municipal officials have attempted to decrease the disparity between shore land property and other local real estate by increasing the assessed value of lake property. For the most part, officials are using the amount of frontage owned on a lake as determinate for the valuation, but giving little consideration to the quality of the water frontage. The value of the buildings or camps was not a major concern at the last change in values.

The Litchfield Board of Assessors, the assessors' agent, and volunteers are attempting to refine the process by which evaluations are set to assure that properties are assessed equitably. Sales ratios, construction costs, and improvements made since the last evaluation are being considered. The Maine Revenue Service is also a major source of information to Maine municipalities about property evaluations.

Should you have any concerns about property tax assessments please do not hesitate to contact local officials.

LOON PRODUCTIVITY STUDY

This year Maine Audubon has started having volunteers count and document loon activity on Maine lakes throughout the summer in addition to the annual loon count day in July. We have Buker Pond, 2 sections of Woodbury Pond, part of Sand Pond covered. But we need more volunteers. Interested for next year?
Call Diane Clay at 268-3247

PURGATORY STREAM

DOWN MEMORY LANE

By Karen Smith-Ahern

Many of us only dream of revisiting our childhood memories. Sue Tullis of New Hampshire made her dreams come true recently. Sue spent most of her childhood summers at her Aunt's camp in Maine. She knew Sand Pond in Tacoma Lakes was the general location, but had only vague recollections of the specific location. Through our website, she contacted Bruce Doyle and asked for our help. Her description of the lake, the islands off the beach, the dancehall 'up the way' that burnt down in the 60's, helped Bruce pinpoint the camp road and camp she was remembering.

"Was it possible to see it from the water?" she asked.

My husband and I took the opportunity to share our love for the lakes and helped to make a dream come true. She and her husband Dave arrived Saturday, camera in hand. They had driven around Monmouth, Litchfield, and up to W. Gardiner —so much had changed and not much looked familiar. Once on the water, we motored down Woodbury Pond and under the bridge to Sand Pond. Her eyes widened as we approached the west side islands. "That camp was there 45 years ago", Sue exclaimed. It was starting to look familiar with comments about 'That camp' and 'those rocks', "We used to swim off those rocks", referring to the now-marked water hazards. Her eyes welled up as she shared stories of her childhood. She took several pictures to share with her brother and said good bye as we passed it one last time.

It was an honor to represent the Tacoma Lakes.

It was a pleasure to meet Sue & David Tullis and provide Sue with the avenue to follow her dream. We hope she comes back to visit again!

Last month your Society was notified by the Friends of Cobbossee Watershed that variable leaf milfoil was discovered in Purgatory Stream below the Woodbury Pond Dam. Further investigation by members of your Society, Friends of Cobbossee Watershed and the DEP found no milfoil in Woodbury Pond. To date there is no remediation plan. For further information including photos and maps, please visit our website.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Something to consider for anyone who is a summer resident on the Tacoma Lakes and would like to be able to check their email or access the internet. The Litchfield Senior Center, located on Academy Road in the old Litchfield Academy building (next to the Libby Tozier Elementary School) has computers available during the days they are open. The times are 8:30 to 4, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Stop by for a cup of coffee and check out the other activities going on as well. Exercise, line dancing, cards, games, etc.

SUCCESSFUL FUND RAISER

We're pleased to announce that that in cooperation with the Friends of Cobbossee Watershed we have raised \$1025.00. Generous donors provided Red Sox and Patriots tickets at no cost to the associations. They were auctioned at the Friends annual cocktail party on August 18. The proceeds were split equally between the two organizations. We would like to thank the donors, purchasers and the Friends for their generosity.



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TACOMA LAKES IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

2010 MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2010: \$15.00.

Thank you for your membership in the Society. Your membership dues are essential to support our many activities. Together all of us can help to keep Tacoma Lakes beautiful and healthy.

NAME: _____

STREET: _____ (Mailing Address)

TOWN: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____ **OK TO E-MAIL?** _____

We would appreciate your permission to send you e-mail. We will keep your e-mail private and will not share it with any other organization. Thank!s

POND PROPERTY IS LOCATED ON: _____

DUES: _____ **DONATION:** _____ **TOTAL ENCLOSED:** _____

Thank you for considering a donation to help us continue our important work.

Please mail this completed application along with your check payable to Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society to:

**Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society
P O Box 293
Litchfield, ME 04350**

Can you help? We are seeking volunteer boat inspectors. Free training is provided. If you are interested, please indicate your interest below and we will contact you:

Please contact me, I'm interested: _____

WE APPRECIATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP!