



Newsletter

May 2020

President's Message

by Chuck Nichols

Hello everyone, I hope this newsletter finds everyone safe and well. What unusual times. Luckily for all of us, we have a beautiful place to "Stay Home."

Seymour Lake Association (SLA) has sent a couple of email blasts I hope you have found useful. Normally, I would be reminding you of the dates for the SLA annual meeting and the SLA summer social. However, at this time we can't really be sure if we will be able to hold these events, at least in the traditional way. Maybe we will have a large Zoom annual meeting. So please keep your eye out for more email blasts where we will try to keep you updated with what's happening in Vermont and around Seymour Lake.

A couple of things I would like to mention.

The loon platform has been put out (see enclosed article on page 5) and we ask that you not go within 50 yards (or inside the signs) of the platform with any motorized boat, kayak, canoe, or even your body. The Loon Committee does believe that activity around the platform has been part of the issue with the loons not having chicks. Even peoples' voices can be disruptive to nesting loons.

A reminder...all boaters must refrain from creating any wake when closer than 200 feet to the shore or any other vessel. A boater may drive closer to shore than 200 feet as long as he/she creates no wake. This is Vermont law.

Make sure to read Beth Torpey's article below about the boat access. SLA will keep you informed over the next weeks (hopefully not months) of the status of the boat access. Everyone around Seymour Lake has done such a great job keeping the lake free of invasive species that we do not want to undo all that in these difficult times. We are very concerned about private boat access areas and would ask that everyone get in touch with Beth Torpey (see article below) and she will arrange for any boat that has come from other than Seymour Lake to be inspected.

Please stay safe and be well in these difficult times. □

Boating Access Update

by Beth Torpey

Due to pandemic considerations, the Greeter/Boat Inspection Program at the public boat access was recently in limbo, but we are happy to report it will operate as normal. The State of Vermont typically provides approximately half of the money needed to run this program, while SLA and the Town of Morgan split the balance. Currently the Greeter Program will receive funding, perhaps not to the extent in the past. The SLA board has met and understands that SLA and the Town of Morgan may need to invest additional resources.

In the 20 years this program has operated, it has intercepted over 100 invasive species on their way into our lake!

The good news is that the access areas will be open, docks installed, and

Greeter services allowed. There are no present plans for Portalettes (their polite term for Portapotties) at boat access areas. All guidance regarding social distancing, etc. will be followed.

We are concerned about launching of watercraft from private access areas around the lake. We've made an effort to identify these private areas, but if you're aware of one, please contact Beth Torpey at BethyL1@gmail.com or (802) 895-3013. If you must launch a boat from one of these areas, contact Beth.

Please be reminded that Eurasian Watermilfoil is still a potentially big threat and that Zebra mussels do exist in other nearby Vermont lakes. □



Eurasian Watermilfoil



Zebra Mussels



This newsletter is a semiannual publication of the Seymour Lake Association, a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of Seymour Lake and the surrounding locality for the benefit of lake users, property owners, and residents of Morgan, Vermont.



Seymour Lake Association

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 NominatingTim Buzzell, Bonnie McWain, Sean Selby
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Recognition

The newsletter is paid in part with support from VT Department of Environmental Conservation funds. □

Shoreland Protection Permitting

For questions regarding Shoreland Protection Permitting, the contact person is Lindsay Miller who can be reached at Lindsay.Miller@vermont.gov and 802-490-6200.

Save The Dates

Due to the Covid-19 uncertainty, there are too many unknowns at this time to set firm dates and times. Therefore, this May there are no Save The Dates. Information will be sent by email as it is available. □

Town of Morgan Listers

by Bruce Barter

The Town of Morgan, at its town meeting in March, approved abolishing the Morgan Lister's Office. The change to move from town listers to a professional assessor is being encouraged by the State of Vermont for all Vermont towns. The New England Municipal Resource Center's, Ltd. (NEMRC) of Fairfax, VT will be the firm to carry out those duties as they are familiar with Morgan and have the expertise and staff to perform the work needed for our Grand List. NEMRC's goal is to provide technological & management resources to municipalities, schools and non-profits. □

Grant Funds Watershed Health and Youth Employment

by The Barton Chronicle

In 2019 NorthWoods Stewardship Center completed 15 watershed improvement projects in northern Vermont, thanks to funding through the Vermont DEC Clean Water Initiative Program. The \$121,684 of grant funding was used to employ local youth to complete 11 weeks of work on watershed projects in the NEK. Projects included the building of stone steps from Route 5A to Lake Willoughby, the repair of erosion on the South Pisgah trailhead, and [the installation of storm water management practices at the Seymour Lake Fish and Wildlife boat access area.](#) See photo nearby.

"The work crew grant funds the labor necessary to make these high priority clean water projects happen," said NorthWoods Conservation Science Director Meghann Carter. "The advantage of our program is that we not only ensure that projects are completed using sustainable best management practices, but we also employ local youth to complete the work, providing valuable, paid, hands-on conservation experience

for young men and women in the NEK." At the Seymour Lake Fish and Wildlife access area in Morgan, runoff from the existing parking lot had been carrying sediment and contaminants directly into the lake and neighboring Sucker Brook. In the summer of 2019, the NorthWoods watershed crew re-landscaped the access, adding three perennial rain gardens, two berms on an unused access ramp, and planting shrubs between the parking area and the water to help redirect and filter runoff.

"For many years the SLA had been seeking a way for the Fish and Wildlife boat access to become a public demonstration of best lake shore management practices for maintaining or improving the lake's water quality and ecology," said SLA member Peggy Barter. "There was positive buzz around the lake all summer as the project progressed and working with Meghann Carter and her crews was a pleasure. They were always energetic, polite, and willing to engage with volunteers on the

project as well as with visitors to the access."

The NorthWoods Stewardship Center continues to work on priority watershed work throughout the region, as well as supporting programs in forest stewardship, environmental education and a youth conservation corps.

For more information about their latest projects, email Meghann Carter, or call (802) 723- 6551, extension 303, or visit northwoodscenter.org. □



Peggy Barter, left, and NorthWoods Stewardship Center workers in front of a rain garden in 2019.

Seymour Lake Histories: Carolyn Emery and Seymour East

by Dan Brush

Carolyn Emery turned ninety-three this year and is the proud matriarch of the Emery Family, a family who has been enjoying Seymour Lake for over eighty years.

Seven-year-old Carolyn Boucher (now Carolyn Emery) remembers arriving at Seymour Lake with her parents and walking down a long and narrow footpath covered in a canopy of Pine Trees which then gradually turned to Hemlocks. As she approached the lake's shore with her brother, Bobby, a small cabin nestled in the trees on the lakeshore beckoned to them. The year was 1934, and Carolyn's parents, Nourine and Neil Boucher, had rented this camp from Larry Murdock, a Groveton

acquaintance.

Little did Carolyn know at the time, but this was the beginning of a lifetime of summer (and sometimes winter) camping at Seymour Lake. It only took this one visit for Carolyn to fall in love with this special place. The deep and clear waters of this beautiful Northeast Kingdom lake are the backdrop and beginning of the story unfolding for Carolyn and her family.

Carolyn's parents soon bought this camp, the same one they had first rented. This original camp that Carolyn's parents bought is still in the family and remains full of memories. Carolyn's father added on to the camp so there

would be more room for their growing family, even improving it with a canvas-lined roof that was gleaned from the Groveton Paper Mill. Many improvements followed over the years, and succeeding generations of family campers continued making improvements.

In those early days of the 1930's, Harold Barry owned the land from the beach at Seymour East up to the brook as part of his farm, which is now where Route 111 and the road from Seymour East meet. This property was later purchased by George and Carolyn MacLeay, who ran the Seldom Rest Horse Farm for many years.

Back then there was no electricity

Seymour Lake Histories...continued

and only a few footpaths between the scattered camps. Carolyn remembers walking up the hill from her camp with family members. They would walk up to the farm at the top of the hill where Farmer Barry would chip off pieces of ice from blocks of ice in the ice house. This ice was packed in sawdust to insulate it from melting in warm weather; having been cut and harvested out of the frozen lake months earlier and brought up to the farm to be stored there. Carolyn's family would then carry the ice back to the ice box in their camp on the lake to keep their food cool. Carolyn also remembers a Mr. Prue, who would come by and sell vegetables to campers on the lake.

Carolyn looks back fondly on other memories. There were times when she and her brother, Bobby, would row to the outlet of Seymour Lake in their wooden rowboat and dive into the huge pool at the dam. Over the years, sediment from the outlet stream has filled up the bottom of this pool so diving there is now unsafe and only a long-ago memory. Rowing those old wooden boats took much more work than the new lightweight aluminum ones that are common now.

Carolyn has a lifetime of these stories and family memories to share. She recalls seeing the giant-lettered Ames Park sign up on Elan Hill. This sign was so large that it could be read from the other side of the lake at Seymour East. There was the time a moose walked down the hill from the MacLeay's Horse Farm and was startled by a dog near the lake. The moose then waded into the lake and swam across towards the Ames Park Sign on Elan Hill.

Almost seventy years ago, Carolyn Boucher and Hollis Emery were married, both from Groveton, NH and during their youth spent summer-times at Seymour Lake. Hollis courted her here, rowing to the beach by Smelt Brook to share evening campfires long before any camps were built there. In the 1960's, Hollis and Carolyn purchased a camp only two doors away from the one Carolyn first stayed in at the lake. This is the "home" camp for the entire Emery Family. The camp sits back from the shore on the lower east side of the lake with their children: Mike, Jill, Tom, Tim, and Steve, all owning camps nearby. Other family members, the McCarthy's and Bouchers, have camps on the lake too, with more than forty immediate family members visiting Seymour Lake each year.

Carolyn's eyes twinkle when talking of dancing with Hollis to the song, "Scotch and Soda," a 1950's hit from the Kingston Trio. This was Carolyn's and Hollis' favorite song, and they went on to name their party boat after this song. Carolyn smiles when thinking of the iconic "Scotch and Soda," which is certainly the oldest party boat (and many consider it to be the most interesting and unique one on the lake).

She reminisces about when the boat "got loose" during a storm and was later found on the beach by Birch Point (boat chasing is a fairly common event here at the lake and can be a great way to meet other campers). The "Scotch and Soda" is still used by the Emery's for fun. In addition, Tom Emery (Carolyn's son) can be seen taking water samples to test the cleanliness of Seymour Lake for the Lay Monitoring Program.

Carolyn recalls spending time at Seymour Lake in the winter. She would park by the state fish hatchery on Elliot Acres Road and walk into the Emery "home" camp with her daugh-

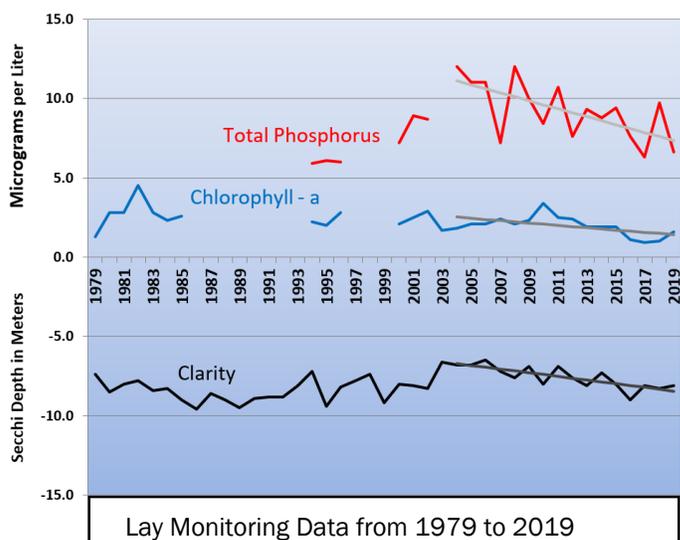
Seymour Lake Histories...continued

ter, Jill, through the deep winter snow. Together, they would tow a sled of blankets and provisions behind them, this being the easiest and shortest way to their camp as the Seymour East Road was not cleared in the winter.

As the matriarch of the Emery Family, Carolyn treasures her family, the memories and the memories-to-be-made. Celebrating summertime with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren here at the lake, she's an important and respected member of the community at Seymour East. □

Water Quality

by Water Quality Committee



The Lay Monitoring Program, administered by Vermont's Department of Environmental Conservation, trains lay people to collect water samples and data which is recorded and analyzed by Lakes and Ponds scientists for more than 50 lakes.

Volunteers like Tom Emery (c.f. November 2013 newsletter article) for Seymour Lake accomplish this task each week-end through the summer months and these measurements are averaged to produce the data in the graph. Three parameters are measured, Total phosphorus, chlorophyll - a, and clarity. Note that clarity is expressed as a negative number because it expresses depth below the water's surface. Lower is better!

The graph now includes a gray trend line—also known as a linear regression line—over the last 16 years from 2004 to 2019 where we have complete data for every year. This gives you a visual appreciation of the trend going downward over those years. The Water Quality Committee is especially pleased with the trend as there is a noticeable improvement in all three parameters, especially total phosphorus. We believe this is partly due to efforts of lake owners to improve their properties and to implement lake-friendly programs such as Lake Wise. There is no direct correlation of this but we should all be proud of the success of our efforts. □

Video by Eric Hansen on Loons

by Rhonda Shippee



E CALL OF THE LOON

It's mid-April on the lake and already the magical call of the loon can be heard. For me, hearing this call has seemed reassuring in these uncertain times. SLA has previously shared a link to a presentation on loons by Eric Hansen, Loon Biologist at the Vermont Center for Ecostudies. If you haven't had the time to watch that presentation, here are some interesting loon facts from Eric's presentation. It is my sincere hope that all our SLA members, friends and neighbors will be able to return to Seymour Lake this summer to enjoy and be reassured by this special sound. Some questions and answers:

Is it true that loons mate forever? This could happen, however, because one partner may die or an "intruder loon" may take over the partner they typically have several mates over their lifetimes. Intruder loons are typically male—often 5-10 year olds who were previously non-breeders due to their youth. The intruder usually attacks the other male in the spring. If there is a chick, the intruder may kill the chick either intentionally or unintentionally. The "loser" loon will typically retreat to a nearby lake.

How long do loons live? Loons commonly live for 20 years or more. The males have a higher mortality rate. The oldest recorded loon of those studied is 35 years.

What do loons eat? They primarily eat small 2-4" fish and their favorite is perch. In winter, they'll eat crabs and crayfish.

What type of lake do nesting loons prefer? Loons prefer to nest on an island or small cove and on an undisturbed, not too steep weedy shoreline. Seventy to one hundred acres is a good "territory size" for a pair to control. If at a large lake with several pairs, it is important that they have distinct territories so that the pairs don't see each other (such as Seymour Lake's two

legs). Rocky shorelines are undesirable (which is why no pair has ever successfully nested on Willoughby Lake).

When do loons nest? Nesting begins in early to mid May and the eggs will hatch at the end of June to mid-July. They will usually lay two eggs which will hatch within 24-48 hours of each other. This sequential hatching gives the first chick (and the parents!) a head start. Loons will re-nest if the first nest fails. The male and female will share incubation of the eggs. Chicks will leave the nest within 12 hours of hatching. Once hatched the loons no longer use the nest which is when the protective signs can be taken down. Male loons don't typically begin breeding until they are 6-7 years old and females until they are 7-8 years old. Until they mate and begin breeding, these loons are "single" or non-breeders.

What are the different calls and what do they mean? The *yodel* – a crescendo with up and down repeated notes – is only made by the male and is a territorial call. It is used to ward off intruders and avoid fighting. Every male has a unique yodel that other loons will recognize. The *wail* is an identification call that says "where are you" or "who are you" and is made mostly at night when they can't see each other. The *tremolo* call says "something's up" and can be because they are upset or excited. The *hoot* is a call for close communication, usually within a family group.

Loons on a single large lake with multiple territories or neighboring lakes listen to each other's calls. They know each other and what's happening in the other territories/lakes!

Is it possible to tell a male loon from a female while on the water? If they are travelling as a pair, the larger loon is typically the male. Also, only males make the yodel call.

What is the purpose of the loon's preening? Preening is critical to loons. They must do it every 2-3 hours. It involves putting oil that comes from a gland in their rear end into their feathers to provide waterproofing.

Do chicks born on a lake return to that lake as adults? No but when they mate they will typically choose a lake that is similar in size and pH to the lake they

were born on. Males will choose a lake within 20 miles of the lake they were born on but females are less likely to settle that close to where they were born.

Where do our loons migrate to in the winter months? Most of our loons migrate to the coast, primarily Cape Cod or Nantucket. A migrating loon is generally a solitary traveler but may form groups when they land to rest and feed. The parents will leave in October and any chicks that survived will leave in late October or early November. You may see their winter plumage begin to emerge before they head off.

And there is more. This synopsis cannot do justice to Eric's presentation, you just have to see it. He included many more observations, all of which are worth your time. If cabin fever has got you down, this will perk you up.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2ccPp2Ilq4&feature=youtu.be>

Very important for the health of our loons on Seymour Lake, please, please stay away from the loon warning signs and floating nests on the lake. They are there for a very specific reason, to protect them and their chicks.

I must end this article with huge thanks to those dedicated volunteers on Seymour who have worked with Eric Hansen over the years to encourage nesting and restore the loon population—Charles "Woody" Woods, Denis Fortin, Nancy Bowen, Dave and Bonnie Potter and the Jenness family. □



A floating nest set up by Denis Fortin.

Thank You to the following Seymour Lake Association Members for Your support in 2019

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| Robert McCarthy | Jim & Mary Ann Pratt | Bob & Mary Lou Steenrod | Scott & Alicia Woods |
| Craig & Val McDonald | Walter & Leona Quigg | Craig & Deborah Stevens | Allan Wooley |
| James & Linda McDonald | Bill & Judy Reed | Brian & Sean | Ilene Douglas |
| Maureen McGuire | Bill & Diane Reeves | Cynthia Stevens | Bill & Joanne Worth |
| Derek S. McKenny | Carol & Ed Rehor and Family | Gary Stevens | Todd Wright |
| Madison McKenny | Margaret Reilly | Michael & Debi Stevens | Wayne & Judy Wyckoff |
| Ian McKenny | Barbara Gunter | Dean & Joanne Stratton | Will Young |
| Jean McKenny | Kathy & Bruce Remick | Casimer S. Sudol | Gayle Hanson |
| Lee & John McLendon | Jackie & Worthy Reynolds | Francis Sullivan | Heather & Robert Zeagman |
| James & Bonnie McWain | Spensley Rickert | Sue Swenson | Alexander, Allyssa & Austin |
| Lyman & Sue McWain | Colette Haag-Rickert | Justin Taft Family | Carl L. and Wilma A. Zettlemoyer |
| Loraine Melick-Seronick | Mary Ann Riggie and Family | Barry & Paula Thibodeau | |
| Peter Seronick | | | |

Eagle on Seymour Lake

by Doug Gimler and photos

In March of this year an immature bald eagle showed up on the lake ice. I was lucky to get any photos as he/she stayed very briefly. Bald eagles are

considered mature at five years of age, and their head color becomes completely white, and therefore I would guess this immature eagle to be be-

tween one and three years old. Always a treat to observe these majestic birds of prey. Compare with photo of mature eagle below. □



Spotlight on David Wieselmann

by Erik Lessing

David Wieselmann has been a Seymour Laker for many years but unfortunately suffered a mountain biking accident in 2010 when he incurred a serious spinal cord injury. It is relatively high up the spine at the upper part of his torso which makes it very difficult to control those muscles, so important for physical movement. David lives south of Boston to be near three facilities which help him with rehabilitation but each weekend and many other days in summer he returns to the place of his love, Seymour Lake, to pursue a long-time passion in one of the few physical efforts he can do, kayaking. David spends many hours on the lake in his kayak and is the leader of the VIP (Volunteer Invasive Patroller) Program of SLA which supplements the boat launch greeters. His commute is long from Boston but his mother picks him up in Littleton, NH and drives him to their Seymour East camp.



David in his kayak in the outlet area of Seymour Lake.

For the past many years, David has moved from his wheelchair to his kayak with the help of 20 neighbors who enthusiastically and willingly take turns to do this task each summer. This is accomplished with shear muscle power by lifting David from wheelchair to kayak and back again. These are the

unsung people whose assistance is invaluable for David.

Before the accident, David was also an avid skier but has unfortunately missed ten years of being on the slopes. He got a chance recently, however when he went skiing at Waterville Valley with help from the Waterville Valley Resorts' Adaptive Snowsports program, a part of Waterville Valley where disabled people team up with extraordinary volunteers and learn to fly— that's how the students describe the freedom of sliding down a snowy slope unencumbered by a wheelchair or braces. As a skier myself, I have watched these wonderful volunteers do their magic helping others.

David does need more VIPs so if you would like to be part of this effort, contact David at Davidis-backsf@yahoo.com

And when you see him in his colorful kayak, wave hello. □



David in the foreground at Waterville Valley.