



CHEBACCO LAKE & WATERSHED ASSOCIATION *Newsletter*

A Quarterly Publication of the Chebacco Lake & Watershed Association

www.chebaccolake.org

June 2013

Notes from Around the Lake

Summer weather is finally here! Quite a few folks have already been out on their boats enjoying the lake. The CLWA will be funding the portable toilet at the boat ramp again this year from May through September. We will also be doing water testing again in four locations around the lake during the swimming season to ensure that the water quality is safe.

Due to quite a few complaints over the last couple of years about unsafe boating, boats coming into the swimming area at Centennial Grove and large wakes, the Hamilton and Essex harbor masters said they will be out on the lake and at the ramp more this season. We don't want to see any accidents this summer or more damage to the shoreline, docks, etc.

There are three docks or rafts that have drifted away from someone's property and are out in the lake. Please bring them back to your property or dispose of them properly if you don't want them. If someone gets hurt on them the owner could be liable for damages. The owner could also be responsible for any property damage caused by their loose docks.

Alewife Counts are Up this Year

After quite a few years of low fish counts, the alewife population is on the rebound. The late 1980's and early 1990's saw many of these fish migrating up streams and rivers all along the New England coast. Between 1987 and 1992 the numbers of alewives and river herring went from 77,000 to 379,000 in the Merrimack River watershed. In 1993 the numbers really dropped off and stayed that way for a long time. Dams and other impeded waterways, pollution, commercial over fishing and a need for more water, such as the Ipswich River going dry in the summer, all contributed to the low counts. Now the counts are rebounding in all areas including the Parker River in Newbury, the Little River in Gloucester and here in the Alewife Brook. For the past several years volunteers have spent a lot of time at the Apple St. bridge watching for the migrating fish in the spring with disappointing results. This year a lot more were seen in the brook and they have been spotted in the lake and the ponds upstream.

The CLWA has spent a lot of time for over a decade bringing the issue of clearing Alewife Brook to the Town of Essex. Last year the State issued a permit to clear debris blocking the brook. Essex DPW employees cleaned a lot of the area by the Apple St. bridge last year and will continue this summer. Volunteers from the CLWA cleared quite a bit upstream from the bridge but there is a lot more to do. If anyone would like to be on the volunteer list for

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July 4th Boat Parade

Our annual tradition of the boat parade will soon be here.

Come join the fun on the Fourth and participate in the parade or cheer on the entries from shore.

Awards will be given for the Most Patriotic and the Most Creative entries. All decorated boats will get a prize.

Meet at 1:00 pm in front of the Centennial Grove beach for a slow cruise around the entire lake.

CLWA Membership

Great news! The number of households who have become members of the CLWA is up this year.

If you haven't renewed or joined yet please consider supporting the CLWA so that we can continue to promote responsible use of the lake for many types of recreation, protect the water quality, and fund our projects and the newsletter.

If your membership is current, your mailing label is marked 1/14, meaning your membership is current through January, 2014. If there is no date on your mailing label, your membership has expired.

CLWA Officers & Board of Directors for 2013

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Kerry Kaplon

David Lenzi

Keith Symmes

Newsletter

Kimie Kester

Web Site E-mail Address

chebaccoassociation@gmail.com

Designing With Nature Landscaping For a Healthy Lake

It is a busy time of year and I am sure many of you are off and running with landscape projects around your property. As a landscape designer, this is an especially hectic time of year for me, so for this newsletter, I am just going to dash off a few updates on issues that we have mentioned before in this column.

1. The Winter Moths – you may have noticed last December that the moth population was very light. We also had some very cold weather in later December. As a result, there were fewer caterpillars around this spring. They did appear well after the trees leafed out but, their “chomping” didn’t last too long and the damage was minimal to trees in the lake area. Hopefully the cycle has been broken in this region and all of the trees that were affected a few years ago will have time to recover.

2. Garlic Mustard - Last year, I wrote an article on the invasive weed, garlic mustard, which was taking over the woodlands in our area and crowding out the native understory. I want to report that in sections of my woodland where I pulled it out and destroyed it before it went to seed, it has not come back. I plan to be diligent again this year and I know of other neighbors that are doing the same. The weed usually appears about now, is about 2 -3 feet tall and has rounded leaves with small white flowers on the top. It pulls out very easily. You should not put his weed in your compost pile.

3. The Buffer Zone – With all the rain we have been having in June, the water level is rising. This is when having an adequate buffer zone along the water’s edge, with a mixture of plants that hold the soil together, is critically important. Not only does it help prevent erosion, it also helps protect the water quality of the lake from runoff coming from the watershed area. When the water recedes, examine your lake shore edge and see where you can add to your buffer zone. Those of you not living directly on the lake can help as well. The more plant roots in the watershed, the more protection from runoff and the better the water quality of the lake.

- Robyn Kanter

Alewife Counts are Up this Year

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this year please call any CLWA board member and you will be notified when the work will start.

The alewife may not seem like an exciting fish but it’s an important part of the food chain for lake and ocean fish and many types of wildlife. A healthy population of these fish should be a concern to everyone.

Boating Tips

We hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable boating season. Please keep the following in mind:

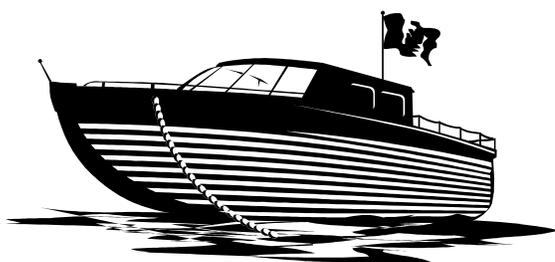
- Both Essex and Hamilton have banned personal watercrafts on the lake. They are not allowed.
- Please follow the suggested traffic pattern (counter-clockwise for all power boats) to minimize the chance of collisions.
- You must have a spotter, over 12 years of age, when water skiing, tubing or wakeboarding.
- All boaters under age 12 must be wearing a personal flotation device.
- In Massachusetts, youths 12 through 15 years of age must pass an approved boating education course or must be accompanied on board and directly supervised by a competent person 18 years of age or older.
- While underway in a motorboat, do not ride on the bow, gunwale, transom, or in any position that is obviously dangerous.
- Keep a safe distance from swimmers, canoes, kayaks, sailboats and wildlife.
- Use lights at dusk and do not water ski, tube or wakeboard as darkness approaches.
- Remove all plants and plant fragments from boats and trailers before leaving any lake.
- Please don't litter!
- Never dispose of waste in the lake.

If you see a dangerous or potentially dangerous situation, call:

Hamilton Harbormaster: 978-468-4421

Essex Harbormaster: 978-768-6628

Massachusetts Boating Guide, which includes boating laws and responsibilities, is available at: <http://www.boat-ed.com/ma/handbook>



Turtle and Frogs

This time of year many turtles are coming out of the water to lay their eggs. If you see a turtle in the road, help it across in the direction it is heading if you can do so safely. It is sad to see so many that have been run over. If you have a goose barrier next to the lake please leave a space at the bottom of the fence so that turtles and other small animals won't be trapped trying to get back to the water.

Frogs and toads are in the roadways at night, especially when it rains. It only takes a little effort to slow down and watch out for them if you are driving near a wetland. These beneficial animals eat a lot of mosquitoes, slugs, etc.

Mosquitos are Back

Now that mosquito season is here, we need everyone's help to keep the population of these bugs under control.

We all know that they can spoil a day or evening outside but they are also carriers of EEE and West Nile virus. They can transmit heart worm to dogs and cats.

A very small amount of standing water can hatch a lot of mosquitoes in 4 to 5 days. Please keep boats bailed out, empty and refill bird baths every few days and keep an eye out for any stagnant water such as buckets, old tires, plant saucers, etc. Last year West Nile virus was found in Hamilton, Wenham and Essex.

Parade begins at 1 p.m.

Don't miss the
Annual July 4th
Boat Parade



Chebacco Lake & Watershed Association
P.O. Box 2344
South Hamilton, MA 01982

Kids Corner: Just for Fun!

Be an Artist

Copy this fish one square at a time.

