

# WILSON LAKE NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020



“Only the development of compassion and understanding for others can bring us the tranquility and happiness we all seek.”

~Dalai Lama XIV

## Contact us at...

Website: <http://wilsonlake.net/>

Facebook: *Wilson Lake Association*

Email: [Wilsonlakeas@gmail.com](mailto:Wilsonlakeas@gmail.com)

## **Board of Directors 2019-2020:**

Isobel Michaud- *President*

Eric D. Cook-*Vice President*

Ann Marie Nadeau-*Treasurer*

John Nadeau- *Erosion Control*

*Extraordinaire*

Lisa Flayhan-*Secretary*

Wayne and Sharyn Reetz- *Plant Patrollers*

Rich Chevalier- *Lake Monitoring*

Jeff Brown-*Board Member*

Kerry and Bob Garrity-*Board Members*

Bob Anderson-*Boat Safety*

Heidi & Arlie McGaw-*Board Members*

Bill Pimental-*Board Member*

Teg Road-*Board Member*

David Spahn-*Board Member*

Margaret Sitarz-*Board Member*

---

## ***Membership in WLA: Your Dues Help Protect the Lake!***

*I want to help protect and preserve Wilson Lake for future generations and enclose my 2019 contribution of \$20 (Please make checks payable to Wilson Lake Association). Additional donations are always welcome!*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Lake Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Send your dues (\$20) to Wilson Lake Association, PO Box 162. Acton, Maine 04001 *or* through PayPal or credit card at <http://wilsonlake.net/>

## Letter from the Lakeside

*Take a breath*

*Take a moment to be thankful*

*And take a page out of the Lake's book*

In my first letter as president, I wrote that “we live in a world of crises.”

Perhaps that is why I feel calm in spite of, perhaps maybe even *because* of...well. You know.



Fall of 2019 feels far away. Since then the world was hit with the COVID19 global pandemic. In some ways, the losses are measurable in cold data like fatalities and unemployment percentages. Yet the numbers cannot fully account for the stress and suffering that has and continues to occur.

Tensions are high. Politics and policies have never felt so polarizing. The emotional fatigue and frustration are driving many toward either apathy or violence, and both threaten the integrity of our great nation.

However, here on Wilson Lake, things are serene. It's beautiful here and maybe you're like me and the chaos in the “outside” world makes you feel...guilty? about enjoying a piece of heaven.

Yet here's the thing. The world has ALWAYS been crazy—*that's* precisely why we all bought camps in the first place!

The world is no crazier than it was this time last year. Yet because we're a reactionary society, we're only acknowledging and attempting to resolve some of the craziness now. It will take time, it will take patience, and it will require kindness toward and respect for one another.

In the fall, I also wrote: “It's paralyzing to think about all of the crises. It's easy to become numb to them. And yes, we cannot single-handedly solve every problem. But the thing is, there are 7.7 billion people in the world. What if each of us did something to make things better in our own little piece of it?”

Some things have changed...now the world's population is 7.8 billion and masks are fashion accessories. But these things remain the same; be kind. Respect the lake. Respect each other. Be thankful. And read on for a refreshing breath of good news! ~*Isobel Michaud, WLA President*

## **SAVE THE DATE!!!!**

### **Our Annual Meeting will be OUTDOORS**

9 am Saturday, July, 11, 2020 at Nadeau (Old Acton) Airfield

- Bring your lawn chair and a smile
- Six feet apart. Masks aren't required, but common sense and respect for others is
- Rain date: the following Saturday July 18, 2020 at 9 am

## **Invasive Plant Patrol**

The global pandemic seems far away when we are enjoying our beautiful, healthy lake. Vigilance on many fronts will help to keep it that way, including monitoring for invasive plants.

Later this summer, when plants have fully emerged, we are planning a Level 3 Survey of the lake. This will be a complete identification of plants within our littoral zone, the area where sunlight penetrates to the bottom of the lake. The coordinator will be York County Specialist Laurie Callahan, accompanied by trained volunteers from our lake and beyond. This project will be an example of your dues payments and donations being put to good use.

An interesting and valuable resource for homeowners and visitors is [lakestewardsofmaine.org](http://lakestewardsofmaine.org). Take a look, Wilson Lake is # 3920. As always, keep an eye out for unusual aquatic plants in your area and contact [wilsonlakeas@gmail.com](mailto:wilsonlakeas@gmail.com) if you would like us to check out anything suspicious. Do not try to pull the plants out. Mark the area and take a photo.

*~Wayne and Sharyn Reetz*



*Summer 2019 paddle lead by Laurie Callahan*

## Lake Level Management 101

The lake is a little low as of this writing on May 30, 2020, low by about an inch or two as measured at the dam. We have had no rain in over two weeks and little is forecast at this time.

The dam was partially closed on May 5<sup>th</sup> which was earlier than usual. Despite the closed dam, the lake level continued to drop. Low levels during the spring allow for cleanup of the shoreline for many camp owners who need to remove leaves from their beach (using hand tools only, by regulation, of course!). The bottom of the dam was also left opened at the bottom to allow fish to continue migrating as Inland Fisheries and Wildlife recommended.

Department of Environmental Protection recommends that we err on the side of low levels for several reasons. Lower levels reduce shoreline erosion during high winds. And low levels provide for some wiggle room if lots of rain arrives all at once, particularly with hurricanes, so that properties and their septic systems are not flooded (as has happened in the past).

On May 15<sup>th</sup>, the dam was fully closed in anticipation of the many boat launchings that take place on Memorial Day weekend. Be mindful that it has not rained since about then. But the charge of water that was still in the ground of our watershed kept feeding the lake, and the lake level rose four inches over the next several days.

As we acquire rain the lake level will be maintained a bit higher than it now is, and by the time you read this it might be higher as hoped. The color markings on the side of the dam indicate our target points. Perfect is the lowest point on the white mark. Into the four-inch white mark indicates a bit high but is okay. Once in the orange the level is too high and the dam will be raised to adjust for more proper level. We will try to not let it get into the orange.

We do watch weather predictions closely and take them into account. Realize that with our dam we are keeping the lake artificially high for summer recreational activities, even now when we consider it “a bit low.” Without the dam the lake would be much lower all summer. In mid-October the dam is removed to again allow fish migration and to prepare for a low level of ice to prevent shoreline ice damage during winter and early spring.

This is currently how the lake level is being managed. And, FYI, we plan to install a fish ramp to welcome fish that want to enter the lake during the summer when the dam is closed. Small fish have been seen in the culvert behind the dam and we want to welcome them into our lake, if that is their goal! ~*John Nadeau*

## Got Smelts?

Last spring, three million smelt eggs were introduced by Inland F&W into the brook that crosses Route 109 near Hawk Road. Fortunately, it was five days *after* the Great Beaver Dam Mud Flood. Many years ago, we nearly lost our Wilson Lake smelt population due to pollution runoff from Route 109. Our first water shed survey in the 1990s identified the problem, and the runoff issue was corrected by Maine’s DOT. In Winter 2019, WLA suggested to IF&W the concept of reintroducing smelt, and the eggs were placed in the brook. Please report smelt sightings to WLA so we can keep IF&W updated on the success or failure of their efforts. ~*John Nadeau*

## Wilson Lake Water Quality Report 06.01.2020

Hello to all at Wilson Lake. I am excited to report the news for water quality this year!

Here are is the report taken on the water quality for the lake.

My first readings this year took place on May 5<sup>th</sup>. The Secchi reading for water clarity was 6.4 meters deep which is pretty typical for a mid-year reading, but not bad for this time of year. The water temperature was 52.3 degrees Fahrenheit.

Last year on May 15<sup>th</sup>, the Secchi reading was 3.8 meters!! When I took that reading, I thought I was doing something wrong testing the water because it was so poor. Then I learned the beaver dam gave way and a tsunami of swamp water entered Wilson Lake on the south west side. This year, thanks to the work down by WLA to repair the dam and remove the beavers, things are much different.

The second reading I took was May 19<sup>th</sup> with a Secchi reading of 8.09 meters and water temperature at 59 degrees Fahrenheit. The Secchi reading is great and I have not seen it as good as this in the past 3 years. Not having lots of rain helps the clarity of the water because there is not so much run-off water coming into the lake. This time last year, the clarity was still degrading and only had a Secchi reading of 3.10 meters down. This year is much different. Thanks to much work in flushing the lake, getting rid of the beaver dam and fixing the damage, the lake is much healthier. My thanks go to all who were involved in that situation.

I will be taking a water test for phosphorus in mid July as I typically do.

Best regards ~*Rich Chevalier*

## Wall Hangings and Hats

After the Great Beaver Dam Mud Flood of May 10, 2019, we learned quite a bit about beavers. Not only are they eager, but they are persistent, never-satisfied dam-builders. In our attempt to “live in peace with them,” we found that they insisted on keeping their culvert plugging dam. Inland F&W suggested that we have them trapped and recommended a couple of local trappers, Jenny Starbird and “Trapper Bob” MacGregor. Jenny trapped the first beaver within three hours and brought it to Trapper Bob. He utilizes all of the beaver for various commercial purposes. The other beaver was trapped and dispatched to Bob the next day. I purchased the pelts from Bob. One is hung on my garage wall. The other is being tanned to soften the leather and will be fashioned into my Acton winter hat.

Two more beavers were spotted this spring, in the North cove. Trapper Bob says beavers are quite plentiful in the area—too plentiful. He trapped 75 in one month and says that he could have trapped twice as many. They are so numerous that they fight one another and the pelts have bite marks that decrease their value. Culling them will leave a healthier beaver population in the area. Thank you Jenny and Trapper Bob for your valuable service. ~*John Nadeau*

## Wilson Lake Life and COVID-19

Wilson Lake is my sanctuary—where my husband Jeff and I unwind. Kayaking, gardening, cooking, picking fruit, and especially hosting family and friends who appreciate the quiet magic of this place, restore me. It provides the perfect balance to weekday life. I am a primary care doctor and Infectious Diseases specialist, working to keep people healthy, treat their illnesses and control spread of infection. Coming to Maine for the weekend always meant leaving these responsibilities behind.

Now the whole world is upended by the coronavirus; even our peaceful corner of Maine is impacted. So many of us want this time to end, to return to normal routines, to go where we want, to do what we want, and to be with whom we want. It feels burdensome, unfair, over-called, and a huge imposition on our lives.

I've had all these feelings, too. But I've also seen this illness at its worst actions. Our actions can help to halt its spread. We've learned so much about prevention, and most people are doing a great job protecting one another. I am not giving medical advice, but here are some considerations to help navigate COVID-19 prevention:

1. This pandemic is a math problem. As long as the average person infects at least 1 other, it will endure. With no precautions, the average person with COVID-19 passes it to 3 others—that's how we got to 6 million cases world-wide. Drop that number below 1, and the pandemic will collapse. *This* is why our individual efforts matter.
2. There's evidence that we are most contagious just before we develop symptoms. And some infectious persons never know their status. This is why a mask/face covering makes sense when you leave home and are near others and why hand washing is vital.
3. If your lakeside home has been unoccupied for 3 days, then it is *Coronavirus*-free and safe for anyone to use.
4. Welcoming family or friends to your home? Everyone's exposures over the last 2 weeks matter. Check that everyone is well before the visit. Take a swab test if worried
5. Set expectations by talking with your friends/family about how you will manage your time together. Will you all wear masks? Will you be closer than 6 feet at times? Will you expect everyone to use hand sanitizer? How will you handle meals, cleanup, bathrooms, car rides, and the waterfront?
6. Maximize your time outdoors
7. It's possible to socialize safely with your Wilson Lake neighbors. Bring your lawn chairs, wine and cheese for an afternoon meet-up. Take a walk with physical distancing. Meet by boat.
8. Use common-sense and be respectful of others

Lakeside living should be a respite from life's burdens; it should also afford us a place of health and safety. I wish you and your loved ones good health and a beautiful summer. ~**Rachel Brown**

## Looking Out For Loons

Just a reminder to leave the loons alone. They are a protected species. They can also be aggressive. An eagle was found dead in a lake with a chest wound near Bridgton, Maine. A dead loon chick was found with the eagle and it is surmised that the parent loon stabbed the eagle with its beak while defending the chick. This same sort of defensive activity was witnessed near the North cove of Wilson Lake several years ago by Gerry Theriault. The loons repeatedly launched straight up out of the water, wings extended, yelling wildly at the eagle swirling eight to ten feet above the loon chick. No injury occurred, and the eagle retreated. Observe the loons from a distance. If they are yelling wildly with wings extended, you are being warned. They have a nest nearby.

~*John Nadeau*

## Plea for Safe Boating

I'd like to take another opportunity to discuss boat safety guidelines.

1. No Wake Zone: The State of Maine has a law which dictates a 200' no-wake zone from shore. This means headway speed only within 200' of the shore.
  - a. This helps prevent shoreline erosion and provides a safe space for swimming, kayaking, canoeing, paddle boarding and other non-motoring activity
  - b. 200' feet to shore is about the distance between two telephone poles.
2. Jet-skis:
  - a. Respectful distances from other jet skis, boats, and people tubing and swimming
  - b. No wake zones apply to Jet-skis as well as boats
  - c. Spotters for tubing
3. Towing skiers or tubers
  - a. Leave plenty of room between boats, other skis, and definitely paddlers. For example, I like to leave the distance of about two tow ropes between me and any other craft
  - b. It's good to know the geography of the lake. I've seen skis flying over water that is only a few feet deep over rocks
4. I would encourage anyone renting out their camps to leave a Boater Safety Guide on the refrigerator or the wall to give renters safety information that they might not have otherwise.

The best way to find out how to safely operate a watercraft is to take the Water Safety Course run by Bob Anderson. Not only is it great information, but it is required in many states and in the ocean in order to legally operate a water craft. It may soon be required in Maine for all watercraft operation and IS required for a person between ages 16-18.

Check out our website for more info on the [Boater Safety Course](#)

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Have a safe and beautiful summer. ~*Bill Pimental*

## Fishing on Lake Wilson

Wilson is home to a healthy year-round fishery, composed of cold water species (trout), warm water species (bass, perch) and an abundance of baitfish (shiner, fallfish, smelt, alewife). Every fall, Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife stocks Wilson with over 500 brown and brook trout.

While Spring 2020 has been anything but “normal” in human circles, our fishery continues to be governed by the cycle of time and seasons. The 2020 open water fishing season is off to a strong overture. Personally, I have caught a number of healthy pre-spawn smallmouth and largemouth bass off of our dock. However, once I put my fishing boat in the water, I stopped catching anything other than small perch and fallfish. It feels like the Universe is trying to tell me that, in this crazy situation, one does not need a fancy boat to catch fish.

A few of us weekenders have had the privilege of relocating here full-time to weather the COVID storm. It is awesome to see David (of striped bass weathervane fame) out on a Tuesday evening, trolling for finicky trout in those beautiful Wilson Lake leitmotif sunsets. He pulled out a 23" brownie—a sign of a healthy fishery, as a fish of this size had to be in our waters at least 2-3 years. Although our fishery does not have the ideal oxygen levels to grow giant trout, the Wilson Lake fishing lore includes plenty of stories of our residents catching brown trout that weighed as much as 12 lbs. (WOW!).

Wilson does not give off its prized trout easily. The lake has a stern reputation and represents its residents very well; our fishery rewards patience, hard work, and grit. Our trout make for great table fare, especially slowly hot smoked over hickory wood. Personally, I am in a bit of a rush to tickle those scrupulous trout!

You may wonder—how one can catch these wonderfully evanescent trout?

- Trolling is your best bet to cover a lot of water. Your odds are better in deeper water
- Anything shiny (e.g., spoon, minnow) with aggressive colors (e.g., orange) can sway brown trout
- Brook trout are a bit less aggressive and may prefer a traditional nightcrawler, small minnow or wooly bugger
- A healthy dose of patience goes a long way

Bass are a very different story:

- They will eat just about anything that resembles a living creature—a rubber worm, a minnow imitation, a plastic frog, even a fake baby duck
- They are found in shallower water around vegetation and docks

Getting started fishing on Wilson Lake is straightforward—all one needs is a rod/reel with a handful of lures, a Maine fishing license, and some unbridled enthusiasm. There's unlimited promise. Every time you put a line out in that clear water, there is a chance that you'll become part of the Wilson Lake lore. Worst-case scenario, fishing is just another way to enjoy the tranquility and beauty of the lake. I hope to see you out there. Good luck, stay safe, and keep the lines tight! ~*Martin Ouimet*

