

Waukewan and Winona Watershed Protective Association

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An Environmental Organization Protecting the Waukewan and Winona Watershed

Message from Dave and Deb

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Summer/Fall 2017

Our Mission

"The mission of the Waukewan and Winona Watershed Protective Association is to encourage and support long range planning, responsible lake level management and sound conservation techniques to preserve the ecology, environment and natural beauty of the Waukewan and Winona Watershed. It serves as a voice for its members in matters of group concern with regard to the environment and seeks to assist with scientific studies, education programs and the preparation and dissemination of educational materials"

Summer has once again come and gone—the shortest season it seems—so we are now looking forward to the changes fall brings as we get ready for another winter.

This past season began with great promise for our loon families in the watershed. Two chicks hatched early on Hawkins Pond, and the loons on Waukewan were active and seeking nesting sights. However, the promise of baby chicks and busy parents did not materialize. Both chicks on Hawkins Pond disappeared within days of each other, and the nesting pairs resident on Waukewan ultimately did not nest (though Harry Vogel heard from a veteran loon watcher on Waukewan that there was an adult pair on Waukewan with a chick. Unfortunately, we are unaware of any other sightings).

There was wonderful news for Lake Winona, however! After many years with no successful nestings, a pair of adult loons settled in, hatched two chicks, and have done a wonderful job of raising them. As of October 12, both juveniles were thriving and self feeding. Please see the article on pages 2 and 3 for news about this exciting turn of events.

We hope you have a healthy and happy winter.

Dave Reilly and Deb Corr

Co-Chairmen

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VLAP Update for 2016 by Bea Thibeault

In both Lakes Waukewan and Winona, drought conditions in 2016 and the lack of storm water runoff likely helped to improve water clarity. This highlights the importance of managing storm water from areas vulnerable to erosion, steep slopes, shoreline, dirt/gravel roads, and impervious surfaces.

Conductivity/Chloride (road salt) has increased in some locations due to winter road, parking lot, driveway, and walkway maintenance. We need to encourage road agents and homeowners to clean up roadside ditches and culverts of any leftover sand/salt

mixtures applied during winter months. High salt loading raised the dissolved oxygen levels to the "Bad" category and can negatively impact aquatic life in our lakes. Average phosphorus levels increased from 2015 but remained much lower than the State median.

On Lake Winona, E Coli levels were low in June, 2016, However, E Coli increased on Howkins Pond



Moonrise over Lake Waukewan 10/05/17
Photo by Deb Corr

and North Inlets and Outlet in August following a significant storm event, flushing upstream waters. The levels decreased to "low" in September.

Lake Winona scheduled a visit from a biologist for the fall sampling in 2017 to monitor algal growth. Lake Waukewan was categorized as "slightly bad" for cyanobacteria but the 2016 VLAP Assessment Report gave no further information.

Triumph of the Loons on Lake Winona by Linda Heminway

There was never a pair of loons at Lake Winona when I was growing up on the lake. That is, until the late 1970s, when things changed and a pair of loons appeared. The first nest that actually had a hatch was on one of our islands and it was in 1990. This chick did not survive for more than a few days. It choked on something fed to it by one of the parents. Up until this year, it was the only successful loon nest at Lake Winona in my 62 years. Over the last 27 years, one nest after another failed. Loon pairs continued to try valiantly to hatch a chick. We have had human interference, sadly, as people came too close in their efforts to observe and an egg rolled off the nest. We have had episodes of high water



nest washed away. The loons never attempted to get on it to my knowledge. It was used by turtles, snakes and other birds like Canada Geese.

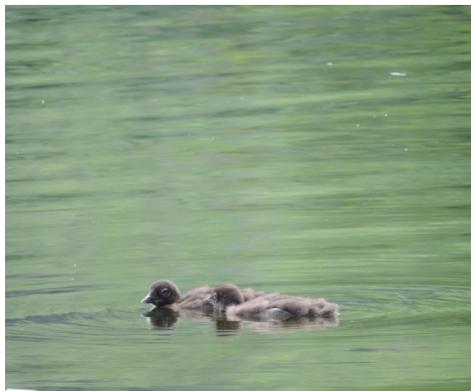
In 2017 our loon pair made a nest among the grasses at the north end of the lake, and they chose not to use the nest raft again. This nest was washed away when water rose after a terrible afternoon of massive thunderstorms. It was heartbreaking, and there were two beautiful eggs that were lost.

All along during this process a group of people who reside at Sunrise Point on Lake Winona conversed. We felt the nest was not placed well. We watch these loons, as lake residents, and we always saw them gravitate to one area of the lake and often get up on a particular flat rock. In fact a few years back the female loon laid an egg on that flat rock, but it rolled off into the water—yet another failure. Last year and in previous



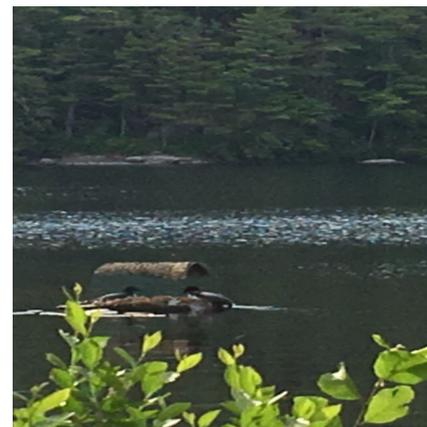
where nests washed away, predators, and one failure after another. Our loons continued to try, and we, the lake residents, watched with hope.

In August of 2015, I contacted the Loon Preservation Committee and asked if they might consider putting a loon nest raft on Lake Winona. In the spring of 2016 they put a raft at the north end, right near where this year's



years when biologists came to investigate after a nest failure, we were told “your loons are poor nest builders”. They said our loons were young and inexperienced. I kept thinking they needed a little more help. I refused to give up on them!

I emailed and attempted to speak with biologists at the Loon Center.



We persisted. I didn't think the loons would make a second nest attempt this season, but it was worth a shot. So, during our late June vacation my husband Mark and I went to the Loon Center and talked with people there. We asked permission again to move the nest raft, and this time got a “yes”. Only a short window of opportunity remained for our loons to nest successfully this year.

The following day Mark and I moved the raft after we had towed it to our beach, cleaned it off and washed it down. Then we built the best loon nest we could figure out how to create out of leaves from the bottom of the lake, moss and small twigs. We made a “nest bowl” in the center and put dry, soft pine needles in it to cushion our feathered friends. We moved and anchored it in place by that flat rock that so appealed to them,

Photos by Linda and Mark Heminway

The Triumph of the Loons on Lake Winona (Cont.) by Linda Heminway

and within an hour of anchoring it, the loons were on it! As of the fourth of July, our loons had begun to stay on the nest continually which meant there was at least one egg. Photographs taken during a nest shift change revealed two eggs. At the end of the 28 day gestation period (July 31st) one chick hatched, and a day later, another hatched.

Our loon pair and its chicks sure did attract a good deal of attention while sitting on their nest. Several of our lake residents had to police the nest to keep boaters away. We are grateful so many people helped. The loons seemed particularly afraid of paddle boards and kayaks. Time after time one could see the loons stretch out and flatten their bodies to appear less noticeable when these small craft came a bit too close. At times the loons leapt off the nest quickly when observers



got too close. That was the most fearful of times as an egg could so easily roll off at that time.

The Loon Center placed signs and floating buoys around the nest sight to warn people away, yet we had people ignore the signs and try to paddle right over to them. It is a wonder that the loons managed to hatch two chicks, and all is well after so much curiosity. I have read many an article on why loons have become endangered, and human interference was the number one reason given for loss of eggs. I hope that we can help educate peo-

Photo Above by Joseph Borque

ple on the situation that exists for our beloved loons and give them room to thrive. Some people just are unaware that getting too close to them is not the best thing for them.

Our pair is named Tom and Giselle (after Tom Brady and his wife). As we jokingly said, the amount of photos and attention given to this pair while on the nest has been as extensive as if Tom and Giselle themselves had taken up residence at Lake Winona! Our chicks are Gronk and Edelman. They are doing well and we hope to observe them until they depart before ice in. We are asking people to respect them and remain a safe distance away. Binoculars and telephoto lenses are a great help.

Editors Note: As of October 12, the Winona Juvenile Loons were thriving.

Prime Wetland Status Explained by Deb Corr

The voters in the Town of New Hampton will vote next March on whether or not to extend Prime Wetland protection to the New Hampton side of the Snake River.

Our organization supports this effort. The Town of Center Harbor has already protected its side of the Snake River by granting it Prime Wetland Status.

The NH DES offers the following information on its website:

“Under [RSA 482-A:15](#) and administrative rules [Env-Wt](#)

[700](#), individual municipalities may elect to designate wetlands as “prime-wetlands” if, after thorough analysis, it is determined that high-quality wetlands are present. Typically, a wetland receives this designation because of its large size, unspoiled character and ability to sustain populations of rare or threatened plant and animal species. Field and “desk top” data are used for the evaluation process.

After high value wetlands are identified, the municipality holds a public hearing before the residents of the community to vote on the designation. Once the municipality approves the wetlands for designation as prime, the municipality provides to the NHDES Wetlands Program a copy of the study and tax maps with the designated prime wetlands identified. NHDES reviews the submission from the municipality to ensure that it is complete and in accordance with

[Env-Wt 702.03](#).

Once the town’s prime wetland submission is considered complete and approved, NHDES will apply the law and rules that are applicable to any future projects that are within the prime wetland or the 100 foot prime wetland buffer”.

For further information, check the NHDES website under the wetlands bureau.

Harry Vogel, Chairman of the LPC, Speaks for Loons at Our Summer Workshop

Fortunately there were extra chairs available in the meeting room at the Meredith Community Center so that no one had to stand during Harry Vogel's wonderful presentation on the State of the Loon on August 16.

Attendees came from several towns and waterbodies in the lakes region to hear the latest news about our loon population and the successes and challenges they face.

According to Harry, 2017 has been a very challenging year for NH's loon population. According to the Squam Lakes LPC biologist, Tiffany Grade, the Squam Lake loons used to produce as many as 15 chicks in a season, but this year, they produced only one. There are so many factors working against loons—from natural events like heavy rain storms that flood nests, predation by bald eagles and snapping turtles to hu-

man caused mortality from global warming and the use of pesticides, flame retardants, PCBs and, especially, lead fishing tackle that kills loons when it is ingested by them.

The news wasn't all discouraging, however. Just look at the birth and survival of two loon chicks on Lake Winona after many, many years!

According to the LPC, "If we've learned anything in our 40 years of monitoring, research, management, and education, it's that a caring and involved public is the key to preserving loons—or, for that matter, any wildlife species." As our large audience on August 16 would attest, people in NH care very deeply about our loons and what will become of them. Education is the key, and as long as people care, there is hope for the survival of NH's loon population.

A Harrowing Tale! Contributed by Sharon (Hawkins) O'Donnell

The following tale is from the book: **Meredith Annals and Genealogies**, arranged by Mary E. Hanford:

The Lydia (Bunker) Hawkins Bear Story: by Hosea Canney:

John Hawkins, when called into the Revolution, left a wife with a child who could walk and a babe in her arms, in some location between Durham, NH and Haverhill, MA. Tradition tells us that he had started a house with two rooms. The sides and one end were boarded in, but one end was partially open with some cover lids and quilts hung up in one end to divide it.

After he left for the war, the bears were prowling around, hungry, and entered the open end of the building, hunting food, but did not push by the quilts that shut Mrs. Hawkins from the outside. She was very much frightened, and the next day started out with a bundle of clothing, leading the older child, with the baby in her arms.

Mrs. Lydia Hawkins was dreadfully frightened. As she walked away from her home the bears were following her, and she figured she must give up one of her children. She threw the bundle down and started

to run as well as she could with leading a small child and one baby in her arms, praying God's guidance which child she should leave, and screaming and praying as she ran. The bundle of clothes she had thrown attracted the bears' attention for a time, and they stopped and tore the bundle in pieces, which gave her a little time to get ahead.

Her screams were heard by an older gentleman who lived in a clearing not far away. He came to her rescue and took her to his home, where she lived until her husband, John Hawkins, returned from the four-year service in the Revolution. (Perhaps Hawkins Hill was given him for his military service).

(Sharon (Hawkins) O'Donnell lives on the Hawkins Farm property on Waukewan Road)



**John Hawkins Homestead on Waukewan Road
Circa 1860**

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