

Waukewan and Winona Watershed Protective Association

P.O. Box 451, Meredith, NH 03253

Website: WWWPA.org

Email: info@wwwpa.org

An Environmental Organization Protecting the Waukewan and Winona Watershed

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Lake Waukewan July 4th, 2020 Boat Parade

By Sharon O'Donnell

This summer on July 4, a large number of Lake Waukewan residents dressed up in red, white, and blue and decorated their boats to celebrate our nation's birthday. On Saturday, at 12:30 PM, dozens of boaters lined up in single file at the north end of the lake to begin the parade. Boaters were waving flags and playing music during the procession, which lasted about an hour and a half.

Boaters kept in a single file and remained safe as they traveled from the north end to the south end of the lake and back. As the boats passed by the houses on shore, people on land were waving their flags to join in the celebration. Janan Hays organized the event and sent out an email to all interested participants. It was a beautiful day and a good time was had by all!

Photos by Sharon O'Donnell

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Photo by Deb Corr

Dave Gets His Well-Earned Retirement

By Deb Corr

From day one, David Reilly has been a true champion for the Waukewan and Winona Watershed Protective Association!

Dave has served tirelessly on our Board practically from the beginning as Co-Chairman. He continues to believe totally in our mission to educate shore owners and others about the interconnectedness of the different water bodies in the Waukewan/Winona watershed and how vital it is to protect them from negative environmental impacts.

Almost ten years have passed since Dave joined our Board, and he has told us the time has come for him to step down and pass the baton to others. He certainly deserves his retirement and his well-earned rest, but we will miss him greatly. We expect, though, that we will see him sitting out in one of his Adirondack chairs in his peaceful front yard down by the shore of Lake Winona (pictured here). Be sure to wave "hello" if you see him when you go canoeing or kayaking by.

Kayak Adventures

By Tracey Pratt

My kayak adventures on Lake Waukewan this past summer proved to be priceless. My favorite time on the water was at sunrise, fog lifting and all creatures stirring, so peaceful and serene. I would head out with the essentials, my camera and coffee with great excitement and wonderment as to what I might see and taking in the beauty all around.

Over the years I have been fascinated by the loons and all the beautiful wildlife that inhabits the lake area. I feel like I have a special connection with some of the loons. As I would sit photographing them, they would swim closer to me. I would slowly paddle back and draw my camera up again to take pictures. They would sometimes swim under my kayak chasing fish.

The first time it happened, it shocked me. While I observed the loon it got closer, so close that when it surfaced I could hear its breath. At one point, it was chasing a fish and kept bumping the bottom of my kayak until it finally surfaced with a small fish. This kind of encounter with a couple of the loons became frequent when I paddled out to Kitchens Island and Jenness Cove to check on the loon pairs and the eagles.

I loved observing how the parents of the chick tended to their young, and watching the eagles soar over the water and land with much grace and patience as they looked for prey. I enjoyed capturing wildlife behind my lens. Over the summer, I was able to capture many moments and the beauty that the lake offers. It was my retreat, my peace, and my "my time."

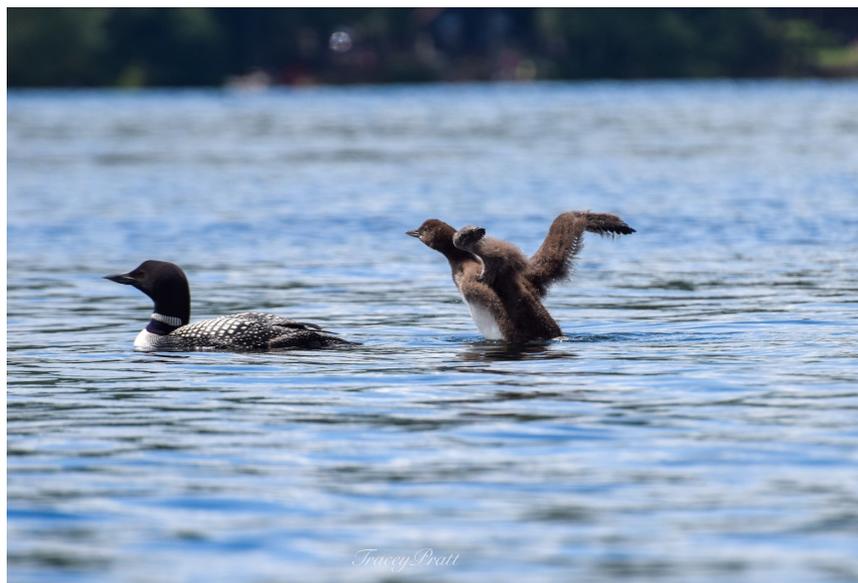


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Snake River Bridge Update

By Sharon O'Donnell

This past summer the beavers were busy at work building dams under the Snake River Bridge as they have in the past. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation came several times to clean out the beaver dams and prevent flooding in the neighborhood yards up at Lake Winona. Even though 2020 was a time of drought, and other areas were experiencing significant drops in water levels, Winona remained high and beach and soil erosion were taking place up until the beaver dam was removed.

The beavers were also busy in the past building dams up in the Lake Winona area; however, beaver deceivers were installed, which has significantly mitigated the dam building and kept the water running. Unfortunately, it does not appear that the beaver deceivers will fit under the Snake River Bridge.

The Snake River Bridge renovation project will begin construction next summer and the bridge will remain closed for the season as the New Hampshire Dep't. of Transportation makes the necessary repairs. The final plans have not been received by the towns; however, the most recent plans received should resemble the final plans very closely. If there are any changes in the plans, it is expected that they will be minor adjustments to the item numbers for construction purposes and detailing and quantifying the reinforcing.

NHDOT has submitted the necessary paperwork to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Sciences and is awaiting their approval. Hopefully, the final plans will arrive shortly after DES gives their approval for the necessary permits to do the work. After DOT receives the final plans and has an opportunity to review them, they will send them along to the towns of Center Harbor and New Hampton for review. All in all, it appears that the process is unfolding as it was intended to do originally and no major changes or surprises are expected.



Photo by Tracey Pratt

Lake Host Program 2020

By Anne Sayers

This summer, the Waukewan lake host program ran on a flexible schedule for our seven volunteers because the town of Meredith donated an extra \$5000 for the paid lake hosts. Paid hosts covered the ramp on weekends Friday through Sunday and on holidays. Volunteers covered 150 hours this past summer.

There were no invasive species identified and boat owners were all very aware of the program. Also, all boaters said they washed down their boats, but did not necessarily dry them for five days as they would be launching again sooner than that.

We are going to be losing three volunteers next summer as these folks won't be coming up during the week. We need some new people to step up and volunteer. Please call Anne Sayers at 603-677-2094 if you can donate a couple of hours a week next summer.

There will be a volunteer training by Tim Whiting in June of next year. Thank you again to all of our members who volunteered for the Lake Host Program this past summer. Your time and service were greatly appreciated!

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Photo by Catherine Greenleaf

How to Help Wild Aquatic Turtles

By Catherine Greenleaf

Why did the turtle cross the road? (No, this is not a chicken joke!) Female wild aquatic turtles cross the road because they are looking for a sunny and sandy area to lay their eggs. You will start to notice turtles emerging from the reedy mud at the bottom of vernal pools, ponds and lakes to undergo their annual egg laying sojourn around Memorial Day weekend. The egg laying of turtles (this includes Snapping Turtles and Painted Turtles) may continue until mid-July.

The best time to tell when turtles will be drawn out of the water to start their travels is the level of humidity. The first spike in humidity, which marks the beginning of summer for so many of us, also sends a signal to the turtles to start their search for the perfect nesting site. On that day, you may see a dozen or more turtles

emerge from a single body of water. Wild aquatic turtles do not feel safe being away from their bog, pond or lake, which is why they will quickly dig a hole, lay their eggs, and make their way steadily back to the water.

I don't have to tell you how hazardous the journey is for these brave ladies. Many are hit by cars and killed. Others suffer serious, permanent injuries. You can help turtles survive by remembering these six tips:

1. When you see a turtle on the road, be kind and slow down. Pull over, if it is safe to do so, and help escort the turtle (in the direction she was heading) until she safely reaches the dirt. Never reverse a turtle's course. She will only turn around later and end up back on the road in harm's way. Always be careful if you have to move a turtle. It is best to use a plastic storage container and a shovel. Gently coax the turtle into the box and then carry the box to the opposite side of the road. Never drag a snapping turtle backward by the tail, as you can rupture the animal's spine, rendering it permanently paralyzed.

2. It is never a good idea to transport a turtle to another pond or lake. A turtle will not adapt to a different environment since they are loyal only to their natal (birth) area. If you displace a turtle, that

animal will spend the rest of its life trying to get back to its point of origin and will most likely be hit by a car. Also, a turtle's immune system is only resistant to the pathogens of the environment it is born into. Putting a turtle into a different body of water only causes disease and passes diseases to other unsuspecting wildlife.

3. If you see a turtle that has been hit by a car, call your local wildlife rehabilitator right away. Turtles are tough, even when their shells have been cracked by the impact of a speeding car. A wildlife rehabilitator can stabilize the turtle and save its life.

4. Never attempt to drive over a turtle. Some cars are built low to the ground and the undercarriage can cause an "avulsion" injury, which occurs when the bridges between the top shell and bottom shell collapse and the top shell is forced onto the bottom shell, crushing the turtle's internal organs. This type of injury usually proves fatal.

5. Snapping turtles are not the cold-blooded killers some people like to portray them to be. Although not the most attractive creatures, they are gentle giants, and prefer to mind their own business. Keep your distance and they will too.

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Lake Winona Loon Update

By Linda Heminway

In 2017, the loons that established Lake Winona as their home hatched the first chicks in over 60 years. Previous to 2017, water level changes, human interference and many other incidences occurred.

Up until around 1980, loons were not present on this lake. They had been absent for many years. No records exist as to when the last known pair of loons was ever at Winona. The establishment of a nesting pair in the 1980s drew great interest and excitement.

Around 1990, one chick was hatched but it died after only a few days. We do not know if the same loons are the ones that are established at Winona were here then, yet we do know they are long-lived.

In 2018, our loons were banded by the Loon Preservation Center biologists; we do know that since that year the same pair has returned. Banding identification has been documented with photo evidence these last two seasons.

After 2017, there were some successes and some failures. Five chicks were hatched, one disappeared, one had an injury and was rehabilitated and released (not at our lake) and three have fledged. We had high hopes when an egg was laid this year, but subsequent issues prohibited the hatch. Firstly, at a few points

during the egg's incubation there were high winds resulting in waves washing over the loon nest raft, at one point the egg was up against the side of the nest raft. A discussion about how to prevent wave wash-outs on the nest raft occurred with Loon Perseveration Center's senior biologist, John Cooley. Next year, we intend to try some new approaches. We hope to increase planting on the nest raft and have more substantial materials.

Volunteer Mark Heminway attended to the nest and replenished nesting material more than once during the high winds.

We are unsure as to whether the egg being disturbed (possibly cracked?) was why the nest failed this year, or whether it was due to an accident and the egg rolled off the nest. The only thing we know is that approximately a week after we anticipated the egg to hatch, it went missing from the nest. The loons appeared distressed and stayed near the nest raft for a period of time, diving and giving the appearance of looking for the egg. Considering that this incident occurred easily a week after the hatch was anticipated, the egg was probably not viable. Though, a second egg could have been laid if one was lost and our anticipated hatch was inaccurate if that was the case.

Several theories exist as to what happened but there is no clear

answer. Possibilities include human interference or the loon accidentally rolling the egg into the water. Also, there could have been a predator.

We look forward to next year and hope to have a successful nesting season.

We have learned, in the time period my husband Mark and I have been field volunteers for the LPC, that loons live a rather precarious and difficult life. No wonder there is a need to have an association dedicated to their preservation. In New Hampshire, loons are still considered a threatened species. We have deep respect for The Loon Preservation Committee and feel they are largely responsible for increases in New Hampshire's loon population. Loons face amazing problems such as loss of habitat, lead poisoning, monofilament fishing line entanglement, et cetera. The Loon Biologists are always only a phone call away if a loon is in trouble. Their help and advisory capacity over the last few years has been invaluable.

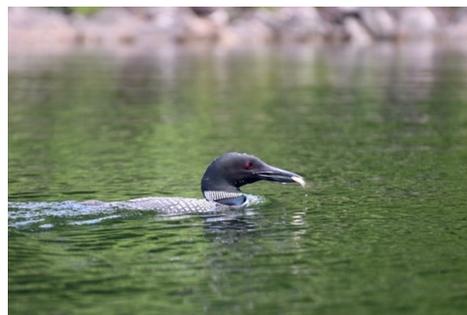


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Snapping turtles are the great, un-sung heroes of New Hampshire's water bodies. They are referred to as the "janitors" of our lakes and ponds, since they routinely patrol the bottom of the water to eat muck and detritus. According to wildlife biologists, if it were not for snapping turtles, our lakes and ponds would lose their crystal-clear clarity and turn muddy. If you have a snapping turtle in your pond, consider yourself lucky. You have a full-time cleaning machine keeping your water clear.

6. Incubation of aquatic turtle eggs takes several months, which means you will see tiny baby turtles hatching from their eggs and trying to scurry across the road toward the water during the month of August. Painted turtles usually lay between five to eight eggs in a clutch, and snapping turtles lay 20-40 eggs, but have been known to lay up to 60 eggs. Pull your car over and allow these little ones to find their way home.

Catherine Greenleaf is the director of St. Francis Wild Bird Center in Lyme, N.H.



Photo by Linda Heminway

Who are the members of our board?

Interested in writing an article for our newsletter? Contact Sharon O'Donnell (info below).

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