

Sabbathday Lake News

June 2005

Calendar of Events

Annual Meeting

Wednesday July 13, 2005

At the Grange

Potluck Dinner

6:30 p.m.

BYO utensils and pot luck.

Provided: beverages & dessert

7:30 p.m. Meeting:

Articles of Incorporation

August Meeting

Wednesday
August 17, 2005

Potluck Dinner

6:30 p.m.

BYO utensils and potluck.

Provided: beverages & dessert

7:30 p.m. Meeting

Topic: To be announced

In My View

Mike Cloutier, President
Sabbathday Lake Association

Hello to all members of the Sabbathday Lake Association. With the ice gone, some spring rains, and a hint of southern breezes, it is time to put in the dock. This past winter provided some good skating and very good skiing on the lake. I hope you had a chance to enjoy it as much as we did. Based on an unscientific survey, it seemed like the average ice thickness this year was about 18 inches.

The Sabbathday Lake Board of Directors and its committees have been busy through the winter. We did not meet often, however, through the Internet we were still able to get a lot accomplished.

Membership in general has been and still is a high priority for the association. From the general membership the association gets its board and committee members. It is also where the volunteers come from as well as the ideas that guide the association. I would like to ask each and every one of you to participate in this association in any way you can. For example, attend the meetings and bring your

neighbor, especially if they are not current members. Also, the pot luck suppers before the meetings are terrific. Join a committee, you and the association will benefit from your participation. Please help where you can. Remember, the key to any successful organization is to have active involved members.

Lori Fowler the secretary of the Sabbathday Lake Association and a member of the Youth Conservation Corps Committee worked with the Town of New Gloucester again this past winter in an effort to secure financial support for this program. She has worked with other agencies within the town in order to continue the level of support necessary for this year's funding. Her efforts were a success. I would like to again thank the Town of New Gloucester for its support of this essential program, and for Lori's continued efforts in that regard. The projects completed by the Friends of the Royal River Youth Conservation Corps have been well received by everyone who has been affected by their outstanding work. A complete summery of their work will be available for review at the association meetings.

501(c) (3) Update at the next Annual Meeting

Our work on the association change to the IRS Section 501(c) (3) is almost complete. In order to meet the IRS guidelines for this

More from Mike Cloutier

change, it has required additional work by many people; and that has taken longer than originally anticipated. The IRS also requires some fundamental changes to our organization. These necessary changes are significant enough that the Board of Directors felt it was in the best interest of the association to vote on these changes at our annual meeting. It will be necessary to Restate our Articles of Incorporation and amend the bylaws. I feel that these changes are essential if the association is to move forward with its activities around the lake and watershed. I urge all members to attend and participate in this process.

Water Testing Results

The results of the water testing for 2004 are provided by Scott Williams, Aquatic Biologist. As in past years we have a mixed message. In summary, compared to other Maine lakes for which data has been obtained, Sabbathday Lake is clearer and cleaner than the average. Overall water quality for the lake improved in 2004, compared to 2002 and 2003. The water in Sabbathday Lake was clearer than it has been in several recent years. Water clarity was slightly above the long-term average for the lake in 2004. The concentration of phosphorus in the water was slightly lower than the historical average for the lake, as were algae levels (measured from chlorophyll concentrations).

Dissolved oxygen loss in the deepest area of the lake was comparable to recent years' findings. Moderate to severe oxygen depletion was recorded near the bottom of the lake during the month of August.

The efforts of the Sabbathday Lake Association and the Town of New Gloucester, to protect the lake and its watershed by monitoring water quality and through informing and educating watershed residents, is an effective approach to insuring that the many benefits provided by the lake will continue to be available to future generations.

Based on the tests results, it appears that some of the projects that have been completed around the watershed are having a positive effect on the lake. These types of projects along with what we can do on our own property will be essential for the continued good health of the lake.

Get more facts and greater details on all the preceding information at the up coming association meetings. I look forward to seeing you there.

See you on the water!

Sabbathday Lake Tee Shirts for Sale

Last summer the Lake Association sold beautiful white tee shirts with a loon floating on the lake in the sunset. We are going to be selling the tee shirts again. They will be available at the Shaker Store.



Milfoil Committee Update Lillian Nayder

The threat posed to Sabbathday Lake by invasive aquatic plants continues to be a very pressing one, as variable leaf milfoil has already become a significant problem in nearby Little Sebago Lake, Thompson Lake and Middle Range Pond. Furthermore, Eurasian milfoil, which can grow in areas up to thirty feet deep, has recently been found in a quarry in Scarborough. It is the hope of those on the Invasive Aquatic Plant Committee, as it undoubtedly is for everyone reading this newsletter, that we can prevent the introduction of these plants to the Lake: through courtesy boat inspections at the Outlet as well as ongoing efforts to educate the community and the public at large. Courtesy boat inspectors, trained by representatives from the Lakes Environmental Association, show boaters how to inspect boats and equipment for plant fragments; ask boaters to inspect before and after each launch; supply information about invasive plants; and make sure boaters understand the relevant Maine law (known as "LD 1812"). To help fund this effort, the Lake Association has applied for and received a grant from the Lakes Environmental Association. We need volunteers for this crucial effort and would like to hear from anyone willing to become involved. Please contact Lillian Nayder with questions and concerns, and (most importantly) to volunteer (926-5233).



Youth Conservation Corps

YCC

Since March 1996 the town of New Gloucester, the Sabbathday Lake Association and the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation Commission have received two 319 grants from the federal government. The total of these grants was \$151,583. We also had \$70,561 in matching funds from the community through supplies and work time. As you can see we have spent a considerable amount of money and time on keeping up the health of one the towns greatest assets, Sabbathday Lake.

We are trying to keep up the momentum of fixing the non-point source pollution problems around the lake. We are including the Royal River into the area of watersheds that need protecting.

In the summer of 2001 we had a Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) for just Sabbathday Lake. In 2003 we included the Royal River.

We are again having a YCC this summer. This is being funded by DEP, Casco Bay Estuary Project, The Town of New Gloucester, North Yarmouth, Crystal Lake Association, and a grant from the Libby Brook project.

We are short about \$1,500. We are asking the Lake Association this year to help support the crew by donating \$500. The board of directors discussed it and thought that some of the money we raised through T-shirt sales last year could go to this project. We will take a vote at the annual meeting.

If you have any questions about the YCC or any possible sites that the crew could work on this summer, please call Lori Fowler at 926-3356.

SOMETHING FISHY

Each spring I look forward to the day when I launch my dock from its winter resting place on the shore of Sabbathday Lake and float it out for another season. Once it is securely in place I usually take a minute to stand on it to look out at the open basin off Black Point and ponder the space. The glacier that tore through this little valley ages ago left behind a fine lake indeed. But enough of that, there are a few other things that must be done to complete the task. I drag my small aluminum fishing boat down the banking to the dock. Next comes the motor and then the fishing rods. There is not much time for fishing anymore in this modern busy life, but having the boat a minute away turns the odds in favor of the fisherman.

Maybe I will cast along the banking and try for one of the fat largemouth bass that hang along the shoreline drop-offs. Once the water warms in early summer these overgrown members of the sunfish family take over the shallows, eating crayfish, minnows, frogs, snakes, ducklings, other bass and anything else they can fit in their big mouths. But in the cold-water lakes of Maine it takes this introduced species from the South about ten to fifteen years to reach three pounds or more. Bass only actively feed during a brief period in the summer when the water warms. The rest of the year they barely feed at all. During the summer I snorkel along the shore and chase them around in the

sunken logs and brush piles. I occasionally get my hands on one before it bolts away toward the darkness of deeper water and disappears. The big ones are not that easy to catch on the rod. I guess they learn to be picky after being caught and released over the years. But there are the magic nights when it seems that every bass in the lake is feeding. It is usually a sultry evening when the humidity hangs heavy and the air is completely still. The plastic worm sinks and the line tightens up cast after cast. The fat boys are brought to net, admired, and released back into the lake.

There was a new arrival to the lake a few years ago. Another member of the sunfish family from the South, the black crappie, suddenly appeared. I was surprised to see this green, black, and white-mottled fish come to the net on a September afternoon about 5 years ago. I saved the fish and called the regional fisheries biologist. It was the first confirmed crappie that he knew of, and he said he had been waiting for this to happen. They are showing up all over southern Maine thanks to the illegal introductions by the so called "bucket biologists". If you want to see a fisheries scientist cry, ask him about the problems that they are having in Maine with destruction of native fish populations by illegally introduced fish. Crappie can become over populated in some waters, destroy the food web, and out-compete

more desirable species. But the biologist felt that this would not happen on Sabbathday because the lake lacks the shallow habitats that crappie need to thrive. I have caught very few over the years, so I think he was right. They are actually very good eating, and when I do catch one, I do the lake a favor and render it to the pan.

The smallest fish of significance is the rainbow smelt. They are the same species as the anadromous smelt that run up our coastal stream in the spring. But they are landlocked and spend their entire life cycle in the lake. They travel in large schools (safety in numbers) swimming in the open water depths of the lake, eating plankton and small insects, and trying to avoid being eaten by predators. On calm mornings or evenings I have seen schools rippling large areas of the lake surface as they feed on blooms of daphnia and other plankton. Sometimes they will feed on flies hatching from the surface, and the tiny dimples of hundreds of smelt sucking bugs from the surface film will give the appearance of rain drops. They mass each spring in the creek inlets and outlet to spawn. Up until a few years ago it was a tradition to dip net smelt during the run. Thinking like a loon or kingfisher, one might be able to figure out a way to get a meal out of these little guys. But the smelt have a more important role in the lake ecosystem, and netting the smelt in the tributaries was banned several years ago. The smelt are critical to the trout fishery on the lake. Trout growth is directly tied to this little fish.

It is the trout that bring me down to the dock each spring. The Division

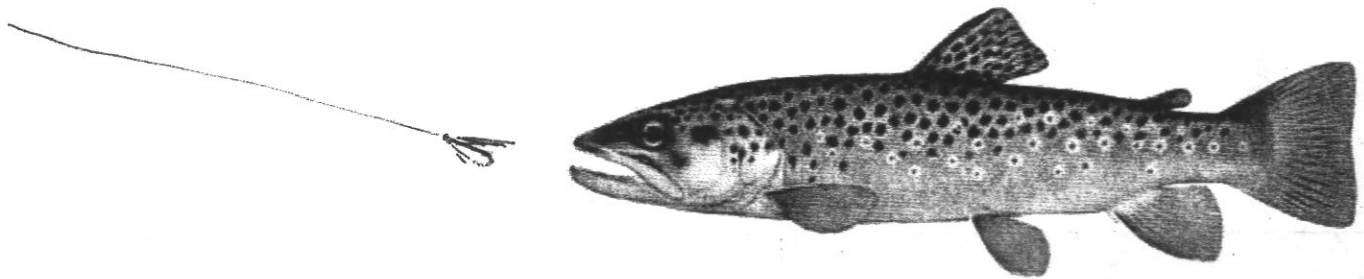
of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife stocks hatchery raised brook trout and brown trout each year. The brook trout are one of nature's most beautiful creations with emerald green and yellow vermiculations on their backs, red and blue spots, and fluorescent red and orange on their bellies and fins. But these fragile char that evolved in pristine lakes of the Northeast provide only a limited put and take fishery, and do not survive well in the lake. In the fin clip studies and creel surveys fish biologists have found little evidence of long-term survival. It could be that they can't survive the decrease in dissolved oxygen during late summer that

sometimes occur in late summer. Browns stocked as small fish (<12 inches) feed on smelt and grow to several pounds in two to three years when the smelt population is healthy. A fish that survives for 4 or more years can push the two-foot mark and weigh over 5 pounds. The brown trout can also be a beautiful piece of art. Some are silver with bold black spots like a salmon. Some are deep yellow and gold with black and red spots from head to tail. These members of the salmon family are hard-fighting fish, and I spend most of my spring fishing time seeking these elusive fish. They are the most difficult fish to catch during

your body out of bed before light and fish at daybreak. When the sun hits the water the brown trout fishing is usually over. Better yet, hope for wind and rain. It is this misery factor that defines brown trout fishing.

It was a September day a few years ago when my two boys and I went out for a troll across the deep hole. It was overcast, cold, and a stiff wind blew from the south. The boys each picked a lure, and I tied a streamer onto my line. We had been on the water for about ten minutes when my line tightened.

You can always tell a good fish from the dull pressure you initially



impacts the deeper cold waters on the lake. It could be that they are eaten by predators or all killed by fishermen. It could be that the brook trout cannot compete with the other introduced fish. Biologists don't really know why. Unfortunately, brook trout, the only indigenous sport fish on the lake, are now primarily a hatchery fish.

It is the brown trout that thrive and can grow to impressive size in the lake. Browns compete aggressively with other fish and tolerate dips in water quality conditions that

the open water season. They evolved in Europe and were pursued by men for centuries before their trip to the new world. Perhaps forces of natural selection have required a greater level of cunning and wariness. They do get fished hard during the ice fishing season, and I believe their numbers go up and down based on ice and fishing conditions during the winter. But there are always some browns in the lake. To catch them you need to fish at dawn or dusk, or on dark cloudy or rainy days. A south wind and waves help. So get

feel on the line, and this was a good one. The boys reeled in their lines and my oldest son, Aaron, grabbed the net. The wind blew and we drifted for about fifteen minutes as the fish stayed down in the deep water below the boat. Each time he came close, he would power dive back down into the black water. Finally he broke the surface and we saw the golden sides and round black spots of a big brown trout. We had the fish we were after! Eventually he tired and my son slid the net under him and lifted his prize into the boat.