

THE LAKESIDER

Newsletter of the Greater Pushaw Lake Association, serving Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond

Road Associations Get Good Grades by Sandi Duchesne

I think we'd all agree that lakeside living is wonderful — most of the time. However, many of us live on private roads that are not maintained by local or state road crews. Residents have to perform or contract the many tasks that are needed to keep these roads passable. Regular road maintenance is very important, particularly on gravel-surfaced roads, because it helps to minimize soil erosion and keep phosphorus-laden runoff out of our lakes. Well-tended roads help to keep property values high, and reduce the wear-and-tear on vehicles.

Several landings on Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond have formed private road associations that can legally charge annual dues or assessments. All residents are required to contribute their fair share of the funding needed to maintain access to all properties along the road. Other landings use a neighbor-helping-neighbor system: individuals take turns plowing and grading all or part of the road, soliciting contributions from others to

cover the cost of their materials and equipment. A special collection (also voluntary) is taken up as needed to pay for major road repairs or improvements. This informal, relationship-based system relies on high social cohesion in the neighborhood to motivate people to pitch in with donations or labor or both. A formal road association makes it much easier to raise funds and plan in advance for periodic maintenance, while distributing the most costly expenditures over a larger funding base and a longer timeframe. In fact, many road associations actually charge *less* in annual dues than people would pay under the informal donation system, because problems tend to get fixed before they become really expensive — and building a "rainy day fund" really helps to ease the shared financial burden of unexpected major repairs. Road associations also tend to achieve higher rates of compliance in their dues collection efforts, so the requested contribution from each participating household

can be reduced accordingly.

If you are interested in learning more about forming a road association, or if you just want to get more bang for the buck from your private road maintenance funds, there are several good resources available. Penobscot County Soil and Water Conservation District (PCSWCD) offers gravel road "best-practice" maintenance workshops, reference materials, and technical assistance. PCSWCD can also help you apply for grants that will cover most of the total cost of design and construction projects that address serious soil erosion problems. The State of Maine website also provides useful information on how to establish a road association: <http://maine.gov/dep/blwq/docwatershed/roadassociations.htm>.

GPLA is currently planning a workshop on private road funding for 2009 (date TBD at press time). For more info on the workshop, see the article by Jack Heineman on Page 2.

2008 Loon Count Results by Richard Dressler

The Pushaw Lake Loon Count for 2008 yielded 30 adults and one chick. We know there was definitely one other chick that was confirmed the day after the count. A third chick was reported by an observer at the south end of the lake, but it could not be

confirmed. The final official Maine Audubon count was 30 adults and one chick for Pushaw Lake, 10 adults and one chick for Little Pushaw Pond. I have not had opportunity to call everyone that did the count, but thanks to all on both lakes, especially the "first-timers."

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Volume 1, Issue 2

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DID YOU KNOW?

- Soil erosion from gravel roads and private lots is the greatest pollution threat to Maine lakes — even worse than lawn chemicals!
- Pushaw Lake is only 29 feet deep at its deepest point.
- The Greater Pushaw direct watershed covers 75 acres and five municipalities: Bangor, Old Town, Orono, Glenburn, and Hudson.

Water Quality Testing: Results from 2008 by Jeff Hayward

Water testing continued on Pushaw Lake this summer with GPLA members trained by the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (MVLMP). Testing is performed bi-weekly from late Spring to early Fall. The 2008 water testing duties were performed by Louis and Dorli Cloutier, seasonal residents of Hudson. Their bi-weekly testing started in May and lasted into late September. Thanks to Lou and Dorli for their volunteer efforts on this extremely important activity.

Clarity measurements (the distance that an object can be viewed under the water from the surface of the lake) were down from 2007, but still trending with historical results.

Deep Hole Clarity Summary			
Year	Minimum (Worst) Result	Maximum (Highest) Result	Average Result
2008	2.8 meters	4.1 meters	3.2 meters
1995-2007	2.4 meters	5.3 meters	3.6 meters

Dissolved Oxygen (DO) testing for 2008 continues to show healthy levels of oxygen in the water, with little stratification from the surface to the bottom of the lake, which indicates that the lake is mixing well and not becoming "layered" with levels of low oxygen.

Deep Hole Dissolved Oxygen Summary			
Year	Minimum (Worst) Result	Maximum (Highest) Result	Average Result
2008	7.2 mg/l	9.7 mg/l	8.7 mg/l
1995-2007	2.7 mg/l	10.5 mg/l	7.1 mg/l

Phosphorus levels continue to be the primary cause of concern on Pushaw Lake. Although not all of the 2008 samples have been returned from the lab as of press date, results received thus far continue to show phosphorus values in the mid to upper teens, which are high enough to support an algae bloom. It is believed that Pushaw's colored water may actually be helping the lake avoid an algae bloom, because the sun cannot penetrate to the bottom levels where phosphorus is highest in the sediment, and as a result, the algae growth is not triggered. Nonetheless, we should all work to decrease phosphorus contribution to the lake.

Deep Hole Phosphorus Summary			
Year	Minimum (Best) Result	Maximum (Worst) Result	Average Result
2008	11.0 ppb	20.6 ppb	14.8 ppb
1995-2007	7 ppb	34 ppb	15 ppb

For more information on water quality and the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program, please visit <http://www.mainevolunteerlakemonitors.org/>.

If you would like to help out with water quality monitoring on Pushaw Lake or Little Pushaw Pond, contact Jeff Hayward at 827-6536 or jlhayward@roadrunner.com.

Osprey Rescue at Little Pushaw by Phyllis Heineman

Every day, nature presents something new, sometimes amazing and sometimes not. Such an occurrence took place late one Saturday night in September, while we were eating supper. Seen through the front sliders of our home, an eagle flew by with something very big in his talons...as we weren't sure just what that was, we grabbed the binoculars and ran out to our deck. The dogs ran out, the eagle dropped his burden and flew off, and lo and behold there was some kind of bird in the water. This bird started swimming from the end of our peninsula toward shore...about 75 yards...SWIMMING! We'd never seen a large bird swim before and couldn't tell exactly what it was, so

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GPLA Committee for Road Associations by Jack Heineman

In view of the recent assistance that Beechwood Avenue in Hudson received from federal and town grants, we would like to form a committee to inform road associations about the programs that are out there for their own roads.

As a start, Bill Phillips and I would like to coordinate with the various road and lake associations and conduct educational sessions and discussions so that we can develop a thorough understanding of the grant process. Briefly, it will take the cooperation of lakeside residents and municipal leadership to raise a certain amount of money which will then be matched with grant funds. Since these funds only become available at certain times, it would be a good move for your association to consider appointing a representative to this committee.

In the near future we plan to conduct a workshop at the Hudson Town Hall for all those interested. At this meeting we shall request Bessie Wright and Chris Brewer of PCSWCD to guide us through the grant application process. Please call us with your name and phone number so we may put you on the notification list. You can reach Bill Phillips at 827-0454, or Jack Heineman at 327-1000.

Old Town Is Focus of Pushaw NPS Grant, Phase II by Bessie Wright, PCSWCD

The Pushaw Lake Non-Point Source (NPS) Watershed Project, Phase II will be opening up in Spring 2009. Like Phase I, the purpose of Phase II is to improve Pushaw Lake's water quality by reducing the amount of phosphorus entering the lake from the surrounding watershed. Phase II will focus on repairing the most severe erosion sites along the shoreline in Old Town. Most notably, the Penobscot County Soil and Water Conservation District (PCSWCD) will be working in partnership with the City of Old Town and its Public Works crews to ditch, crown and install culverts on Woodland Avenue and Lakeside Lane.

Throughout Phase II, PCSWCD will be working closely with GPLA to encourage more participation in the lake association, including volunteer projects that will protect and restore Pushaw Lake. Additionally, PCSWCD will work with GPLA to conduct the second of five watershed survey updates to the original 2001 survey. The next survey update will take place along the Hudson shoreline on Whitmore Landing.



PRELIMINARY REPORT ON SUMMER 2008 GPLA SURVEY by Kathy Lukas

My survey partner, Vicki LaRoche, and I want first to thank the nearly 75 residents of Little Pushaw or Pushaw who took part in the GPLA survey. During August and September, we walked every road on our two lakes, knocked on the doors of all lakeside residences that looked lived in part-time or full-time, and spoke with approximately 15% of our 900 or so homeowners or renters. We were sorry to have missed so many. We think that this was due to so many working full time or, if at home on the weekend, so many being out on the lake. If you would like to take part in the survey now, please see the last paragraph of this article.

The predominant finding in the survey is that lakesiders share almost all of the same loves and many of the same concerns. Wildlife, scenery, lake sports, and peace and quiet were almost universally expressed as the first loves of those we interviewed.

Taxes, road quality, and water quality were our common concerns, although the degree of emphasis on each differed among the towns. Noise was a concern for those living on the coves, where misuse of jet skis within 200 ft of the shore seems to be an issue. Timely access to emergency health and fire services is an issue for some, particularly those reaching an age when emergency services could mean life or death. More on our findings will follow in future newsletters.

We were pleased to find that volunteerism is healthy on every road on both lakes. Resources that people volunteered ranged from providing small and large equipment and labor for maintaining our lakes and roads, to grant writing, fundraising, law enforcement, and professional environmental services. Almost all those we interviewed said that they would help with water and erosion testing in their neighborhood if they were trained.

There were some opinions or questions expressed by those we interviewed that seemed worthy of follow up. Among them were questions about whether the invasive species monitoring of vehicles using the lake is as stringent for planes as it is for boats and if lakeside building codes and enforcement are more permissive in some towns than others. There were other questions, including some about the historical activities of the GPLA or its members. We may place a *Fact or Fiction* box in future GPLA newsletters that addresses some of these questions as we are able to ascertain factual information.



GPLA processing of the information in the 2008 survey is just beginning and will go on over the next year, so if you would like to express your loves for or concerns about our lakes, or to volunteer in concert with your neighbors on projects that affect your area of Pushaw or Little Pushaw, please get in touch. If you didn't talk with us this summer and would like to contribute your opinions now, please contact Bill Phillips at 827-0454. Bill will make sure that you receive GPLA information or the survey, which you can fill out and mail in to us at any time.

Photo credits this page: Loons on Little Pushaw Pond, Pam Griffith

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*“Never doubt that a small
committed group of
citizens can change the
world. Indeed it is the
only thing that ever has.”*

Margaret Mead

Little Pushaw Rescue, Continued from Page 2

we put on our shoes, brought in the dogs, took out the john boat and pushed off to try and rescue this poor bird. By the time we reached him, he'd reached the floating dock of our neighbor, Mark McKinnon, and stopped, exhausted. Phyllis picked him up on the end of a plastic leaf rake and helped him get onto the dock, then ran inside to call for help, while Jack stayed with the very wet bird, to make sure the eagle didn't come back.

I called George Smith in Orono, the former animal rescuer, who called the game warden, Jim Fahey, who in turn called Diane Winn at Avian Haven. We all tried to figure out what kind of bird this was, even through our ignorance...it was smaller than an eagle, but had a white head, and larger than a seagull, with either black or brown feathers, which were so wet as to be unable to really tell. Diane called one of her chain of rescuers, Cheryl Lord, who came down with her husband to pick up what turned out to be a juvenile osprey. Jack covered the bird with a blanket to keep him warm while we waited.

After all that, Cheryl called us the following morning to tell us the bird did not make it through the night. We all felt pretty sad, but did learn about Avian Haven, something we did not know before. We also learned there are a lot of caring people out there. Avian Haven can be reached directly on their website, AvianHaven.org. We also learned there is another haven called Birdsacre. So next time, should there be one, we can not waste time calling lot of people, but call directly to either of these bird rescue facilities.

Phone number for Avian Haven in Freedom: 382-6761

Phone number for Birdsacre (Stanwood Wildlife Sanctuary) in Ellsworth: 667-8460

GPLA Salutes Our Pushaw Protection Partners!

A big post-Thanksgiving THANK YOU goes out to all of our GPLA members, donors, and active volunteers — far too many to list individually, but YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE — and to the many organizations that help us protect the watershed surrounding Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond: **Penobscot County Soil and Water Conservation District, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, Maine Council of Lakes Associations, Bangor Bass Club, Orono Land Trust**, and our Municipal Partners: **Town of Orono, Town of Hudson, Town of Glenburn, and City of Old Town**. Special thanks to **Pushaw Lake Campground** in Orono for hosting our Annual Meeting in June, and to the **Checkout Convenience Store** in Glenburn for two generous donations that purchased those OFFICIAL Maine hazard buoys you saw all over the lake this summer.