

President's Report

Dear CLA members and supporters, I'm excited to share our recent accomplishments and future endeavors with you. After reading, I hope you feel as inspired as I am by our team's efforts!

First and foremost, we kicked off the 10-year China Lake Watershed-Based Management Plan (WBMP), that seeks to restore China Lake to meet state water quality standards and no longer support nuisance algae blooms.

In fulfilling WBMP's first round of actions for 2022-2023, we determined specifications for the future alum treatment that will inactivate phosphorus in lakebed sediment. Thanks to DEP, Colby College and lake science experts for their partnership in this effort. We also filed a grant application under section 319 of the Clean Water Act to fund projects that will reduce erosion and nonpoint source (NPS) pollution in 2024-2025.

In addition, we worked with Maine Audubon to install, monitor and maintain a loon restoration raft and celebrated the 2nd anniversary of the annual alewife migration.

We also served as the local host for the Maine Lakes' and the Lake Stewards of Maine joint annual conference in June. Throughout the spring, we raised our communications bar by engaging our community via social media, our newly revamped website and email campaigns.

In closing, it's YOU — our members — who help protect our lake for future generations. Whether through your donations, volunteering, educational or conservation efforts, you reaffirm and renew our vision for a clear, bright future of China Lake.

Please mark your calendars for our annual meeting, scheduled for **July 29, 2023, 8-10:30 a.m. at China Primary School, 763 Lakeview Drive, South China.** Please note the new time and location this year. You'll find the agenda on pg. 7 and additional updates will be posted to social media and our website, so check back frequently!

Thank you.



Stephen Greene, President
China Lake Association
May 2023



2022 - 2023 Board of Directors

President
Stephen Greene

Vice President
Eric Lind

Secretary
David Preston

Treasurer
Natasha Littlefield*

Registered Agent
Eric Lind

Robbie Bickford
Jen Chase*
Wayne Clark
Bruce Fitzgerald
Marie Michaud
Bob O'Connor
William Powell
Jen Syer*
Dan Tucker*

** appointed in 2023*

Photo credit: Jen Syer



Contact CLA's new Loon Count Coordinator, Bill Powell, at looncount@chinalakeassociation.org to participate in the 2023 Loon Count on Saturday, July 15th from 7–7:30 a.m..

Home Is Where the Raft Is!

by Bill Powell
Director, CLA

“**T**hink like a loon!” That’s been my mantra since CLA signed up with Maine Lakes and Maine Audubon to participate in the Loon Restoration Project (LRP) last Fall.

LRP is a five year effort aimed at increasing Maine’s loon population by minimizing various natural and manmade threats during nesting season. It’s funded by a legal case settlement after a 2003 oil spill killed ~500 loons in their wintering grounds off Buzzards Bay, RI.

So what’s involved with thinking like a loon? Get a feel for the area,

check out the amenities, then construct and move in. And that’s what I did — well, all except for the moving in part, of course!

Along with Karen McNeil from Maine Lakes and China resident Tom Michaud, we toured the lake and picked out four areas we thought would be good for a loon raft.

The final site – a well-protected location away from boat traffic, wakes, roosting eagles and otherwise rough water – was selected under the guidance of Tracy Hart, Maine Audubon LRP Director.

On May 2nd, Tracy Hart, David Morrill, Maine Audubon staffer and I constructed the loon raft, taking great care to make it safe and attractive for a nesting pair of loons. We carefully covered the raft’s wooden platform with cedar boughs, moss, dirt and other plants, then towed it by boat to its final destination.

At press time, no sign of loon activity had been reported. Tracy Hart says it isn’t uncommon for loon pairs to take a couple of years to warm up to a potential nesting site, so we’ll keep our fingers crossed for next summer!



LEFT: Tracy Hart, David Morrill and I are ready to build the raft. CENTER top: preparing moss for the raft “bed”. CENTER bottom: many hands make light work. RIGHT top: Getting ready to tow the raft to its final destination. RIGHT Bottom: Voila! The raft is ready for loons!

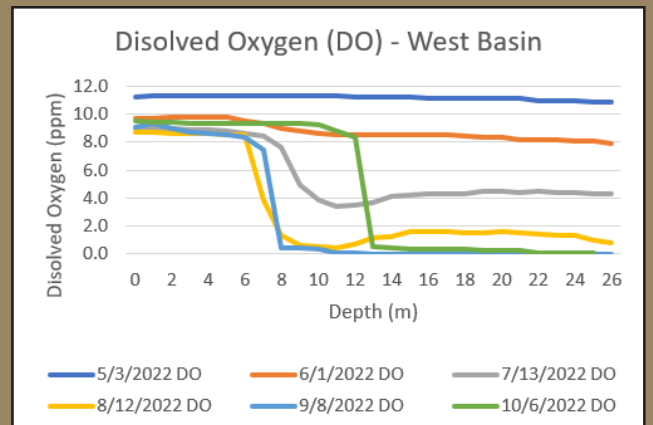
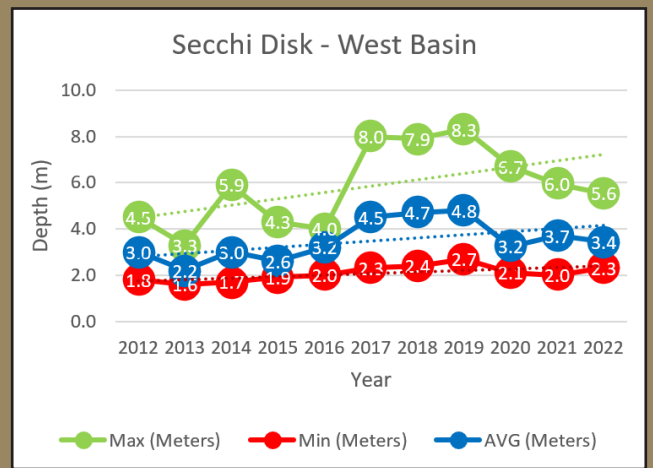
China Lake Watershed Update & Water Quality Monitoring Report

by Robert Bickford, Water Quality Manager, Kennebec Water District (KWD)

Throughout 2022, KWD managed its 344 acres (~10 mi.) of forested shorefront property — mostly around the West Basin — to promote a healthy buffer to prevent pollutants from entering China Lake. During this time, KWD completed a planting of ~6,000 softwood seedlings in a previously unforested field. Likewise, we worked to complete the selective harvest of the South Peninsula, but the project was ultimately postponed again until winter 2023-2024 due to unfrozen ground conditions.

With funding support from the Maine Drinking Water Program's Source Protection Grant, KWD contracted Drumlin Environmental and C.A. White Associates to complete a Water Stewardship Plan. After gathering input from community stakeholders and analyzing current KWD policies and procedures, the plan was finalized in March 2023 and will help guide high level KWD policy decisions that protect the long-term health of China Lake.

KWD Water Quality Technicians monitored China Lake's water quality every two weeks between May 3 and October 27 by sampling three locations to understand lake wide trends. Sampling consisted of secchi disk transparency, water temperature and dissolved oxygen (DO) gradients, and total phosphorus and total kjeldahl nitrogen concentrations at multiple depths.



Although several reports of a “greener than normal lake” were received throughout the late summer months, China Lake did not experience an official nuisance algae bloom (secchi disk transparency less than 2m). Looking at the trends over the past decade (2012-2022), we see the average transparency increase by 13% (3m to 3.4m), the maximum transparency increase by 24% (4.5m to 5.6m), and the minimum transparency increase by 28% (1.8m to 2.3m).

While we are seeing an increase in transparency, the deepest parts of the lake continue to experience periods of anoxia (DO = Oppm) due to thermal stratification and biological activity within the hypolimnion. These anoxic conditions can be inhospitable for fish and could potentially release additional phosphorus from lakebed sediment, which could result in increased algal activity.

For more on KWD's watershed activities (including the full harvest plan), visit www.KennebecWater.org/Source.

China Region Lakes Alliance (CRLA)* Report

by Scott Pierz
Executive Director, CRLA

Our Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI), Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), LakeSmart, and Gravel Road Rehabilitation Program (GRRP) were busy throughout 2022.

CBI inspected 1,261 boats entering and leaving the region's four boat launches for invasive aquatic plants (e.g., Hydrilla & Milfoil) which can infest a lake when introduced from another water body. To date, there is no documented evidence of "invasives" in our region's water bodies. Visit www.lakestewardsofmaine.org/reporting-aquatic-species-6/ for more information.

YCC conducted *nine* lakeside projects associated with LakeSmart to protect our local watersheds. They planted shoreline buffers, installed infiltration steps and stabilized shorelines. Contact chinalakesmart@gmail.com or info@crlamaine.org for a free LakeSmart evaluation.

GRRP repaired *two* gravel camp roads accessing China Lake. These fixed stormwater runoff that channeled pollutants — like phosphorus — into the lake. Since 2019, six road rehabilitations have been completed. GRRP funding comes from the Town of China's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program. The Alliance partners with camp road associations and private road owners, and financial cost shares are always received from the local taxpayers residing along the camp road.

For further information, visit www.crlamaine.org.

2022 CBI Inspections

China Lake (Head of the Lake)	685
China Lake (East Vassalboro)	345
Webber Pond	164
Three Mile Pond	67

Total Inspections	1,261
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Maximize Your CLA Membership!

Enhancing your gift* to CLA is easy with these additional opportunities; **THANK YOU** for supporting our cause!

- **At the office**
Ask your employer about matching gifts
- **Friends & Family**
Start a GoFundMe for your birthday, anniversary or other special occasion
- **Proceeds**
Select China Lake Association for your Airbnb, eBay for Charity, Deed, HumbleBundle and Nextdoor sales
- **Gift Card Turn-in**
Donate unused gift cards via CharityChoice.org

* CLA is a tax-exempt organization as outlined in 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code (EIN 01-450868). Your donation - made without consideration of goods or services - is tax-deductible.

Photo Credit: Jen Syer

* China Region Lakes Alliance ("the Alliance") is a non-profit organization established in 1995 whose members include China Lake, Three Mile Pond and Webber Pond Associations, the Towns of China and Vassalboro, Kennebec Water District and the Three-Cornered Pond Owner's Association.

Fighting Erosion, One Site at a Time

by Bruce Fitzgerald
Director, CLA

161! That's the number of property owners that were contacted this past fall by our Erosion Reduction Campaign (ERC) team to meet, document and discuss ways to reduce erosion on their properties.

Many landowners responded (THANK YOU!!!), and have since reviewed their site-specific action plans... At time of writing, it's anticipated the first batch of ERC projects around the lake will begin soon and last through September.

...But let's back up a second. *Why* are we telling you all of this?

The adoption of erosion control at these properties – most of which are shoreline residences* – will significantly reduce the amount of phosphorus that finds its way into China Lake as well as pave the way for and ensure that future remediation efforts targeting phosphorus already in the lake are as effective as possible.

How significantly will phosphorus be reduced by the ERC, you ask? Well, although developed land** represents ~25% of China Lake's watershed area, it represents 70% of the phosphorus coming from the watershed. This watershed phosphorus is often called nonpoint source (NPS) pollution or referred to as "external load" in scientific publications.

* as identified by the 2020 Watershed Survey and becoming a priority action item in the 2022 Watershed-based Management Plan (WBMP).

**residential and commercial property, roads and agriculture.

CHINA LAKE Restoration Project

Part of the 2022-2032
Watershed-based Management
Plan's Nonpoint Source
(NPS) Pollution reduction
strategy, in partnership with:



Erosion Reduction Campaign
chinalakeassociation.org

NPS is generated from soil sediment erosion, fertilizer, herbicides, insecticides, pet waste and faulty septic system run-off.

So — as you can see — remediation is **important**.

Thanks to a generous grant from Kennebec Water District, landowners benefit from financial assistance to complete ERC projects. Since labor is provided by volunteers, the China Region Lakes Alliance Youth Conservation Corps and private contractors, it's a real win-win!

If you're a landowner interested in ERC work at your property, keep your eyes out for an enrollment letter from us this Fall. Alternatively, feel free to email us directly at erosion@chinalakeassociation.org.

Our goal is to address at least 10 sites annually; for the sake of the lake and future generations to come, we can't wait to work with you!!

For more about ERC and WBMP, visit the Restoration section of our website.



TOP: Sample ERC sign placed on participating properties in 2023.
BOTTOM: Documenting two erosion sites during the 2020 Watershed Survey, which helped identify priorities for the WBMP and ERC.

What's the Duff All About?

by Jen Syer
Director, CLA

One day a neighbor commented on the “duff” I was raking up around my camp, and — thinking they were referring to Homer Simpson’s favorite beverage — I asked them to repeat themselves. I’m glad I did. Turns out, duff is part of Mother Nature’s filtration system (also known as a shoreline buffer), *not* a drink. Buffers include:

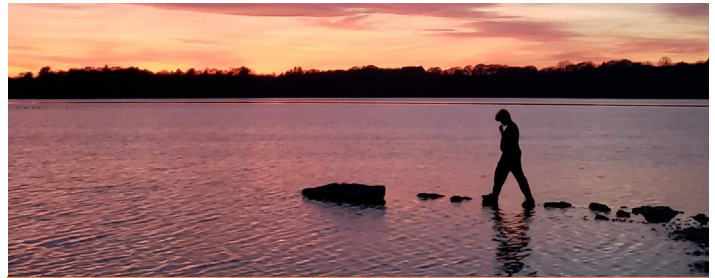
1. **Tree and shrub canopy:** intercept rain and its impact on soil
2. **Leaf surfaces:** collect rain and allow evaporation
3. **Duff:** natural filter comprised of decaying plant matter that prevents sediment and pollutants — like phosphorus — from getting into the lake
4. **Roots:** hold soil in place, absorb water and nutrients
5. **Irregular ground surfaces:** allow rain and snowmelt to puddle, then seep into the ground

Since learning about duff, I’ve kept raking to a minimum and worked with LakeSmart to improve my shoreline buffer: white clethra and ferns now fight erosion, and they look great doing it, too!

If you’re interested in improving your buffer, contact CLA at erosion@chinalakeassociation.org or CRLA at chinalakesmart@gmail.com. Both teams are professional, qualified and eager to help!



White clethra source: LaurensGardenService.com



Apply to Serve on Our Board of Directors

We are currently accepting letters of interest and/or resumes from people interested in serving on the Board of Directors.

The Board has monthly business meetings (mostly via Zoom) and normally meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m..

In addition to regular meeting attendance, Directors must actively engage and fully support our mission to protect our lake for future generations.

Directors will be selected entirely on a nondiscriminatory basis with respect to age, sex, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender identity, national origin, disability or veteran status.

To be considered as a Director, please email a letter of interest and/or a resume to info@chinalakeassociation.org; direct questions to the attention of Stephen Greene.

In Memoriam: Steven Blackwell



We mourn the loss of Steven Blackwell, who passed away March 6, 2023. Steve was a former president of CLA and took great pride in our mission. To those who have donated on behalf of Steve’s memory; thank you. Your gifts help ensure the lake will be enjoyed for future generations.



2023 Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 29, 8 – 10:30 a.m.

China Primary School • 763 Lakeview Dr., South China, 04358

Agenda

- 8 a.m.** **Welcome & Networking Breakfast**
Catered by Sunrise Bagel of Waterville
- 9 a.m.** **Opening Remarks**
Stephen Greene, CLA President
- 9:05 – 10 a.m.** **Presentations**
Keynote: Wendy Garland, Division of Environmental Assessment, Maine DEP Director
WBMP Update: Jen Jespersen, Ecological Instincts
Water Quality Report: Robbie Bickford, WQ Manager, KWD; CLA Director
Annual Loon Count & Loon Restoration Project: Bill Powell, CLA Director
Panel Discussion: David Landry & Scott Pierz, former CLA Presidents; & Stephen Greene, current CLA President; Eric Lind, CLA Vice President (moderator)
- 10:05 – 10:30 a.m.** **Election of Officers & Directors**
Stephen Greene, CLA President
- Treasurer's Report**
Natasha Littlefield, CLA Treasurer
- 10:30 a.m.** **Closing Remarks & Adjournment**

Election of Officers & Directors

Elect following as Directors with terms expiring in:

2024

Wayne Clark
Eric Lind
Stephen Greene

2025

Robbie Bickford
Bruce Fitzgerald
David Preston

2026

Jen Chase
Natasha Littlefield
Marie Michaud
William Powell
Jen Syer
Dan Tucker

Elect following as Officers until the July 2024 annual meeting of the members:

Stephen Greene, President
Eric Lind, Vice President
Eric Lind, Registered Agent
Wayne Clark, Secretary
Natasha Littlefield, Treasurer

\$200 VISA GIFT CARD RAFFLE!

Everyone subscribed* to our email newsletter by the end of the Annual Meeting is eligible. To enter, scan the QR code, visit www.chinalakeassociation.org/subscribe or stop by the registration desk at the meeting. Winner will be announced via email by 5 p.m. on July 29th.

* Existing subscribers are automatically entered. By entering, CLA has permission to email you about news, events, volunteer and stewardship opportunities. You may unsubscribe by clicking the unsubscribe link at the bottom of an email.





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Newsletter



**Preserving China Lake for Future Generations
Through Environmental Stewardship and Community Action**

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