



CHINA LAKE ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Spring 1994

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This past year has been quite eventful for the China Lake Association with regard to the restoration of China Lake. The most important news has to be the decision not to perform an alum treatment on China Lake. The reason for this decision is three fold: lack of federal money, lack of state money, and perhaps most significantly, the poor results obtained in Three Mile Pond following the 1989 alum treatment there. The directors of the China Lake Association began to have concerns about an alum treatment in early 1993 upon learning about the reappearance of algae blooms in Three Mile Pond. The decision was made at that time to re-evaluate carefully the effectiveness of an alum treatment. Through 1993, additional negative factors arose. We realized that funding would be delayed or perhaps unavailable. The final blow to the alum treatment was the State of Maine Department of Environmental Protection decision not to recommend an alum treatment based on the factors described.

While the cancellation of the alum treatment is a blow to the lake restoration, it does not doom the return of clean water. On the positive side, the phosphorus level in the lake has declined for the last three years. Additionally, China had relatively good water quality last summer at a time when a number of other lakes experienced very poor water quality. The intent of an alum treatment was to reduce rapidly the internal phosphorus in the lake. At this point, we will continue to work on reducing the external sources of phosphorus to the lake and hope this too will bring a continued improvement in the water quality.

In addition to the work on lake restoration, the Association has worked on strengthening our organization. We have applied for and hope to obtain tax-exempt status, we have continued to fund educational programs in the China schools, and once again, we will be sponsoring Lakefest.

Lakefest will be held on Saturday, July 30th at the China Middle School. We anticipate having live entertainment, a barbecue, and lake related displays. As in the past, Lakefest will be the backdrop for the annual meeting. We continue to need people to work on association projects and serve on the board of directors.

No President's Report would be complete without acknowledging the tremendous work done by George Lord in this past year. George, working for the Town of China as the Lake Restoration Director, has been successful in obtaining \$250,000 in grant money to do erosion control work on highways in the lake's watershed, further reducing phosphorus input to China Lake.

I would like to thank all of the directors of the association for their dedicated service and remind the members at large that membership renewal is critical to the continued function of the China Lake Association.

Respectfully,

Dave Landry
President

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

By Loel Kline

The China Lake Association has sponsored a Maine Audubon workshop this spring called *Wonderful Wetlands* for the entire third grade of the China Primary School. Early in May the class journeyed to Orono where the students discovered how wetlands function in a watershed to slow down, hold and purify water. They also learned about the value and significance of wetlands as a habitat for a variety of animals. The excursion was enthusiastically enjoyed by both teachers and students. The teachers came away with "heads full of ideas for incorporating wetlands studies into our science units" and the students enjoyed a new interest in making conservation posters and poems.

Once again the C.L.A. will be offering scholarships to China Middle School sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students to attend the Maine Conservation School in Bryant Pond. Participants are chosen through an essay contest held at the school in late May. The Conservation School offers a week of environmental awareness, exploration and fun. Field studies cover topics such as soils, wildlife, aquatic systems, and forests.

These two educational outreach programs are funded and made possible by your membership and support of the China Lake Association. Our goal is to help students and our community appreciate our fragile environment and the delicate balance of nature.

EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL: A THREAT TO OUR LAKES

By Carol Thibodeau

Eurasian watermilfoil is a nuisance aquatic plant that currently infests a number of New England lakes. Although it has not yet been found in China Lake, it has the potential of being introduced here.

This plant is known for its rapid growth and spread which can lead to significant problems within a lake. Commonly found in shallow bays and along the shoreline, milfoil forms dense weed beds that can seriously impair the recreational use of a lake, reduce the availability of fish spawning grounds, outcompete beneficial native plants and otherwise alter a lake's natural environment. Once milfoil has infested a lake there is no known way to eradicate it.

Because Eurasian milfoil is an introduced species to this continent, it has no natural controls to keep it in check. Therefore, it has the potential to completely infest lakes.

Eurasian milfoil can reach the surface in up to twenty feet of water, growing up from the bottom each year from a fibrous root system. Milfoil grows and spreads extremely quickly forming dense surface mats. Unlike most aquatic plants which are usually associated with particular water qualities, Eurasian milfoil will grow readily in many types of lakes, as well as on almost any lake bottom.

Eurasian milfoil reproduces almost exclusively by the breaking off of fragments which can then drift away, sink, develop roots, and grow into new plants. A fragment just a few inches long is capable of starting a new plant. This fragmentation occurs both naturally and as a result of human activity. Within a lake, wind and waves may break plants loose, allowing them to drift into new locations and root. Boating activity through dense milfoil beds also contributes to the fragmenting and spread of milfoil plants.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP PREVENT MILFOIL GROWTH

To stop the further spread of this nuisance plant, it is imperative that the boating public remove all plant fragments from their boats before putting in or leaving a lake's access area.

REMOVE ALL PLANT FRAGMENTS FROM:

BE SURE YOUR BOAT IS FREE OF ALL PLANT FRAGMENTS BEFORE LAUNCHING.

DISPOSE OF PLANTS ON HIGH, DRY GROUND WHERE THERE IS NO DANGER OF THEM WASHING INTO ANY WATER BODY.

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE FOUND AN OCCURRENCE OF EURASIAN WATER MILFOIL, CONTACT GEORGE LORD, LAKE RESTORATION PROJECT MANAGER, CHINA TOWN OFFICE AT 445-2014.