

# China Lake Association

Newsletter

Spring 1998

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### China Lake Association Board of Directors

#### *President*

David Landry

#### *Secretary*

David Preston

#### *Treasurer*

Andre Boutin

Nancy Hoch

Scott Hoch

Bruce Daniels

Ken Parker

Jamie Pitney

Irma Simon

Robert O'Connor

Paul Memmer

Michael Ledger

Johathan VanBourg

Roger Poulin

#### *Advisors*

George Lord

Reb Manthey

The China Lake Association (CLA) continues to work year round to fulfill its mission of water quality and education as well as address the concerns of its members. The high points of the past year were the Board of Environmental Protection's decision on water levels and the wrap up of the camp road project that CLA has worked on for the past two years. The Town of China made a continued commitment to maintaining and improving the water quality in China Lake by again placing funding for the China Region Lakes Alliance on the town warrant. We are hoping for a similar commitment from the Town of Vassalboro.

One area of concern in the coming year is the poor condition of the movable gates on the China Lake dam. The gates, rebuilt with oak in 1985, are rotting. While it is hoped that the gates will remain serviceable this summer, replacement is needed. The Town of Vassalboro, which owns the dam, is looking at a \$20,000 cost for new aluminum gates. Repair costs have typically been shared by the Town of China. No decision of funding or repair has been made at this time, but replacement must be done during the fall. The China Lake Association will be monitoring this situation.

We look forward to an exciting summer season. In conjunction with the China Region Lakes Alliance, LAKEFEST, will be back this summer. Bigger, better, and with something of interest for everyone! The China Lake Association will also begin a new project: **The Year of the Buffer Strip**. A buffer strip is the vital area at the border of the lake that limits phosphorous runoff into the water. CLA will help provide technical assistance and funding to improve the vegetation in landowner's buffer strips. For our education project, The China Lake Association has been asked to provide on-water transportation for a school lake day this June. We will need volunteers with pontoon boats for this one day event. We will have a China Lake map available for the 1998 season. This has been a long time wish and has been made possible by the Department of Conservation's Tim Thurston. Order one now using the order form on the back page.

As always, we need volunteers. Our directors are tired and would love some help. If you cannot volunteer your time, renew your membership, get your neighbor to sign up, and consider writing a letter to the China Town Manager or selectmen thanking them for their continued support. Remember, the China Lake is one of your biggest investments!



## China Lake Map

The Maine Department of Conservation will be providing the China Lake Association, (CLA), with an accurate map of China Lake for distribution. The map is the work of Tim Thurston who is responsible for maintaining the hazard markers on the lake. The China Lake Association's board got a look at a draft of the map at its January meeting and was enthusiastic.

CLA was asked to review the map for accuracy of marked hazards as well as names of islands and coves. We asked for the help of local residents and hope the map is useful and accurate. The map can be ordered for five dollars using the order form on the back page. It will also be available locally during the summer. This will be an evolving project with updates as indicated. Map users who wish to make suggestions for the future should contact CLA.

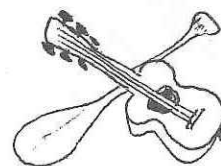
Tim Thurston is available for consultation regarding marking the lake's hazards and can be reached at the Department of Conservation in Richmond, (207)-582-5771 or information can be relayed through the China Lake Association.

## LAKEFEST 1998

It's back! LAKEFEST will reappear after a three year absence. This year, LAKEFEST will be hosted by the China Region Lakes Alliance. The festival will be held on Saturday, July 25th at Erskine Academy from 2 - 7 p.m. The great chicken barbecue put on by the South China Boynton Webber American Legion Post is planned from 4 - 6 p.m. with live bluegrass and acoustic music playing during the afternoon.

The theme will be *our lakes and what we can do to protect them*. There will be displays by the China, Webber, and Threemile Pond Associations as well as many other displays. Loon calling and poster contests for the youngsters are also planned. We are hoping to have local boat dealers, craftpersons, and even a second hand water craft sale area at LAKEFEST. With the Erskine facility we will have the capacity to have the event rain or shine!

The annual meeting of the China Lake Association will take place at LAKEFEST at 3 p.m. and all members are urged to attend and bring a friend.



## LAKEFEST '98

**Saturday, July 25**  
**2 - 7 p.m.**  
**Erskine Academy**

**China Lake Association**  
**Annual Meeting, 3 p.m.**

**Chicken Barbecue**  
**4 - 6 p.m.**

**Second hand boat and**  
**marine supplies**

**Boat sale (Sell your boat**  
**for a nominal fee.)**

**Bluegrass Band**

**Poster Contest**

**Boat Displays**

**Lake Related Displays**

## Grade School Tour

The fifth graders of China Middle School will study lake ecology in the best way possible, by spending a day on China Lake. The students hope to learn water quality monitoring and conservation methods from lake biologist George Lord of the China Region Lakes Alliance.

Getting the 80 students out on the lake will be no small feat and the China Lake Association, (CLA), has been called upon to help. There will be a morning and afternoon session of 40 students each. It is estimated that 5 good sized pontoon boats with drivers and life jackets will be needed. CLA will need assistance from the community to help the fifth graders with this worthwhile project. The exact date has not been chosen but will be in the first or second week of June.

If you can help, please call Janet Preston, 968-2565, or Nancy Hoch, 968-2139, who will be coordinating this project on behalf of the China Lake Association and fifth grade teacher Anita Smith.

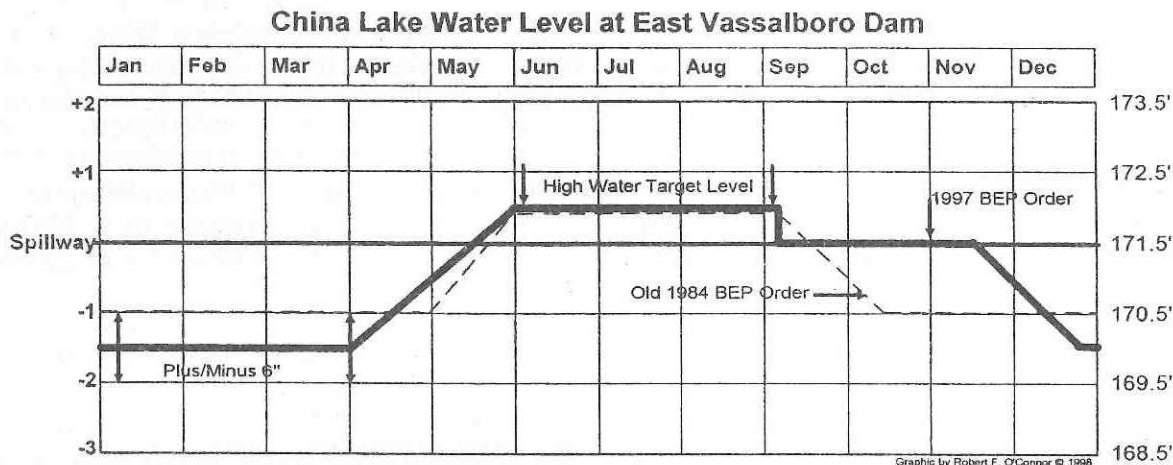
## Water Level Changes

Following a series of public hearings, the Board of Environmental Protection, (B.E.P.), voted unanimously to make some changes in the water levels in China Lake. The changes made are primarily aimed at lowering winter water levels to minimize shorefront ice damage, delaying spring refilling until after ice-out, and delaying the final fall drawdown until after the brown trout spawning run. The summer water level will remain the same as it has been in the past, but the maximum spring water level has been reduced by 6 inches.

The Board's decision was prompted by a citizen initiated petition that proposed water levels significantly below current levels. This dramatic change was opposed by the towns of China and Vassalboro as well as by the China Lake Association.

In making its conclusions the B.E.P. found that the "reduction in water levels that had been proposed by petitioners would not materially improve the existing water quality. The public and private resources affected by water levels are best protected by amending the existing water level regime to protect fall brown trout spawning, limit the erosion potential of waves and ice scouring under high water conditions, and limit the erosion potential of waves under unchanging water levels." The B.E.P. acted by increasing the winter drawdown and limiting the maximum water level at any time to 172.5 feet which is six inches above the dam spillway. The outflow of the lake will be monitored and kept at a minimum of 10 cubic feet per second (cfs).

The China Lake Association acknowledges the complexity of the water level issue and believes the decision reached by the Board of Environmental Protection is reasoned and balances the many issues involved. (See graph.)



### 1997 BEP Order Summary

- \* November 15: draw down to 1.5 feet below spillway. Goal to reach target by ice-in.
- \* Ice-in to April 1: 1.5 feet below spillway plus or minus 6 inches.
- \* April 1 to Memorial Day: refill to a high water target level of 6 inches above spillway.
- \* Memorial Day to Labor Day: maintain water between spillway and 6 inches above spillway.
- \* Between Labor Day and November 15: maintain water between spillway and 6 inches below spillway.
- \* Maintain a minimum outflow of 10 cubic feet per second (cfs) in the outlet stream with conditions.
- \* Water levels and minimum flows shall be monitored and recorded at least once per week April 1 through ice-in and at least once every two weeks from ice-in through March 30.



## CRLA Plans 1998 Activities for China Lake

As in the past, the China Region Lakes Alliance (CRLA) will be leading the China Conservation Corps. The Corps is a group of five energetic local high school students dedicated to reducing erosion and sedimentation along the shoreline and at other locations throughout 32 square mile watershed. This year, the Conservation Corps will be led again by Jason York, a South China native who is attending the University of Maine in Orono and is a seasoned veteran of the Corps. We are now planning the specific projects to be addressed this summer. If you need advice or work performed on your property, please give George Lord or Reb Manthey a call at 445-5021.

We are continuing our work on camp roads around the lake and, again, would appreciate any information from property owners with regard to problem roads and possible projects with which we may not be familiar.

This is also the first year of the China Lake "Year of the Buffer Strip." We will be putting together a program to promote the planting of various shoreland shrubs to reduce pollution from lawns near the lake. We will keep all lake dwellers informed of this important new program as it becomes more developed.

We will be running a fall training session to get started on a volunteer watershed survey. The previous one was done in 1988, and it is time to see what progress has been made. We hope to locate pollution sources throughout the watershed. Plan to attend the training session, and do your part to help us protect and improve the water quality! If you are interested in participating in the watershed survey (a good excuse for a walk in the woods) give us a call and we'll put you on our list of contacts.

We will be continuing to monitor the lake's water quality, with the help of the Kennebec Water District. We are planning to take a group of China Middle School students out on the lake for a half-day this spring and teach them about monitoring the health of their lake. If you have a party barge and/or would like to help, contact Janet Preston, 968-2565.

We need some things to make our work more efficient. Donations will be a great help! Please see our wish list below. The China Region Lakes Assiance is now approved by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501c3 non-profit organization, which allows all donations to be tax deductible and which also enables us to approach private foundations for grant money.

As always, we are here to help you help your lake. If you have any questions or concerns, please stop by our office at the old China Town Hall, or give us a call at 445-5021.

### \*\*\* Wish List \*\*\*

Mulch hay  
Boat, 16-20 foot double-hulled fiberglass with  
Trailer (ours was stolen last summer)  
Pickup truck  
Roof Racks for a F-150 or for the donated pickup  
Heavy duty wheelbarrows  
Laptop computer (486 or better)  
Utility trailer

### \*Mark your calendars\*

- April 16 Maine Water Conference at August  
Civic Center, North Wing, 8 am-4 pm  
George Lord will speak on "Watersheds  
on a Shoestring."
- June 27 Maine Congress of Lake Associations  
Conference at Southern Maine Technical  
College, South Portland, 9 am-4 pm.
- July 25 LAKEFEST and China Lake  
Association Annual Meeting at Erskine  
Academy, South China, 2 pm - 7 pm rain  
or shine. (CLA annual meeting at 3 pm.)

For more information, call George Lord, 445-5021.

## Plant a Buffer Strip

Where there are humans, there is nutrient pollution. The way we live tends to over-nourish and pollute the environment. Foot and vehicle traffic compacts the soil so water cannot seep into it. Soil washes away from bare areas such as roads and driveways. Pollutants and fertilizers wash downhill into water bodies.

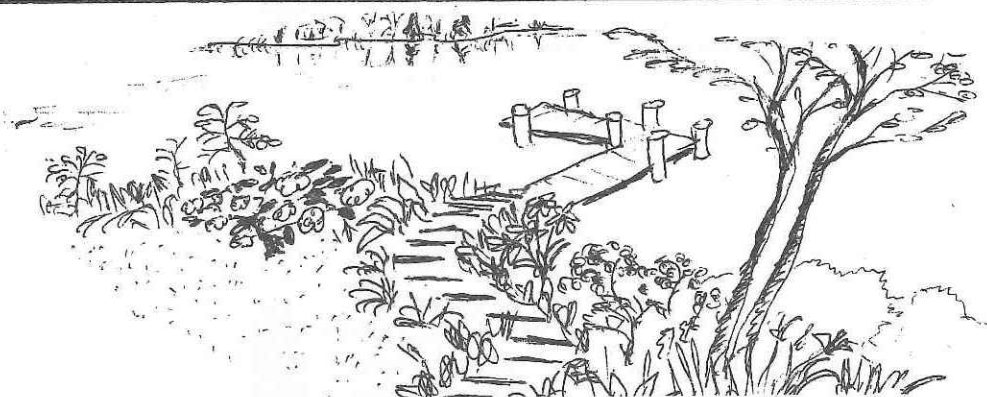
The soil and nutrients that wash into a lake or stream affect the quality of the water. This non-point source pollution can cause an overabundance of water plants, an algae bloom, or a decline in fish populations. Boating and swimming become less attractive. The value of shoreline property can drop significantly.

One way to lessen the problem of nutrient pollution is to plant a vegetated buffer strip. Buffer strips are areas where plants have grown naturally or have been planted at the edge of a lake or stream. Buffers are designed to catch surface flow, subsurface flow and deeper groundwater flow. The plants remove sediment, nutrients and other pollutants.

Buffers need to be placed between people and the water. We need to filter runoff from our buildings, roads and driveways. Although a lawn is better than bare areas, it is not the best type of growth to have near the lake. A variety of plant types and sizes will protect the soil and water better. A buffer strip can be as manicured or as wild as you wish. The important thing is to minimize the amount of bare earth and lawn.

The China Lake Association, (CLA), and The China Region Lakes Alliance, (CRLA), will be sponsoring a project to heighten awareness of the importance of buffer strips, and to encourage landowners to install buffers. The China Lake Association will be surveying the lake shoreline and offering advice and financial assistance to shorefront residents who are willing to plant and create or improve buffer strips.

Contact the CRLA at 445-5021 for a brochure on creating buffer strips. Later this summer there will also be recommended landscape plans and plant lists available. Look for the Kennebec Soil & Water Conservation District order form in this newsletter for great prices on trees and shrubs that can be planted this spring.



### Five Things You Can Do For Your Lake

**Walk your camp road.** If it washes out after heavy rains, talk to your road neighbors about getting it fixed.

**Plant shrubs.** If your lawn extends to the lake, or you have some eroding areas, plant shrubs along the lakeshore to absorb dirty runoff to reduce algae blooms. (See article on buffer strips above.)

**Check your septic system** to see if it is up to code or needs pumping.

**Use little or no fertilizer** (either chemical or manure) anywhere near the lake.

**Come to LAKEFEST and the Annual Meeting of the China Lake Association on Saturday, July 25th at Erskine Academy to stay informed!**

China Lake Association  
P.O. Box 215  
China, ME 04926

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
China, ME 04926  
Permit No. 15

## BOXHOLDER

Edited and published by Janet Preston

Membership renewals are due next summer. We will be sending a 1998-1999 Membership Renewal form in our next newsletter in the summer. Thank you for your continued interest and support!

### China Lake Map Order Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ ST: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ x \$5.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
no. of maps total

Please send check made out to China Lake Association to P.O. Box 215,  
China, ME 04926.