



China's Pride
Keep It Alive

CHINA LAKE ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Summer 1995

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The China Lake Association directors have been busy this last year working on projects to benefit the lake and the China community. As President, I have represented the lake association at the newly created China Region Lakes Alliance. Through this group, which is composed of the China, Webber, and Three Mile Pond Associations as well as the Kennebec Water District, we hope to obtain federal grants to continue lake related work. This does not mean that the China Lake Association is less active, rather that we have allies in our work.

The water clarity is very good this spring and hopefully formal water quality testing this summer will show that the trend in improving water quality noted three years ago is continuing. The China Conservation Corps will be working on shorefront projects again this year. Anyone with shorefront erosion problems should contact George Lord at the China Town Office. He is lining up summer work for the corps. Property owners having work done by the Conservation Corps may qualify for financial assistance.

The Lake Association continues to be involved with the China Schools on environmental related projects. The Association will contribute between \$500 and \$1000 to construct a wetlands study area as part of the much larger Project Learning Tree that is taking shape on a 10 acre site behind the China Primary School. Introducing conservation and environmental topics in the schools today will make for informed citizens and voters in the future.

There has been some discussion within the community regarding the water levels in China Lake. Two citizen-initiated petitions have circulated, one seeking support in lowering the water levels and a second petition aimed at maintaining the current water management plan. The China Lake Association has not taken a position in this debate but members of the board of directors have participated in two meetings on the water level in China Lake. We are continuing to study this and ask for your input. Please complete and return the enclosed survey. We want to know what you think.

Finally, I ask for your help. We need four new directors for the Lake Association board. The time commitment is not great, perhaps two hours per month, but without more active members we will be unable to carry out the work that must be done. For those of you that are supportive but cannot find time to be a director, help us out by sending in your dues and convince a neighbor to become a member of the China Lake Association. There are two membership renewal forms in this newsletter - one for you and one for your neighbor. Thanks a lot!

Respectfully,
David Landry, President
968-2856

Annual Meeting July 27, 7 pm

The annual meeting of the China Lake Association will be held on Thursday, July 27, 1995 in the library of the China Middle School. The meeting will start at 7 pm and include updates on the China Lake Restoration Project, water quality reports, and other matters before the association. The midweek meeting is a departure from Lakefest that has been held for the last three years. The directors felt a change in format was in order. This year the directors will put their energy into a membership drive that will take place the weekend of July 14th or July 22nd. Since Lakefest 1993, membership renewals have fallen off. If the China Lake Association is to continue to work towards cleaner water, we must reestablish our strong membership base.

China Lake Association

President	David Landry
Treasurer	Andre Boutin
Secretary	David Preston

Reprinted from *The China Lake Association Newsletter*, Spring, 1994

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.

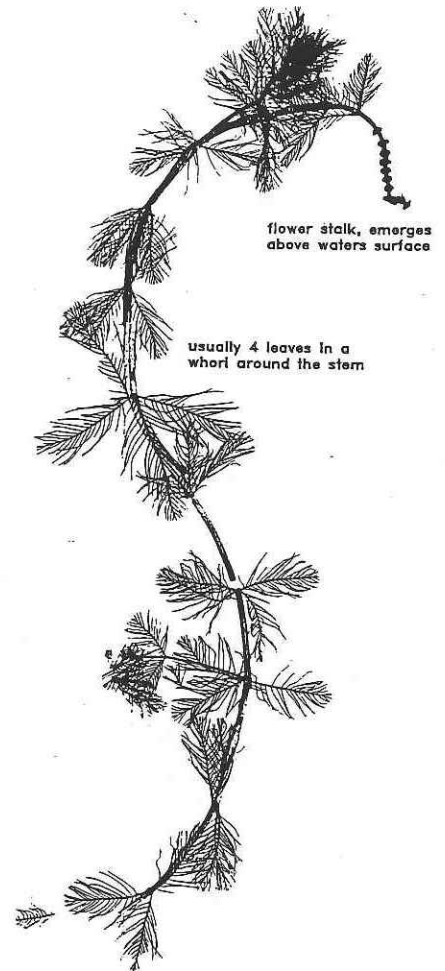
This plant is known for its rapid growth and spread which can lead to significant problems within a lake. Commonly found in shallow bays and along the shoreline, milfoil forms dense weed beds that can seriously impair the recreational use of a lake, reduce the availability of fish spawning grounds, outcompete 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.

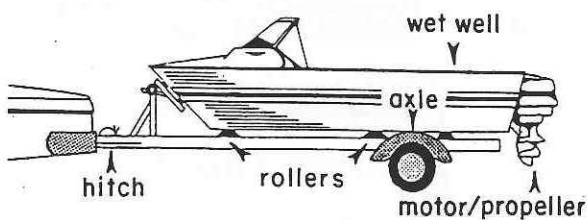
EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL
(*Myriophyllum spicatum*)



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.

China Lake Restoration Project

"A lake is the product of its watershed, and of the people who care for it."

The past year has been one of variety, innovation and change for the China Lake Restoration Project. Since January, 1994, we have been holding regular meetings with representatives of the China Lake Association, the Three Mile Pond Association, the Webber Pond Association, the Kennebec Water District, and the Towns of China, Windsor and Vassalboro to discuss and plan the formation of a regional watershed management program. Known as the China Region Lakes Alliance, the mission of this new, nonprofit regional organization is, in part, to guard the waters of China Region Lakes against pollution and to preserve the environmental health of their watersheds. We will continue to receive assistance from various sources and hope to obtain local funding, both public and private, in order to affect continual long term improvement in these three area lakes. With "start-up funding" from China's Clean Lakes Program grant, this regional alliance has the opportunity to implement long term water quality and watershed programs for these three culturally eutrophic lakes. Over the next two years, we hope to work together with all "stakeholders" in the area to implement a watershed-based, long term local program.

Some of our recent activities and accomplishments within the China Lake watershed include:

Federal Highway Administration Project

The Town of China worked closely with Maine Department of Transportation Resident Engineers on two major highway reconstruction projects in the China Lake watershed during the past summer. As a result of this cooperative relationship, more than twenty of our original highway runoff erosion control sites were repaired or reconstructed concurrently with the MDOT projects. The China Conservation Corps received highway worker safety training at the MDOT Maintenance Division headquarters and performed hand labor behind guardrails in connection with the larger projects.

China Lake Shoreline Survey

The China Conservation Corps performed a comprehensive survey of all remaining erosion sites along the entire twenty five mile shoreline of China Lake. Each site was documented with photographs and a narrative description of the problem and its proposed remedy. As a result, we have been able to measure overall progress of this important aspect of the lake restoration project and to plan specific activities for the Corps in 1995. During the process, these local teenagers gained an appreciation of assessment techniques and project planning, including the use of available maps and documents at municipal offices.

Jones Brook Habitat Improvement

We recently received a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency to control erosion and sedimentation in Jones Brook and, thereby, to improve and increase fish spawning habitat in this major tributary to China Lake. Erskine Academy has generously offered to provide a "learning workforce" to assist in restoring the brook.

Biotechnical Demonstration Grant

The Town of China and the Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District received a grant of \$21,800 to demonstrate the applicability and effectiveness of various established erosion control methods and materials to be installed as Best Management Practices (BMPs) at existing active erosion sites within the watershed. During the past construction season, three of these systems have been installed, with the remaining seven to be completed in 1995.

A Study Pond for Kids

by George Lord
China Region Lakes Alliance

It has been a busy and interesting year out behind the China Elementary School. With direction and an abundance of energy provided by Paul Memmer, Lake Association member and Scott Paper Company forester, a huge outdoor classroom is nearing completion. Prompted by his knowledge of the national Project Learning Tree educational program and his strong desire to introduce our children to the "working forest", Paul has created a model outdoor learning center.

Last fall, as Paul was completing plans for nature trails, forest management exhibits and a classroom in the woods, he asked the China Lake Association for assistance in creating an aquatic habitat for the students. The Board of Directors voted to finance the construction of a one acre pond, complete with a handicap accessible bridge, for the school to use in its ecology and environmental awareness programs.

During "China Lake Day", May 25, several Erskine Academy students joined the Lake Restoration Project in conducting four on-the-job training exercises for a total of about sixty China Elementary students from kindergarten through fourth grade. Throughout the day, with big kids teaching smaller ones, a full twelve yard load of rip-rap stone was carefully placed along the embankment of the access road which serves as the dam for the pond. By early June, the pond project was completed with the installation of a custom made outlet structure.

Thanks to the China Lake Association, Erskine Academy, the China Elementary school, and especially Paul Memmer for working together to provide this unique educational opportunity for our kids.

The China School Forest Project

by Maribeth Memmer

Since the beginning of this school year, dedicated community members have been working on the planning and building of a learning center in the woodlot behind China Schools. When asked what he thought the main goal of the project was, Paul Memmer replied, "To provide opportunities for kids to gain a better understanding of our environment through PLT (Project Learning Tree) activity guides. The theme of PLT is to use the forest as a window to environmental education. China is extremely lucky to have this resource in its school yard, giving students opportunities to have hands-on learning experiences."

The project will be made up of a number of different learning stations including demonstration silvicultural practices, different measurement systems used to manage a forest, a wildlife pond, geological area, and a soil station. There will also be a Learning Tree, where students can go to sit and relax, read, or write.

The backbone of this project is the China School Forest Projects Steering Committee. This group is made up of several teachers from both schools, community members, both principals, vice-principal, a contractor, forester, and town manager. They have dedicated much of their time, meeting, at first, once a week, now every other Wednesday. There is also a group of eighth grade boys doing much of the building. Many organizations have made financial contributions to this project to get it off the ground.

A major concept of the project is the importance of total community ownership. Mr. Memmer continues, "All people must work together, from adults in the community to individual organizations and groups, but most important are student involvement and input. With this type of dedication, the project will live well beyond its initial beginning, and constantly grow and improve."

Camp Roadwork

Many of the erosion sites and contributors to phosphorus loading in our watershed have been addressed through work done as part of the China Lake Restoration Project. Ongoing shorefront work is being done by the China Conservation Corp. One area that has not received needed attention is erosion sites along many of the fire roads around the lake. Two years ago, a North Anson school teacher, Pamela Partridge, surveyed the China Lake camp roads as part of her graduate study. George Lord has reviewed the data she collected. A number of serious problems have been identified.

The Kennebec Water District has volunteered some manpower as well as a limited amount of equipment use to help correct these problems. Additionally, Don Kale of the Department of Environmental Protection would like to assist in the work on area camp roads as well. At this point a list of site work is being developed and then camp road volunteers will be needed to get the work done. This is work that will need strong participation by individual fire road residents in order to take full advantage of the assistance that is being offered.

Erskine Academy Restores Jones Brook

by Reb Manthey

Kennebec Soil and Water Conservation District

Earlier this year the China Lake Restoration Project received a Federal watershed restoration grant through the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Its purpose was to repair and restore trout spawning habitat in Jones Brook, a small stream that runs into the southern end of China Lake.

Jones Brook used to be a clean, gravel-bottomed brook, ideal for trout and smelt spawning. Because of increased runoff due to population growth and highway upgrades, it had become unstable with eroded soil from its banks covering up the gravel bottom. This fine silt kills fish eggs and young fish, resulting in very little successful spawning activity.

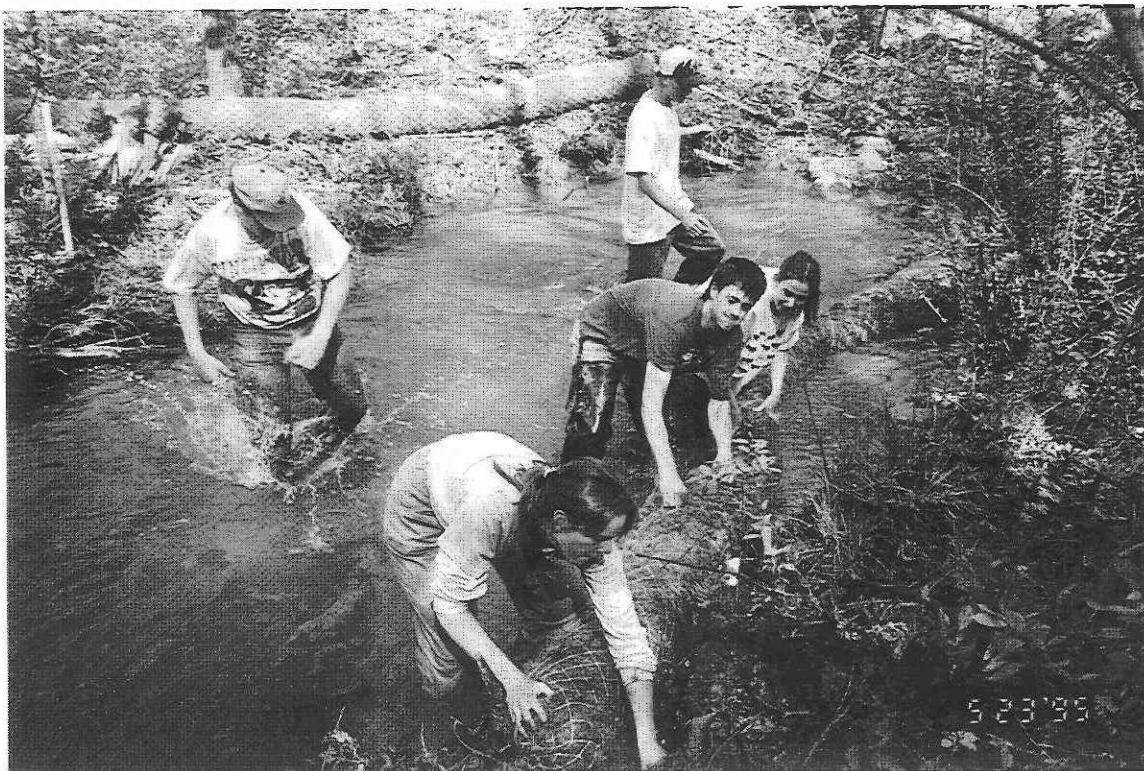
The proposed remedy was labor intensive, and needed to take place in the spring at the beginning of the growing season. Fortunately, Ken Hallowell from Erskine Academy contacted the Restoration Project in the hope that his students could learn more about water quality and erosion through practical application. The school and the Restoration Project quickly developed a pilot project intended to fill each others needs.

During the second and third weeks of May, crews of Erskine students and teachers spent mornings in Jones Brook on this vegetative stabilization project. Several sites were stabilized using willow wattles; clumps of willow branches staked into the banks. These will sprout into shrubs in the next year and their roots will help hold the soil in place. Other sites had fiber rolls, or giant sausages made of coconut fiber held together with nylon netting, staked into place at the bottom of steep slopes (see photo). As the slopes continue to slump, the soil will be held in place behind the fiber rolls rather than entering the brook. Over time the rolls will rot, but in the meantime they will stabilize the bank allowing vegetation to become established. At one bend in the brook, a trout shelter was constructed. The shelter looks like a streamband platform placed at water level. It will provide a stable, shady overhang for trout to rest under.

All this work was done by the Erskine students, under the direction of George Lord and Reb Manthey. The students, all freshmen and sophomores, were highly motivated and worked hard on this important habitat restoration project. The result of their work will be a decrease in the amount of soil being deposited in the lake, an improvement in the water quality, and an increased recruitment of native salmonids in China Lake.

Last week, China had some visitors from Maine's Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Included in the group was the National Chief of the Nonpoint Source Program. They wanted to see what had been done at Jones Brook. Needless to say, all were very impressed by the work!

With such a successful pilot project, the Restoration Project and Erskine are now planning to continue their partnership, with similar joint activities each fall and spring. Long term local partnerships such as this are the best way to assure continued water quality improvement in China Lake. Thank you, Erskine, for caring and helping.



So-Called "Takings" Legislation What Would It Mean for China?

by David Preston

Some of you may have already heard about proposed legislation, at both the state and national levels, which, if enacted, would effectively end land-use regulation. While the China Lake Association takes no official stand on political matters, it is important that our members be informed about this proposed law which might drastically affect China Lake.

What the "takings" law proposes is the following: if the effect of any land use regulation is to decrease the value of someone's private property by more than 50%, the government would have to compensate the landowner. In other words, if a private landowner felt that a zoning restriction adversely affected his property values, he could sue the town, or state, and force the taxpayers to pay him for "taking" away his property. While at first glance, this may seem fair, let's see how the law would operate by giving some examples.

Let's say a real-estate developer from New York buys some land on China Lake for the purpose of constructing a 15-story resort hotel, casino, and marina. He figures the property for such a purpose would be worth two million dollars. Suppose China's shoreland zoning ordinance prohibits the construction of such a resort at the lakeside because it would be a source of pollution and dirty the lake. The land without the hotel is worth \$100,000. The developer sues the town of China for the difference of \$900,000. The town has the option of letting him go ahead with his development, or be forced into a long and costly legal battle and possibly lose 2 million dollars.

As another example, let's say Mr. X decides to convert his residence next to China Elementary School into an adult bookstore. His house is worth \$90,000, but with the proposed "business", he thinks his property would be worth \$250,000. The town of China would either have to let him do it, or pay him \$160,000 to prevent him from using his property in this way.

The people of China know first hand what can happen without any land-use rules. After seeing our lake water go from clear to pea-green, the people of China realized that something had to be done and we did it. We democratically enacted wise land use ordinances. We fixed eroding banks and roads. And we are now seeing what many thought impossible: an actual turnaround in water quality. So, to us, land-use regulation isn't some abstract law that "the government" is forcing upon us. In many cases, they are rules passed by ourselves for the benefit of - guess who? - us. Sure, no one enjoys being told what to do with his land and dealing with the "red tape", but we understand what it's all for in the end: a cleaner lake, better fishing and recreation, a better environment, higher property values, and a healthy, sustainable local economy for us and our children.

The rules that would be over-turned by the "Takings Bill" would threaten the recent improvement in water quality here in China. Members of the Lake Association and any concerned citizen may wish to contact their legislators (Senator Beverly Bustin and Representative Gail Chase in China) to let them know how you feel about the "Takings Bill", LD 1217.

Grant Approved for China Region Lakes Alliance

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has approved a grant of \$81,000 for the China Region Lakes Alliance to fund a full-time position for two years. The new staff person will be in charge of a second Conservation Corp whose focus will be the watersheds of Three Mile Pond and Webber Pond. The Conservation Corps in China has done so much good work on China Lake; we are very excited to be able to expand the idea to the other lakes in the Alliance!

Senate District #15
Senator Beverly Bustin
Maine State Senate
State House Station 3
Augusta, Me 04330
1-800-423-6900
(home 622-3009)

House District #106
Representative Gail Chase
House of Representatives
State House Station 2
Augusta, ME 04330
1-800-423-2900
(home 923-3787)

It's time to renew your membership!

MEMBERSHIP FORM
China Lake Association

Please renew my annual membership.

Name(s) _____

___ Annual Family Membership: \$20

Address: _____

If you are able to give more:

City, ST, Zip: _____

___ Friend: \$30

Phone: _____ Date: _____

___ Patron: \$50

___ Sponsor: \$100

___ Benefactor: \$500 or more \$ _____

Please make check payable to **China Lake Association** and mail to P.O. Box 215, China, ME 04926.
Thank you very much for your tax deductible contribution!

Please pass the extra form on to a neighbor.

MEMBERSHIP FORM
China Lake Association

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Name(s) _____

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Address: _____

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