



Newsletter

Volume 38 • Issue 1 • Summer 2025



In June, 51 landowners planted Buffer Bundles (591 plants!) throughout the watershed!

President's Report

Dear CLA members and supporters: As I wrap up four rewarding years as president and pass the gavel to Eric Lind, I'm pleased to report that China Lake Association heads into 2025-26 with fresh momentum. We are:

- **In year 4 of our 10-year Watershed-Based Management Plan** to cut phosphorus runoff and render phosphorus in lake bottom sediments inert through a future alum treatment while monitoring water-quality trends.
- **Leveraging the Section 319 Clean Water Act grant** Partnerships with the Town of China and The Cottages on China Lake fixed a major shoreline runoff issue. At time of print, additional runoff issues were being resolved at Four Seasons Club.

- **Strengthening shoreline buffers.**

30 watershed property owners attended a buffer workshop in August, and more than 50 took home free native plants in June as part of our inaugural Buffer Bundle campaign, thereby improving the lake's natural phosphorus filter.

- **Partnering with Maine DOT**

to repair problematic culverts on roadways near the lake.

- **Working with the China Regional Lakes Alliance**

to expand Courtesy Boat Inspections and block invasive aquatic species.

Your support powers every one of these efforts, with new projects already in the pipeline.

Please join us at our annual meeting—Saturday, July 26, 2025, 8:30–11 a.m., at China Primary School, 763 Lakeview Drive. I look forward to seeing you and advancing our shared mission to protect China Lake.

With appreciation,

Stephen Greene, President
China Lake Association
May 2025



Before/after shoreline restoration at The Cottages, Lakeview Dr. October 2024

Enthusiastic Response to Buffer Bundle Campaign

If you offer it, they will plant it...

by Gerry Boyle, CLA Director

That was the belief that organizers of the China Lake Buffer Campaign had in mind when they came up with a plan to give bundles of native plants to shoreline property owners.

Six months in the making, the project was coming to completion in mid-June as the phosphorous-filtering plants were distributed to property owners for immediate planting. The campaign is the brainchild of Jen Jespersen, owner of Ecological Instincts, an environmental consulting firm that has worked extensively with the China Lake Association and other lake conservancy groups.

It was a resounding success, with



Buffer Bundle setup day at KWD's Treatment Plant in Vassalboro on June 9, 2025. In attendance: CLA Board Members (front row left to right) Gerry Boyle, Bill Powell, Stephen Greene, Eric Lind and Mike Hendrikse and landowners (back row: Bob and Susan Eagan)

more than 50 China Lake property owners quickly responding to the offer. "I'm amazed and pleased to see the response," said Jen Syer, a CLA director who was one of the planners of the campaign.

Syer called the campaign "a frictionless experience for landowners to help the lake."

And help China Lake they will.

Native trees, shrubs, perennials, and ground-cover plants were carefully selected by Jespersen's group for their buffering capability—stabilizing the shoreline, filtering stormwater, and helping protect the shoreline from

wave and ice damage. Valued at \$250, the bundles were offered free to participants. Property owners configured their selections to fit the landscape of their shorelines, with three different buffer bundle options based on site conditions. Syer said a waiting list has been created for those who weren't able to get the bundles this year. Free erosion control mulch was also provided as part of the bundles for interested landowners.

The China Lake Buffer Campaign is funded in part by a Section 319(h) Clean Water Act grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency, administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Other project support is provided by the Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District, China Lake Association, Kennebec Water District, and Kennebec Savings Bank, with technical support from Ecological Instincts.



CLA VP Eric Lind planted his Buffer Bundle in and amongst some established plants for extra shortline protection.



CLA Director Gerry Boyle planted his Buffer Bundle in bare-soil spots, which will really help reduce stormwater run-off!

Nest Platform Attracts More Than Loons

by Gerry Boyle, CLA Director

It looked like this could have been the year for hatching of a loon chick on the nesting raft built, maintained, and monitored by China Lake Association Director Bill Powell.

Powell, who saw his first loon rafts during childhood summers at his family's camp on a lake in New Hampshire, was excited in early May when loon-cam footage revealed an adult loon settling in on the moss and natural strawberry plants spread on the deck of the China Lake raft. A video of the would-be parent was a hit on the CLA Facebook page.

And then, for the third year in a row, things went sideways.

In past years, a loon pair has nested on the raft but failed to lay eggs. Another year, a loon pair nested and produced eggs—on shore 50 feet from the raft. Another year muskrats tore the raft nesting site to pieces.

This year it was a beaver that climbed aboard the raft and proceeded to eat all of the greenery, including the canopy of cedar boughs.

The loon video star was replaced by “birds, a beaver, and a muskrat,” Powell said.

Undiscouraged, he points to the numbers: of the 83 rafts deployed in the state last year, 17 were nested on. Those nesting loons produced 20 chicks.

The risk to the young loons doesn't end there. Bald eagles are notorious for snatching chicks from the water, and a significant number die from being struck by boats.

Powell, who runs the Maine Audubon Loon Count on China Lake (Maine Audubon also provides funding and expertise for China Lake's raft effort), is determined to keep improving the loon nest platform in hopes that next year a loon chick will be the social media star.

“The raft is a perfect spot for a loon to nest,” he said. “We'll continue to launch the raft in hopes of increasing our beloved loon population.”



Adult loon on raft on May 2, 2025. CLA has placed a raft (and hoped for a loon family) in Wentworth Cove since 2022!



China Lake Water Quality Monitoring & Watershed Update

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

KWD completed 17 sampling events (approximately every two weeks) between April and November 2024. Water Quality Technicians monitored a suite of water quality parameters within each basin of China Lake to provide insights into the conditions both at and below the surface of the water.

The parameters monitored included Secchi Disk transparency, water temperature and dissolved oxygen gradients, total phosphorus at multiple points in the water column, chlorophyll-A at the lake's surface, and zooplankton enumeration within the water column.

All the data collected throughout 2024 has been reported to Lake Stewards of Maine and the DEP for validation. A review of the data shows the slightly improving trends observed over the past decade within China Lake continue to hold true.

These primary trends, seen in the graphs provided, are an increase in the minimum, average, and maximum Secchi Disk transparency, continued periods of anoxia (absence of dissolved oxygen) at the deepest parts of the lake, and high levels of internal phosphorus recycling.

Throughout 2024, KWD managed and supported several projects, guided by the 2023 Water Stewardship Plan, to protect the water quality of China Lake. These activities included managing KWD owned forests around the West Basin of China Lake to maintain a healthy buffer to reduce the risk of pollutants entering the lake, increasing focus on education of people recreating on China Lake by improving signage and availability of educational materials at key locations around the lake, and

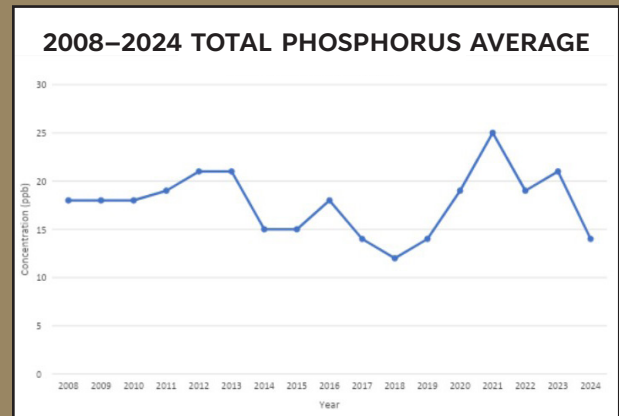
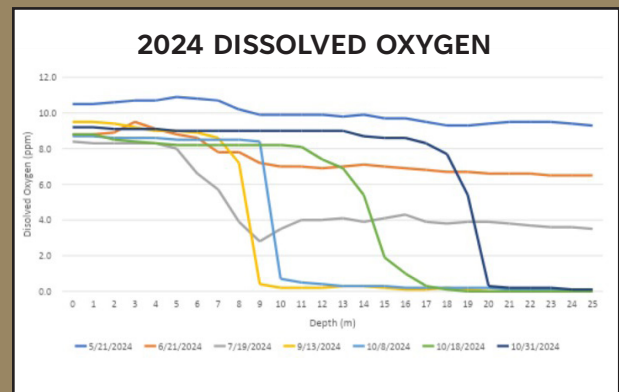
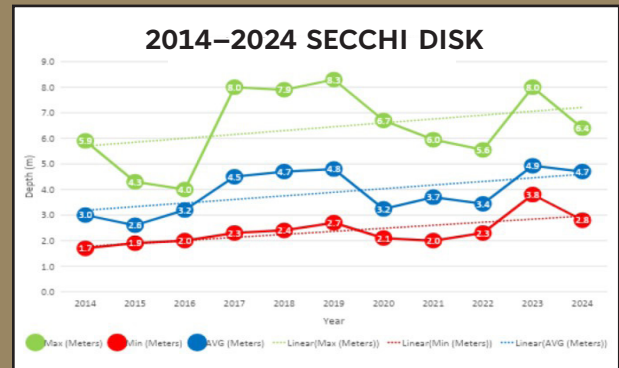


FIND DAILY CHINA LAKE WATER LEVEL DATA AT:
www.KennebecWater.org/water-quality/lake-level-info

fully funding the China Lake Association Erosion Reduction Campaign utilizing a Maine Drinking Water Program Grant.

KWD remains steadfast in its commitment to protecting China Lake and continues to find new ways of working to preserve water quality.

WATER QUALITY CHARTS OF CHINA LAKE'S WEST BASIN





JOIN US FOR AN INVASIVE PLANT PADDLE!

FRI., AUG. 1, 10 AM - 1 PM • CAUSEWAY
DR. BOAT LAUNCH • BYO KAYAK/CANOE
REGISTER FREE AT tinyurl.com/ycy938y2

NOT Your Average Catch of the Day!

Lake fiction, by CLA Director Jen Syer

My grandfather has been fishing our local lakes for over 50 years. These days, he spends more time showing his great-grandkids how to cast than worrying about what's on the end of the line. But last weekend, while he was trailering his boat out of a nearby lake (not China Lake), a Courtesy Boat Inspector flagged him down.

They pointed out a strange, stringy plant stuck on his propeller—something he'd never seen before. The Inspector said, "Something about this looks a little suspicious—just a small piece of an invasive plant can cause big problems for a lake. It's best to let the Maine DEP know, just to be safe. And always remember to clean, drain, and dry your boat and trailer before heading to a new lake. It really makes a difference!"

So Grampa clipped off a piece, brought it home, and followed the steps from Maine DEP. He floated it in a white tray, took a clear photo, and emailed it to milfoil@maine.gov with the date, his contact info, and name of the lake where the sample was taken. He kept it cool in the fridge. A couple days later, DEP got back to him and asked him to mail it in—so he did!

Turns out it was Eurasian milfoil! DEP thanked him, and he felt good knowing he helped prevent this incredibly invasive aquatic species from entering our favorite lake—China Lake, of course!



Eurasian milfoil by Kennebec Journal, 2019. Used under fair use for educational purposes.

The next morning at breakfast, I told my kids the story. "G-pa saved China Lake!" one of them shouted. We all laughed, but we got the message—*A clean boat's the best catch of the day!*

Mailing a Plant Sample

- Place moist sample in a sealable plastic bag.
- Write a note with your name, phone, email, date, and "Collected from [lake name]."
- Mail sample and letter in envelope addressed to: Maine DEP Invasive Species Program, 17 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333.

Hooray For Courtesy Boat Inspectors!

- CBIs monitor FIVE launches every Fri.–Sun. from June–Sept. on China Lake, Threemile Pond, and Webber Pond and act as a front line against invasives; thank them when you see them!

Jeremy Deeds: the Importance of Maine's 'Citizen Scientists'

by Gerry Boyle, CLA Director

Growing up in Windsor, Jeremy Deeds and his dad, John Deeds, fished China Lake, Three-Mile and Webber Ponds.

Now the younger Deeds, an aquatic ecologist with the State Department of Environmental Protection, is working to protect the water bodies that he enjoyed long before he became a scientist.

Deeds is the keynote speaker for the annual meeting of the China Lake Association, July 26 at China Primary School. His message: citizen scientists have and will be important to the study and stewardship of Maine's lakes.

After attending the University of Maine at Farmington, Deeds earned his master's degree from Kent State University in Ohio, and his Ph.D. from the University of Maine at Orono. He's worked as an environmental scientist in Pennsylvania and

Vermont, and sees that Maine has a distinct advantage over other states.

"One of the great things about coming into this job (at Maine DEP) is there's a fifty-five year history of lake monitoring, done mostly by volunteers," Deeds said. "People are interested in the lakes and they're interested in how they work, and what affects them."

His presentation for CLA will center on an interactive lake-quality report card that he designed so that volunteers can assess a lake's water-and habitat-quality, and how it may be at risk. "We take the (citizen-generated) data across the state, and we can identify patterns and look at trends" Deeds said.

"We can get a better understanding of which lakes react a certain way to different factors in their water environment."



A "day at the office" for Jeremy Deeds!

Membership Matters!

Visit www.chinalakeassociation.org/membership to join or renew by credit/debit card or mail this form with your check.* If you've already joined or renewed, *thank you!*

Contact Information

Name: _____

Permanent Address: _____

City State ZIP: _____

China Lake Address: _____

City State ZIP: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Email address: _____

Make checks payable to China Lake Association, P.O. Box 6215, China Village, ME, 04926. 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. INTERNAL CODE: SN25

Membership Level

☐ \$10,000 — Eagle

☐ \$1,000 — Heron

☐ \$100 — Trout

☐ \$5,000 — Falcon

☐ \$500 — Osprey

☐ \$50 — Bass

☐ \$2,000 — Hawk

☐ \$250 — Loon

☐ \$25 — Alewife

Other amount: \$ _____



2025 Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 26, 8:30 – 11 a.m.
China Primary School
763 Lakeview Dr., South China, 04358

Agenda

8:30 – 9 a.m. . . . Registration & Networking Breakfast

9 a.m. Welcome & Opening Remarks
Stephen Greene, CLA President

9:15 –
10:45 a.m. Presentations

Lake Quality Report Card: Jeremy Deeds, Ph.D.,
Aquatic Ecologist, Lake Assessment Section,
Maine DEP

MaineDOT and the NonPoint Source Program:
Cindy L. Dionne, Stormwater Manager,
Environmental Office, Maine DOT

Water Quality Report: Robbie Bickford,
Water Quality Manager, KWD; CLA Director

Annual Loon Count & Loon Restoration Project:
Bill Powell, CLA Director

10:45 a.m. Election of Officers & Directors
and Treasurer's Report
Stephen Greene, CLA President
**Elect following as Directors with terms
expiring in:**

- **2026:** Jen Chase, Mike Hendrikse,
William Powell, Jen Syer
- **2027:** Gerry Boyle, Bob Hargadon,
Eric Lind, Stephen Greene
- **2028:** Robbie Bickford, Steve Jones,
David Preston

**Elect following as Officers until the
July 2026 annual meeting of the members:**

Eric Lind, President & Registered Agent
Jen Chase, Vice President
Stephen Greene, Secretary
Steve Jones, Treasurer

11 a.m. Closing Remarks & Adjournment

2025 – 2026 CLA Board of Directors

President
Eric Lind

Vice President
Jen Chase

Secretary
Stephen Greene

Treasurer
Steve Jones*

Registered Agent
Eric Lind

Directors
Robbie Bickford
Gerry Boyle
Bob Hargadon
Mike Hendrikse
William Powell
David Preston
Jen Syer

** appointed in 2025*

SHOP THE CLA STORE!
Scan, visit tinyurl.com/CLASTore or come to the
Annual Meeting. Pieces
feature Ellen Nelson's
original Alewives print,
as well as our popular
Life's Better at China
Lake design and CLA logo!





Renewal Is Open — Join Us for Another Great Year!
Scan or visit www.chinalakeassociation.org/membership today

info@chinalakeassociation.org • facebook.com/chinalakeassociation • Instagram: @chinalakeassociation

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

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