

China's Pride
Keep it Alive



CHINA LAKE ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Volume 24, Issue 1

Summer 2011

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Lake Day 2011

Who in their right mind would want to take 60 fifth graders out in boats on China Lake for an entire day? Three very dedicated fifth grade teachers here at the China Middle School. Susan Maroon, Bobbi Dusoe, and Diane Lewis, have been doing just that for the past 12 years as part of their environmental education program. *China Lake Day* began in 1999 when then fifth grade teacher Anita Smith thought a lake-based educational day would be beneficial for her students. Anita has been very involved in environmental education and helped China become one of the first towns in the state to incorporate actual lake trips into the curriculum. Fortunately, when Mrs. Smith moved to fourth grade, the program found a dedicated advocate in fifth grade teacher Susan Maroon.

Mrs. Maroon feels that the annual *China Lake Day* is very important, because it teaches the students about a very valuable part of the town of China and introduces the concept of environmental stewardship. "The students see the lake everyday but don't understand that lake-water quality is fragile and must be actively

(continued on p. 2)

Annual Meeting

Thursday, July 21

7:00 p.m.

China Primary School

- Septic System Ordinance
- Water Quality Update
- CRLA accomplishments
- Invasives
- LakeSmart
- Website

*Refreshments *



Phil Mulville of Maine Lakes Conservancy Institute on the "Melinda Ann" with students

(continued from p. 1)

protected. Through *China Lake Day*, we introduce these concepts to the students."

China Lake Day, held the second week of June each year, has become a much anticipated event among the three fifth grade classes at China Middle School. Environmental topics such as buffer strip protection, the water cycle, plant and invertebrate animal life in the lake, and water quality measurement are all discussed in the classroom before lake day. Once out on the lake, the students have an actual floating classroom to help their learning. The Maine Lakes Conservancy Institute provides the the *Melinda Ann* for the purpose. This 28 foot pontoon boat is equipped with a wide array of scientific instruments that allow the students a hands-on opportunity to measure water quality, check oxygen levels in the deep parts of the lake, scan the bottom with a submersible camera, and view through a microscope the many small invertebrate creatures that inhabit the lake. Additional boats are provided by the Kennebec Water District and the China Lake Association. Taking over 60 active fifth graders out on the lake is no small task. Students participate actively by rotating through various work stations on each of the boats.

As part of the lake experience, all of the students tour the Kennebec Water District Filtration Plant in East Vassalboro. There the students learn how China Lake water is treated and then pumped to Waterville for drinking water. The students also begin to understand how many people depend on the water in China Lake and why water quality protection is important.

While taking over 600 students out on the lake over the years has its challenges, Mrs. Maroon is happy to report that no student has ever fallen overboard. She did relate that one year a boat ran out of gas about a half mile from the Head of the Lake and the waiting buses. In that pre cell phone era, it took a while for the people on shore to figure out what was going on and send out a tow boat.

A number of the students that received their introduction to lake ecology through *China Lake Day* have gone on to do lake based environmental work with the China Region Lakes Alliance and even study environmental sciences in colleges.

President's Report

How many of us have commented on what a long winter and what a wet spring we have had? That's Maine. The "ice-out" date recorded by the folks at the *Town Line* was April 17th, nearly a month later than in 2010. While it may seem like a late date, it is merely average with the ice leaving later forty times out of the recorded 139 past years. The latest ice out date recorded was May 6th in 1875. I wonder if the locals complained about the long winter that year?

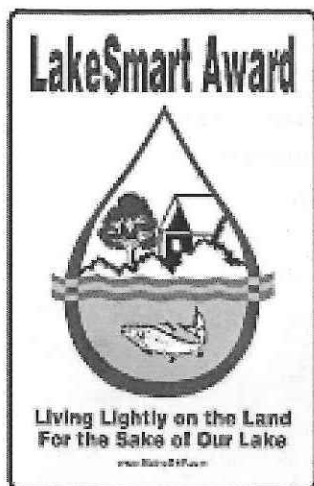
There are many people that help make the China area special, and three teachers at the China Middle School are among that group. Susan Maroon, Diane Lewis, and Bobbi Dusoe have been taking 5th graders out on China Lake for the past 12 years as part of a lake-based educational day. Learning how to become good stewards of our lake is vital if we are to preserve this very special part of Maine. Thanks Sue, Diane and Bobbi!

For me one of the rites of spring is getting the Courtesy Boat Inspection Program (CBI) off the ground. The work begins in March with grant submissions, then hiring students for the program, training day, and finally getting the inspectors out on the boat launches. This program is well worth the expense and is an important tool in keeping invasive plants out of China Lake. I have had a lot of help getting the program organized this year by 2011 Erskine grad Travis Pitre, who is featured in this newsletter. When you are out and about stop and thank the kids in the bright green CRLA shirts inspecting boats at our boat landings. They are doing an important job.

We have been talking about getting a functional website up and running for the CLA, and we are on the verge of making that happen. CLA Director Ed Bourdeau and Erskine Academy media instructor Carol Nixon have been working on this project and hope to unveil the site at the summer annual meeting.

As always it is your generous donations that allow the China Lake Association to continue its important work. Thank you, and I hope to see many of you at our annual meeting.

Dave Landry, President



LakeSmart Award Program

LakeSmart is a program developed by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to reward and recognize lakefront property owners who manage their properties in lake-friendly ways. LakeSmart's goal is to preserve water quality and protect property values by keeping polluted storm water from getting into Maine lakes.

The standards used to evaluate properties were developed by experts in the field of watershed and lake management. Four areas are evaluated on each property:

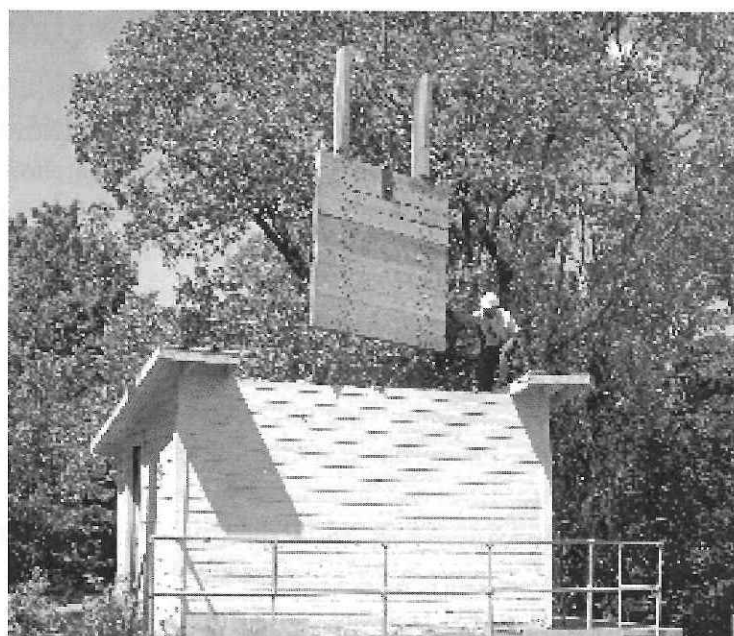
- 1) driveways and parking areas
- 2) buildings and septic system
- 3) recreation areas and foot paths
- 4) shorefront and beach areas

Through the hard work of the China Lake Association *LakeSmart* Team headed by Marie Michaud, dozens of properties have been evaluated in the last two years with 18 properties being given the award. Have you seen one of the *LakeSmart* signs on the shorefront? If so, that signifies that the property owner has taken care to preserve or plant landscaping that will protect water quality and preserve habitat. **We need your help in identifying more potential LakeSmart properties around China Lake.** If you, your neighbor, or friend has a property where the shorefront buffer has been preserved, please call to have your property evaluated for this important lake award. Additionally, if you wish to improve the quality of your property's buffer strip, call for this free evaluation and possibly qualify for free or discounted plants, trees and shrubs. The Youth Conservation Corps is able to do the planting for you as part of the China Lake Association's effort to improve buffer strips around the lake.

For more information please contact: Marie Michaud, 207-242-0240, marieswp@me.acadia.net; Nancy Woodbrey, 207-872-2614, nwoodbrey@fc.wtvl.k12.me.us; or Peter Caldwell, 207-968-2607, pcaldwell@roadrunner.com. Information is available at the D.E.P., www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/doclake/lakesmart.htm.

New Informational Kiosk

The head of China Lake will soon have a new informational kiosk, courtesy of the China Lake Association. Travis Pitre, an Erskine Academy senior and Eagle Scout candidate has undertaken the new kiosk as his Eagle Scout project under the supervision of Tim Axelson of the CLA board of directors. The CLA kiosk will feature permanent installations such as a map of China Lake and information about invasive species that would be harmful to the lake, as well as seasonal community information. Designed by Rick Hayden of the CRLA, it will be more centrally located closer to the boat ramp and will include a bench that will provide shade and a place to sit for members of the Courtesy Boat Inspection team. The installation should be completed during the middle part of the summer.



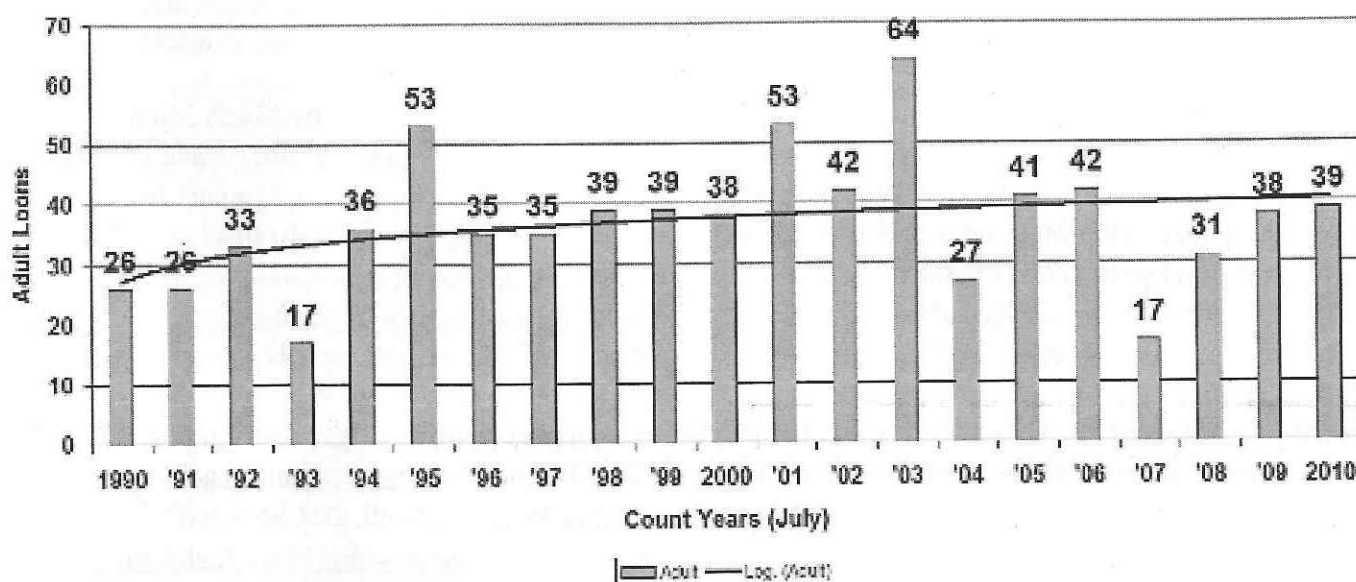
*Jeff Longfellow of KWD guides new dam gate into place
(see article p. 4)*

Loon Count 2011 - Saturday, July 16th



The graph below shows an increasing trend in the loon population in China Lake over the past twenty-one years. The annual loon count on China Lake is part of a state wide count coordinated by the Maine Audubon Society that occurs each summer on the same date and time all across the state. Volunteers are divided into eight groups. Each boat crew has about 30 minutes, beginning from 7:00 am, to survey and count the loons in the assigned section of the lake. This years count will take place on Saturday July 16th. If you would like to help, please call Bob O'Connor, who organized the count, at 445-4140.

China Lake Loon Count

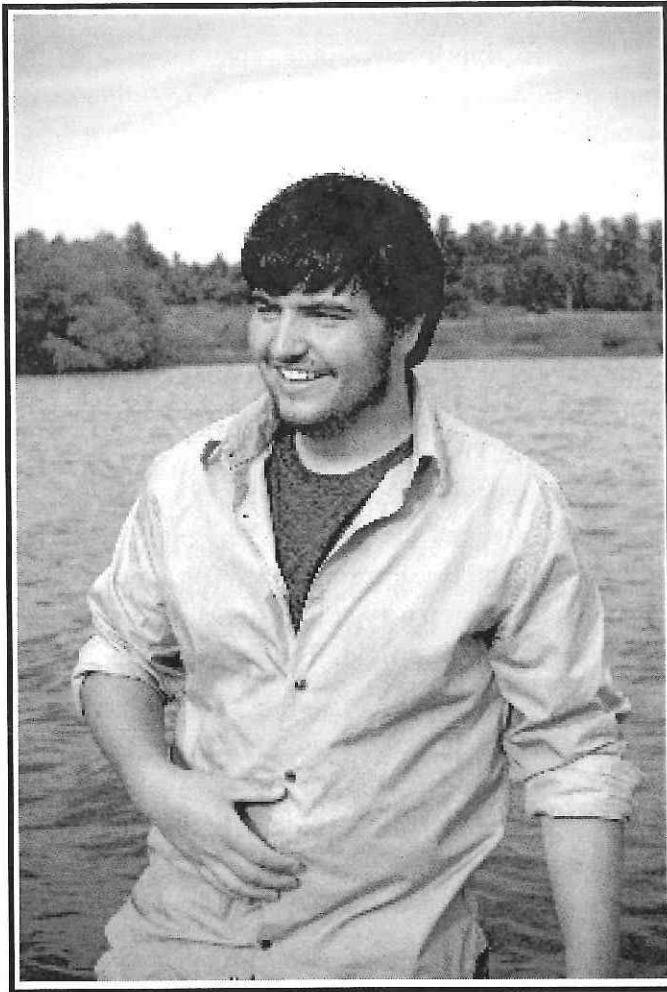


China Lake Dam Gets New Gates

The dam on China Lake was constructed in the 1800's and has undergone numerous revisions and rebuilds. The cement structure consists of a gatehouse along with a twelve foot wide spillway, which serves as an overflow in periods of wet weather and higher water. The gatehouse contains two retractable wooden gates that can be raised or lowered to manipulate water levels. The wooden gates rot over time and need to be replaced. This spring the construction engineer at the Kennebec Water District, Mr. Jefferson Longfellow III, oversaw the rebuilding and replacement of these two gates. The project involved removing the roof from the gatehouse and lowering the newly built gates into place using a large crane. This was no small operation and once again demonstrates the tremendous assistance that the Kennebec Water District routinely provides to lake residents and the town of Vassalboro, which owns the China Lake dam. The new gates should be in good working shape for the next ten to twenty years. Your lake association dues help to provide the town of Vassalboro with a small annual stipend for dam upkeep as well.

The water level of China Lake is controlled by the dam and is measured in relation to the spillway (i.e. height of the water above or below the spillway). The target for the summertime water level is zero to six inches above spillway. Maintaining a precise water level is often times difficult, especially during the summer when the weather is hot and dry, because, surprisingly, the China Lake watershed and drainage area is not very large in comparison to the size of China Lake itself. Stop by and visit the dam for yourself some time! It is located in East Vassalboro behind the old red school that houses the Vassalboro Historic Society on Route 32.

Travis Pitre - Youth Leader



While the China Lake Association (CLA) and the China Region Lakes Alliance (CRLA) have benefitted from a number of outstanding youth leaders over the years, one quiet, highly motivated young man is making his mark on these two organizations. Travis Pitre, a 2011 Erskine graduate, will be serving as the Director of both the Courtesy Boat Inspection Program (CBI) and the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) for the China Region Lakes Alliance 2011 season. This young man, who graduated from Erskine Academy just weeks ago, has the organizational skills and work ethic of a person many years older. Travis began working for the CRLA with the Youth Conservation Corps as a high school freshman. While the demanding physical work might leave most high school students looking forward to weekends off to rest and recover, Travis used his weekends to volunteer on the Courtesy Boat Inspection Program.

In 2010, the Board of Director of the CRLA looked to Travis to organize and run the expanding boat inspection program. Under Travis's supervision the CBI program expanded from three to seven days per week and saw a significant rise in the number of boat inspections. Despite the increased inspection schedule, larger number of student workers, and increased paperwork demands, the season went off without a hitch thanks to Travis.

In the spring of 2011 as the Board of the CRLA was looking for student leaders for both the YCC and CBI programs, Travis proposed that with his experience he might be able to coordinate both of the programs. Board oversight is provided for both of the programs, but the daily scheduling and staffing is all Travis! The only stipulation the CRLA Board placed on Travis was the need for him to spend at least a little time away from lake-based work over the course of the summer.

Travis is currently working on becoming an Eagle Scout and has chosen a lake based project for his Eagle Scout Project. Travis is working on replacing the aging informational kiosk at the head of China Lake, a project funded by the China Lake Association and supervised by CLA Director Tim Axelson.

Travis's interest in environmental-based work has led him to admission to Unity College this fall and planned study in ecology and wildlife biology. Travis is undecided on his final career path, but environmental and medical careers both interest him.

We are very fortunate to have this talented and energetic young man working in our community. Thanks Travis!

China Shoreland Septic System Compliance Program

The Town of China is in the second year of implementing its *Shoreland Septic System Compliance Program* which was approved by voters in February 2009 and became effective July 1, 2009. The purpose of the program is to protect water quality from improperly functioning septic systems near the lake. According to the program, all subsurface wastewater disposal (septic) systems within the Town's Shoreland Districts that were installed before January 1, 1998 must be either inspected or replaced by December 31, 2014. Inspections must be done by a State Certified Inspector, who must verify that the septic system meets Maine's Subsurface Waste Water Disposal standards (Rules 10-144 CMR 241). Should you decide to have your pre-1998 septic system inspected, a copy of your inspection report will need to be provided to the Town's Local Plumbing Inspector (LPI) for evaluation. If the findings show that your existing septic system (and its components) are not in compliance with the Program's requirements, then that system must be replaced with a new one designed by a licensed site evaluator and permitted, installed, inspected, and approved by the Town's LPI as soon as possible.

The Town has already sent letters to all shorefront property owners whose systems need either replacement or inspection. Early failure of a septic system can be caused by many factors including pipes blocked by roots or crushed distribution pipes, soils saturated by high water tables, improper location, poor design and installation, and/or improper maintenance of your septic system. When a system is poorly maintained solids build up in the septic tank and these solids may flow into and clog your septic field. Below are some suggestions for protecting your septic system.

Tips for Maintaining a Healthy Septic System

- avoid driving heavy vehicles on or around the septic field
- avoid planting trees or shrubs on or around the septic field
- avoid pouring chemicals (including common cleaners, bleach, drain cleaners, septic tank cleaning products), paint, oil or grease down the drain
- avoid doing all your washing on the same day (shower, laundry, dishes, etc.)
- conserve water whenever possible
- have the septic tank pumped periodically (e.g. every 2 to 5 years)
- add friendly bacteria annually

Remember that what goes down the drain ends up in your septic tank, the ground, and may possibly make its way into our water resources, including our lakes, tributaries that flow to larger water bodies, and your well water.

A presentation on the program will be featured at the China Lake Association Annual Meeting on July 13 at the China Primary School at 7:00 p.m. For more information, please go to www.china.govoffice.com or email Scott Pierz at scott@chinamaine.org or call 445-3540.

Scott A. Pierz
Codes Enforcement Officer

China Region Lakes Alliance Report

by Jim Hart

The China Region Lakes Alliance (CRLA) was formed in 1995 by the Lake Associations of China Lake, Three Mile Pond, and Webber Pond, along with the Towns of Vassalboro, Windsor, and China, and the Kennebec Water District to collaborate on protecting and improving water quality in its member lakes. The type of work CRLA conducts falls into 4 broad categories:

- Landowner consultations and technical assistance to help remediate or improve their property
- Hands on erosion control and landscaping work at private landowner and public project sites
- Design and project management work on major erosion control and water quality projects
- Patrolling boat launches to inspect for invasive plants on trailers and boating equipment

The China Lake Association is a vital member of the CRLA. Input from the China Lake Association helps to find and coordinate projects done on China Lake, and dues paid by the China Lake Association help to fund those projects.

The CRLA work includes Youth Conservation Corps erosion control and camp road projects, the Courtesy Boat Inspection Program, and free landowner assistance in assessing and treating erosion problems in the watershed. The CRLA coordinates with outside agencies such as the Department of Environment Protection and the Kennebec Soil and Water Conservation District to develop strategies, administer work plans, and prioritize water quality protection programs.

The CRLA is able to handle major erosion control projects through its partnership building practices. In 2010 the CRLA completed Phase II of its Non-Point Source pollution reduction grants from the Maine DEP c/o EPA. Under Phase II, the CRLA helped landowners adopt best management practices on fourteen large priority sites that resulted in a reduction of 284 pounds of phosphorus from entering the lake. The total project expenditures during the two year grant amounted to \$231,055, which consisted of \$102,590 from the grant, \$56,496 from the landowners, and the balance from CRLA and other volunteers supplying their assistance and support as in-kind match. Phase II was another example of the CRLA working together with the community and the Maine DEP to pool local funding in order to accomplish significant projects that help to protect our lake.

Last year, the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) completed twenty-three small and medium size remediation and erosion control projects around China Lake. These projects included:

2010 CRLA Projects

Installation of box culverts to divert storm water runoff into the woods to preserve camp road surfaces
Dredging below culvert out falls to lay erosion control fabric and cover it with rip-rap rocks
Planting shrubs along the shoreline to help duck and loon nesting habitat and prevent erosion
Building of infiltration steps on steep banks to improve lake access and minimize erosion of the pathway.

If you would be interested in a free consultation to review and possibly upgrade the conservation practices on your property, then kindly contact Jim Hart, CRLA President, at 923-3358 to schedule a visit.

If you see our local students working on conservation projects this summer, please say hello and thank them. They are working hard as stewards for our environment!

The China Lake Association is indebted to Jim Hart for his tireless volunteer work as President of the CRLA! His efforts benefit all of us on China Lake and beyond.

Courtesy Boat Inspection Program

A new summer ritual is the organization and training of boat inspectors. To date, 19 student inspectors have been hired for the program. The goal of this important and costly program is to keep invasive plants out of China Lake. On China Lake last summer, 854 boats were inspected; 70 plant fragments were noted on boats, but none were determined to be invasive plants. Additionally several areas in the lake with suspicious looking weed growth were examined and sampled. These plants were found not to be invasive.

Early detection can be critical in short-circuiting a serious infestation. Many lake associations are starting to organize teams to survey their lakes to determine whether or not there are invasive plants already present. Unfortunately, this is beyond the time constraints of the current group of volunteers and directors of the CLA. New volunteers are always appreciated.

The cost of the Courtesy Boat Inspection Program on China's two boat launches last year was about \$9000. Only \$1000 was paid for by grant money. The rest was covered by lake association membership dues and funding from the CRLA. Your contributions are vital to the program and we appreciate every dollar!

If you would like to learn more about the boat inspection program, contact CLA President Dave Landry at david.landry@yahoo.com.

Did you know that, in Maine during 2010, ...

72,428 total inspections on motorized or non-motorized boats took place?

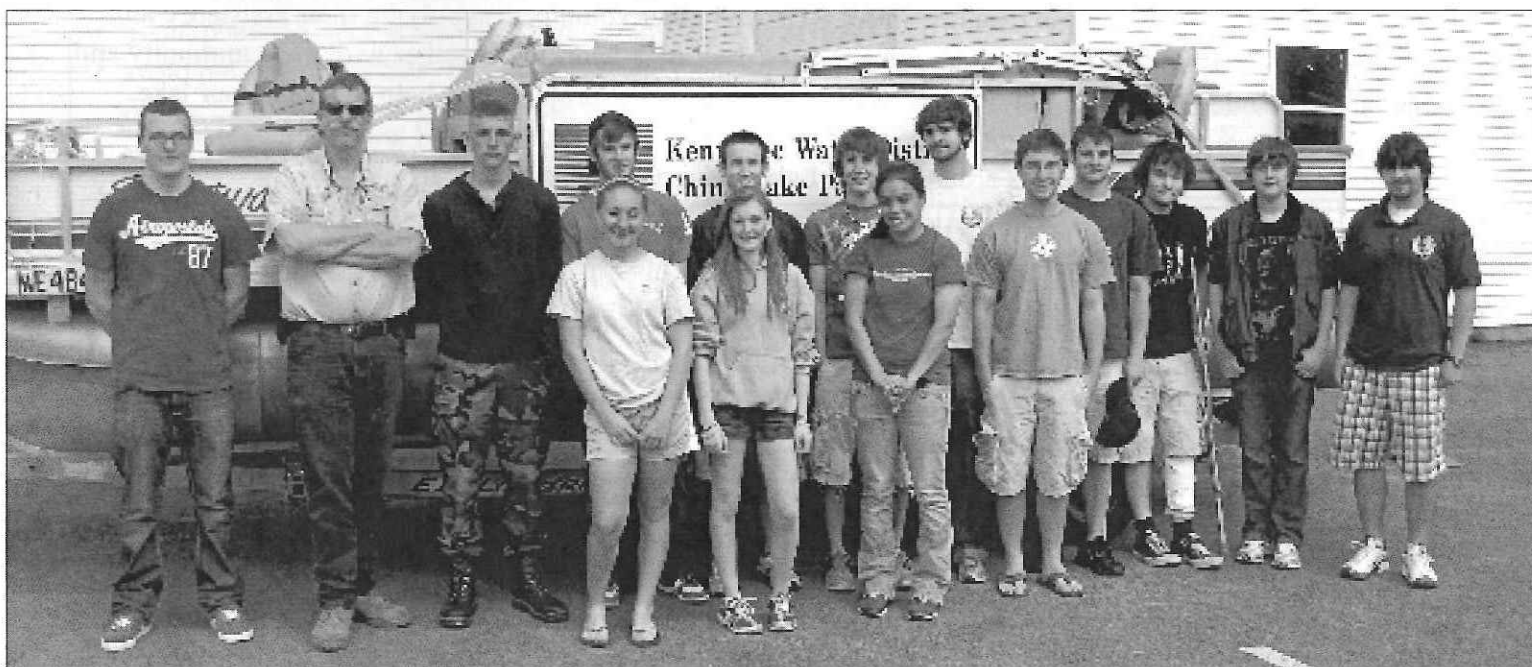
154 launch sites on 119 waterbodies had Courtesy Boat Inspections?

2,334 inspections yielded plant fragments, 281 of which were invasive plants?

49 organizations conducted courtesy boat inspections?

661 courtesy boat inspectors (paid and volunteer) worked a total of 37,165 hours?

statistics taken from Maine Bureau of Land & Water Quality website: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/topic/invasives/inspect.htm>



Front left to right: Allyson Allen, Brittany White, Baylee Doughty, Evertt Fowle

Back left to right: Jacob Farrington, Doug Clark from KWD, Addison Cox, Charlie Abbot, Zach Carey, Brandon Gagne, Kelcy Thompson, Damian Belanger, Mitch Gosselin, Jon Boynton, Travis Pitre

Thank You!

We would like to thank you, our members, for your 2010 membership dues. We had an especially high response rate last spring. Your contributions go a long way in helping us fulfill our mission of improving the water quality in our lakes and streams. The following members gave at the "Loon" level or greater. Thank you!

Mr. Raymond Ward, Bruce and Kathy Daniels, Raymond and Patricia Ward, James and Donna Boccuzzi, Brian Ayer, Ned and Loel Kline, Elizabeth Davidson, Avery Cottage Trust, Rayner and Joanne Kelsey, Gerald and Claudia Wagner, Donna Jacobsen, David and Janet Preston, Marie and Tom Michaud, Bradford Conant, Edward and Cynthia Rolfe, Richard and Mary Alice Giguere, Barbara and Laurence Dobson, H. L. Hopkinson, Richard H. Jenny, Wistar and Connie Comfort, Michael Klein and Louisa Barnhart, David and Cathy Wood, Harold and Sue Charles, Deborah and Joseph Karter, Daniel and Deborah Hobart, Jim and Jenny Clair, Randy Hix and Alan Vachereau, Johanna Lindsey, Douglas and Marcia Caron, WR Jones, James Pitney and Virginia Davis, Dave Landry and Diane Brandt, Mary and John Benziger

**Special Thanks to Lakeview Lumber and Ray Haskell Ford
for their generous contributions at the Eagle level!**

We would like to express our appreciation to Bruce Daniels for 10 years of service on the China Lake Association Board of Directors and for his leadership as Treasurer. Thank you, Bruce!

China Lake Association Annul Meeting

Thursday, July 21

7:00 p.m.

China Primary School

"What Shorefront Owners Need to Know About the New Septic System Ordinance"

CLA's New Website!

With updates on...

- Water Quality
- CRLA Accomplishments
- LakeSmart
- Invasive Species

*** Refreshments ***

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