



CHINA LAKE ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Volume 17, Issue 1

Summer 2004

China Lake Association Board of Directors

President

Treasurer
Bruce Daniels

Secretary
David Preston

Jamie Pitney
Martha Hicks
Roland Tilton
Nancy Hoch
Irma Simon
David Landry
Jon Van Bourg
Joann Austin
Bob O'Connor

Directors Report

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We have seen important issues addressed this past year and are aware of large issues on the horizon. The Board of Environmental Protection held water level hearings last Summer and finished its work by deciding to keep the water level in China Lake essentially unchanged. There are still important questions to be answered in regards to water quality and grant money has been applied for to study wetlands in and around the lake. Coming in the next 5 years is the possibility of introducing alewives into the lake which some feel may have a negative impact on water quality. Anyone that has followed property prices knows that shorefront property has increased

significantly in value in recent years. With increased valuations come the specter of increased property taxes.

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China Lake Association Annual Meeting

Wednesday, August 18, 7:00 p.m.

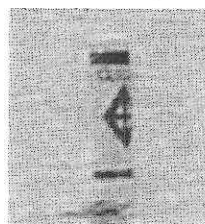
China Middle School Library

Agenda

1. Property Tax issues
2. Alewives in China Lake
3. Election of Directors
4. Election of Officers
5. Other Business
6. Adjourn for Refreshments

Vandals Strike

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Navigational buoy

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Vandals Strike

From front page

and four feet in length. The markers are anchored to the bottom with chain and in winter freeze in the ice with the upper half of the marker above the ice. The markers are occasionally struck and damaged by boaters or in winter by snowmobile and ATV riders. The large numbers of markers that were destroyed and the systematic manner in which the damage occurred points to vandalism rather than accidental damage. Striking the rigid markers with a snowmobile would most likely result in damage to the sled. On the other hand an ATV could mow the markers over with little damage to the vehicle except perhaps for leaving some paint behind.

Tim Thurston of the Department of Conservation reports the cost of replacing the markers was \$2000 not including the manpower involved. Thurston notes that if vandalism continues on China Lake the State may decide to stop maintaining the marker system here. In response to the vandalism the China Lake Association is offering a \$250 reward for information that leads to the arrest of responsible individuals. Anyone with useful information should contact Tim Thurston at 582-5771 or local law enforcement.

PROPERTY TAX ISSUES

It is no surprise to anyone with shorefront property that values have increased significantly in recent years. In some cases, town assessed values do not reflect market sales prices. The State of Maine requires that municipal property values be assessed at no less than 70% of actual value. When assessed values do not closely reflect actual values towns move to reassess property values based on market information.

Recently the Town of Oakland did a revaluation that had a marked impact on shorefront property owners. Shorefront land, exclusive of structures on the property, saw assessed value increase by 55%, non-shorefront residential land and structures remained unchanged, while business property values fell modestly. In discussing the potential for reassessing shorefront property values with China Town manager Daniel L'Heureux, several important points were highlighted. First, it appears that the imbalance

"Shorefront property saw assessed value increase by 55% in Oakland"

between assessed values and sales values are not as severe in China as they were in Oakland. Mr. L'Heureux pointed out that addressing property valuations needs to be done on an ongoing basis as required by the state. It is less costly for the town to address an issue like shorefront property values rather than to wait until a severe imbalance arises and a whole town revaluation. According to Mr.

L'Heureux it is not required that an entire town be reassessed rather a town is able to look at one particular segment such as shorefront property and bring that valuation in line with market price.

If shorefront property was revalued to reflect market price many property owners could be in for an unpleasant surprise at tax time. The lake association will follow this issue of interest. One of the topics at the annual meeting will be a discussion of shorefront property valuations.

Lake Level Hearing

After almost two years of preparation and meetings and numerous pre and post hearings and a very long day of hearings on August 21st 2003. The Board of Environmental Protection, a citizen Board appointed to oversee Environmental issues and the actions of the Department of Environmental Protection for the State of Maine, finally reached a decision. The Board concluded, "that the current water level regime is not adversely affecting existing wetlands or the water quality of China Lake, and that lowering lake levels will not benefit water quality. The Board also concludes that lowering current water levels could harm recreational access and use, may adversely affect fish and wildlife resources and might harm water quality. THEREFORE, the Board AFFIRMS the water level and minimum flow regime as previously established for China Lake by Order... dated November 12, 1997 and modified ... April 20, 2000."

The first petition on China Lake water level was filed in June of 1984, a second petition was filed in 1995 and the this third petition was filed in 1999. The petitioner, Mr. Al Althenn, on behalf of the Friends of China Lake, hired "Bud" Brown of Eco-Analysts to present a case that the water level in China Lake was too high during the Summer months and was damaging the wetlands around China Lake which they reasoned might adversely impact water quality.

Intervenors; Irma Simon and Bob O'Connor agreed that the lake level was too high but disagreed with many of Mr. Browns conclusions and they argued for a compromise.

Intervenors; David Landry, Jamie Pitney and the Kennebec Water District argued that the Lake level did not significantly impact water quality and they maintained that the present water level was prudent. The Town of China took no position but expressed its concern about water quality in China Lake.

Conservation Corps Report

The Conservation Corps is a group of local high school students who work all summer stabilizing sites where soil is eroding. (Remember that soil is the biggest pollutant in our lakes.) The Corps works within the watersheds of all 4 of the CRLA's lakes. Last year they worked on 13 sites in China Lake's watershed (please refer to the seasonal work report, available at the town office). The Corps labor is free to the landowner, who pays only for the material used to fix the site. In 2003, landowners paid \$ 5,064, and the CRLA paid \$ 12,805 for the work done around China Lake.

This year, the Corps is made up of 12 workers and 2 supervisors, usually working as 2 separate groups, but sometimes all together on extra-difficult sites. They started work on June 28, have completed work on 7 sites and are presently (July 6) working on 2 others. So far in the China Lake watershed, they have finished placing rip-rap stone along eroding shorefronts on 2 properties, repairing sink holes behind a retaining wall on 1 property, and



China Lake Conservation Corps, 2004

installing an erosion control mulch berm (or check dam) in a road ditch.

Another rip-rap job is in progress - you have probably heard the sound of stone being dumped in the morning.... This job requires moving rocks by boat to reach some sections of shorefront that can't be reached by land. Much thanks to the Friend's Camp for letting the Corps use their shorefront for launching rock barges, so they didn't have to paddle or tow them from the Head of the Lake!!

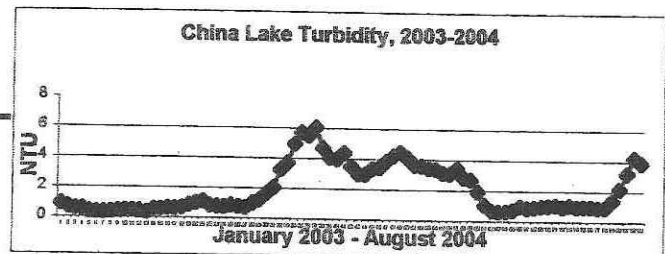
The Corps will work until school starts again in the fall. They have several more rip-rap sites, some planting, and another check dam planned for the rest of the season. If you know of a project that is appropriate for the Corps, give the CRLA a call at 445-5021. Or, better yet, if you have an old boat that would be good as a rock barge, donate it to the Corps.

China Lake Water Quality Report 2003-2004

China Lake Water Quality deteriorated noticeably in 2003-2004. The Lake began a blue-green algae bloom (of *Anabaena*) in early August, 2003 and continued to bloom (with *Aphanizomenon* algae) into the month of February, 2004. The bloom continued throughout the Winter because there was almost no snow and sunlight was able to penetrate through the ice. This created so much of a sediment load that when the lake turned over this year the phosphorus levels were higher than normal and the lake began to bloom in mid July, even though the water temperature was almost 2 1/2 degrees centigrade cooler than normal. The West Basin was the worst because there is so much more sediment in the West basin.

Currently the Secchi disk readings in the West and East basins are 1.7 meters but in the North end of the East basin they are 2.4 meters. This may be indication of an improvement in water quality in the northern part of the Lake because of effective phosphorus control, wetlands adsorption of phosphorus and numerous lake restoration projects or it may simply be an indication that the northern part of the Lake is blooming later because there is so much color from the marshes and the rotting leaves.

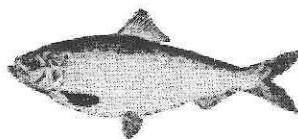
China Lake Turbidity, 2003-2004



Alewives in China Lake

Alewives are small sea-run freshwater herring that used to be common in the inland lakes of Maine. The Department of Marine Resources has been stocking Alewives in many of the lakes of Maine in order to re-introduce them to their historical habitat. Alewives will provide lots of fodder for the Gulf of Maine and they make great lobster bait.

Many people in Central Maine are concerned about the Alewives effect on the Lake ecology. There have been reports of mass die-off when they can't mi-



grate out. They eat *Daphnia*, the Zoo-plankton that feeds on the algae. The residents of Unity are not happy to have Alewives in Unity Pond.

Last year, someone illegally stocked China Lake with Alewives! Local State representatives and the Kennebec Water District met with the DMR and they agreed not to consider stocking China Lake with alewives until there is more information available and not before 2008



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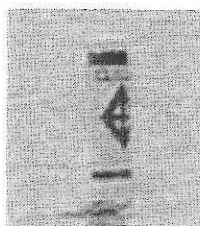
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