

2025 SPRING NEWS LETTER

Conway Lake

Conservation Association



Letter from the President

June 2025

Dear friends of Conway Lake:

Welcome to our newsletter and here's to a wonderful season on Conway Lake. Ice out was declared on April 9th and a loon was seen and heard that very day. Always such a comforting sound of spring after such a long cold winter.

I think our team has put together very useful and informative articles. Enjoy the interviews our team did with Cliff Cabral, our diver and Judy, our head Lake Host. Also, see the article on water quality and increased testing, and an example of how the CLCA is working with the Town to enforce shorefront protection to keep our Lake water clean and clear.

We are all very pleased with the reduced phosphorous levels in the Lake which after heightened readings the last two years have rejoined the ever-decreasing trend line and are now at a ten-year low and the envy of similar lakes in our region.

If we don't meet up on the lake, please join us on August 2nd for the annual meeting. I'm happy to announce Eric White, the new director of Upper Saco Valley Land Trust will be our keynote speaker. Until then, enjoy the summer and the waters.

All the best,

Kin Earle

Kin Earle, President CLCA



Sunset and the Moats. Photo courtesy of Don Yurewicz



CONWAY LAKE CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION (CLCA) MEMBERSHIP

– DUES REQUEST–

Your CLCA Board of Trustees has ramped up and is in full swing to carry out our tasks to keep the Lake pristine for all to enjoy now and for years to come. We have already completed the spring testing of our streams that feed the Lake, have a team monitoring the returning loons as they settle in their territories and build their nests, and started our boat and trailer inspections to keep out invasive plants and animals.

This Lake Host Program is a fixture at the public beach and is by far our largest expense, payable in advance to NH Lakes.

We ask that you pay your dues now and if possible, add a tax-deductible donation to cover our early financial needs. We could not keep our Lake protected without the generous support of our members.

The dues we collect are important and they cover about 20% of our annual expenses, however we are completely reliant on member donations to make up the bulk of our financial commitments. We have no support from the Town, the State or Federal programs and 100% of our receipts come from our loyal and generous members.

We've enclosed a personalized information card for your review. Please add any changes to your contact information, correct any errors, and return the card with your dues and donation check in the enclosed envelope. If you use a payment service, please return the information card with any changes and if none are needed, send it in so we know we have accurate records.

Kindly make your tax-deductible check payable to CLCA and mail it to:

CLCA, P.O. Box 803
Center Conway, NH 03813

Please feel free to contact me on my mobile, 978-884-8541 or email me at KinEarle@aol.com if you have questions, suggestions or concerns about our work.

We will send you a reminder post card one week before our annual meeting. Looking forward to seeing you there, Kin

SAVE THE DATE
CLCA ANNUAL MEETING

SATURDAY, AUG. 2nd, 2025
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

AT KIN EARLE'S HOME:
127 Baird Hill Rd

Chairs and a tent for your comfort

BEHIND THE SCENES: KEEPING OUT INVASIVE PLANTS

Our newsletter normally gives a great deal of emphasis to the defensive actions we take each summer season to keep Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) from entering our Lake. These actions include inspecting all boats entering the Lake, routinely surveying the entire shallow shoreline of the Lake by a team of patrollers to spot unwanted plants, and carrying out thorough sub-surface inspections by a team of divers. These actions will be continued in 2025, but this year we wanted to give our members an in-depth view of our boat inspection process and our beneath the surface surveillance. We interviewed Lake Hosts Judy Capreralla and Wendy Pope and our Lead Diver, Cliff Cabral, for a closer look.



A Day in the Life of our Lake Hosts

ARE THE HOSTS PLAYING VIDEO GAMES WHILE ON DUTY?

Do you ever wonder what our Lake Hosts are doing staring at their iPads or smart phones? Some suspect they are playing video games but in reality, they are connected to the NH Lakes state-wide program to monitor and track all vessels that enter all NH lakes that use the Lake Host system. Nearby homes provide Wi-Fi connectivity for our hosts to use their devices to enter summary information on each vessel.

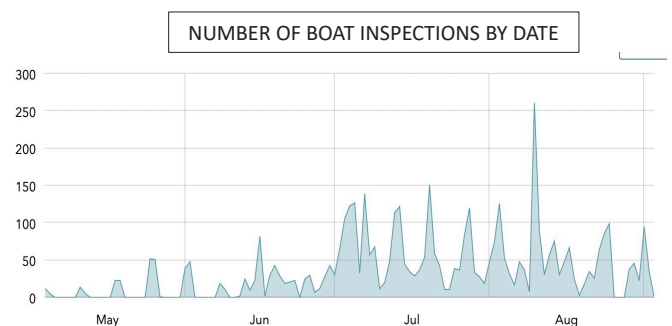
State wide in 2023 Lake Hosts performed 83,000 boat inspections, only 9 of which had invasives on board. This is only 1/100 of 1% and is consistent with our Conway Lake record of 8 or 9 saves over the last 16 years. While this number is very low, the impact of having an invasive plant such as Milfoil get a toe hold in our lake is enormous. Once the invasive gets in a lake it is nearly impossible to remove it. And it will out-compete the native plants and spread quickly to eventually inundate the entire Lake. Only a severe, immediate eradication stands a chance of removing it and even then, the affected area will have to be scrutinized for years to come and it will be a trouble spot that can re-infect and spread further if not checked regularly. And if not, the Lake can suffer irreparable harm of clogging weeds and murky water.

As of Sept 2, 2024 our Lake Hosts had inspected 4,360 boats for the year. About 50% were motorized, the rest were kayaks or canoes. The motorized boats and trailers represent the greater risk of having a hitchhiker lurking in the hidden recesses, but the other paddle boats can also have plants and animals attached that need to be kept out of the lake.

One of the better characteristics of our lake, is the fact that 88% of launches are boats whose last water body was Conway lake itself which lessens the risk of unwanted plants coming in. And our "In and Out" tagging program is still very popular with over 100 boaters registered for the program which further lessens the risk and cuts down on the time of it takes to inspect and is especially helpful on busy days.

The graph below shows the number of inspections by day from May 4 until Sept 2 in 2024. The very large spike in August was the event when the Saco River was closed due to high water and a local boat rental company delivered a large number of folks, many on tubes, that clogged the channel. This particular event has been well understood by the rental company and will not recur. Otherwise, it is obvious that warm, sunny weekend days attract the highest number of boaters, often over 100. However, even mid-week in poor weather the boat inspections continue, just in smaller numbers.

The NH Lakes website is a fast way to get to the Conway Lake data. Go to: <https://tinyurl.com/2l7m44ae> (at the NHLakes.org website).



ASIDE FROM JOB #1, WHAT ELSE DO OUR LAKES HOSTS DO?

Our hosts face a wide variety of situations where they step in to help the process of getting inspected boats in and out safely while coping with passing vehicle traffic that is often oblivious to the boaters maneuvering their boats from the street to the ramp. And at busy times, there are boats coming out of the Lake that want their trailer to be able to be backed down the ramp to load their boat. So



Lead Lake Host Judy Capreralla

traffic jams ensue and tempers often flair. We are very fortunate to have Lake Hosts who have had teaching and support functions in the local schools and as such, have all had annual de-escalation training and conflict resolution. These skills come in handy daily.

Our Lake Hosts routinely act as:

Lake Ambassadors. They explain the layout of the Lake and channel and alert folks to the fact that the Lake has no public land for their use and all property is privately owned. And they offer suggestions for out of State visitors on where to go and what to do once they are off the Lake.

Traffic Control. While strictly out of their job responsibility, they have to regulate who goes in and who goes out on a first come basis. And the Mill Street vehicle traffic trying to bypass the area often is asked to stand by for a short time to allow the boat traffic to proceed. Boats on the lake waiting on trailers are given sequence numbers to allow a smooth flow and avoid conflicts that can quickly escalate. Fortunately, over the years our team of Lake Hosts have experience in calming tempers.

Loon Monitoring. Even in the mooring-packed cove, we frequently have a pair of Loons make a nest and hatch a chick on the tiny island right off the ramp. Judy Capreralla, our lead Lake Host for 16 years has a keen eye for Loon behavior and she reports nesting and egg laying to our Loon Watchers, primarily Rick Blank. We are quick to put up Loon Nesting Signs and ropes when appropriate. We had no nest on the beach island in 2024, but one was scouted out as recently as 2022, and we had a successful hatch with the chick moving out to the main Lake on the July 4th weekend, the busiest time of the year for channel boat traffic.

Life Guards. The Town discontinued having a Life

Guard at the beach and pulled the Town raft for safety concerns. But with all the boat traffic and the strong underwater currents being released at the nearby dam, careless kayakers and unwitting children can quickly get in trouble. Our Hosts are attuned to this danger and alert folks before we have a serious injury.

OUR LAKE HOST TEAM

Over the past 16 years Judy Capreralla has been the lead for the three Lake Hosts we employ (through NH Lakes) for the summer. We have been very fortunate to have Judy provide the continuity and to coordinate schedules, trouble shoot all sorts of unexpected problems and to provide on the job training to new Lake Hosts. We are also graced with Wendy Pope who has been one of our hosts for several years and new this year, two part time hosts, Carys Gove and Marley Hooper.

This brief insight into the actual work of the Lake Hosts only skims the surface but the health of the Lake and the enjoyment the property owners and visitors all experience is in large part due to the job they do every summer day from before the sun rises (unofficially of course) and after it sets, seven days a week. Many thanks to Judy, Wendy, and now Carys and Marley for a wonderful job above and beyond their official duties, which they do flawlessly.



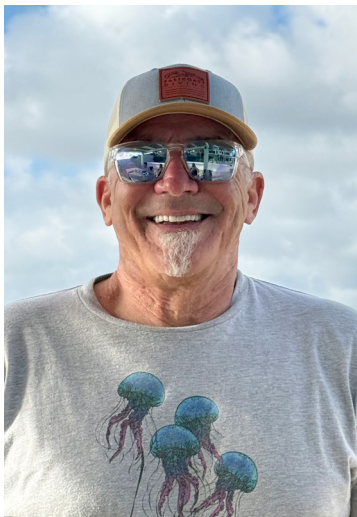
2025 Lake Hosts

Marley Hooper, Judy Capreralla, Wendy Pope, Carys Gove

Eyes Beneath the Surface - Cliff Cabral's annual search for invasive invaders in Conway Lake

by Maria Gross and Don Yurewicz

Each summer, since 2012, Cliff Cabral, a professional diver specializing in identifying and removing invasive aquatic plants, has worked for the CLCA on Conway Lake. He surveys and swims the lake's shallow littoral zone (depths less than 10 ft) along the lake's entire circumference checking for possible invasive aquatic plants. This is not just a casual plunge into the water. In fact, his work is a vital link to the lake's health. We sat down with Cliff to learn more about the professional standards he sets for his business, his methods for removing any invasive plant species he finds, and what he does for us below the surface of Conway Lake. It's a fascinating story and an important part of keeping the lake free of any aggressive exotic plants.



Cliff Cabral our Dive Master

Cliff's journey to diving began in 1985, when he was offered a casual invitation to learn about sea urchin harvesting. At the time, he was a chef and running restaurant kitchens, but his love for the water and recreational diving led him to take a crash course to earn a license to harvest sea urchins. The experience sparked a lifelong passion for working on the water, leading him to shift his focus to combatting invasive aquatic plants in New England lakes and forming his own company, New England Milfoil, in 2000. His teams work more than 100 days each year, removing thousands of gallons of invasive plants per week, sometimes up to one acre per day. This intensity is necessary because invasive species like Variable Leaf Milfoil, Curly Pondweed and Brittle Naiad can grow at alarming rates, in a few short weeks they can overwhelm large sections of our Lake. It can take years to gain effective control of an infestation.

Training and Timing Are Everything.

Training is crucial. The team is dive certified, OSHA compliant, trained in D.A.S.H. (Diving Assisted Suction Harvesting) methods, using specialized gear, described as a suction-based underwater dredge, resembling a vacuum hose. Leaving the native species untouched, the dredge (4" diameter) is guided by the diver over each invasive plant. It captures the bulk of the plant, along with its buried root system with some sediment, and pumps it all up to the boat where it is filtered by a large fine mesh bag. The pumped water and sediment are then drained back into the lake. This system efficiently minimizes seed dispersal and plant fragmentation that can easily happen utilizing any of the traditional mechanical control techniques. The speed and efficiency of the DASH method allows Cliff's team to remove large quantities of plants, depending on factors like plant density, sediment type and diver's efficiency. The collected plant material, that can be used as compost, is then transported to the town's garage situated safely at least a mile away from any stream, pond or lake. He uses flat bottomed Carolina Skiffs and equips 3 of his 5 boats with DASH harvesting equipment. Two of his boats stay on their sites throughout the summer.

Timing is critical. Different invasive species will grow at different rates during the same season, and harvesting needs to be done strategically to remove plants before they can spread. Some of the challenges Cliff faces are maintaining and updating several boats, which can suffer mechanical issues or need to be quarantined; retaining skilled divers as their core team has shrunk over time; and dealing with the unpredictability of the weather.

Necessary steps Diving for invasive plants requires knowing how to identify invasive species, differentiating them from native plants, and understanding the plants' growing seasons and reproductive cycles. Cliff continually hones this knowledge of invasive aquatic plants, maintains his team's competitive harvesting skills, and ensures that his boats and all his gear are thoroughly stripped, cleaned, and washed down (quarantined for 6 weeks, if need be) to avoid contaminating other waterbodies.

How does he start? Weather conditions are a significant factor in his work. With ideal weather (low wind and clear skies), Cliff can start any survey from his skiff by standing on the deck with a team member, visually scanning the shallow littoral zone for invasive plant growth. If visibility is poor or if there's suspicion of invasive plants, one of them will snorkel/dive while being slowly towed behind the boat.

Once Cliff identifies an area of invasive plants that is too large for effective hand pulling, his team turns to the DASH system of plant removal. He never uses chemical herbicides.

For Conway Lake: A three-pronged attack

Cliff lives nearby in Brownfield and has moored his boat at the Conway town beach for years for recreation before CLCA hired him in 2012 to do annual surveys for possible invasive aquatic plants. Cliff schedules many Fridays throughout the season to work on the lake along its circumference, surveying successive sections of its littoral zone. He starts early in the morning, when there is little wind and good visibility, and begins by diving the Channel from Conway's official boat launch to the open water by Scribner Point, checking one side as he enters the lake and the opposite side when he returns. In addition, later in the season, he schedules extra swims around "hot spots," those prized fishing and recreation areas throughout the lake where boats frequently visit. To our great fortune, Cliff knows every cove. This means that if he were to find an invasive plant species, he could quickly remove it before it becomes well established and put out the alarm for the rest of us to intensify our patrols. Fortunately, he has never had to do that.

Despite his vigilance there is a chance he might miss finding that single invasive plant.

This is where community effort shines through and he works closely with many parts of it. Cliff emphasizes the vital role that lake residents and visitors play in preventing the spread of invasive species. Simple actions like thoroughly cleaning boats before entering new water bodies can make a significant difference. He also cites the importance of the CLCA's Lake Hosts who check boats for invasives before they enter the lake and its AIS volunteers who help patrol throughout the summer, surveying the same lake sections that Cliff covers. "We are back and forth across the lake all summer, but the area in Conway Lake where invasives can grow is enormous." He adds,

"They can grow wherever you see native plants." Fortunately, Cliff has always responded immediately to requests for site inspections to identify unknown plants in the lake.



*Diver Harvesting Invasive Milfoil
(not in Conway Lake!)*

Community Involvement and Education

Cliff's passion for his work extends beyond his diving efforts. He will readily share his knowledge with anyone who asks from the local community. Every year, Cliff brings samples of invasive plants he has harvested to AIS patrol meetings, allowing everyone to get a close-up look and handle the plants. When possible, these samples have been brought to CLCA's August annual meetings. He has also extended an open invitation for anyone to observe how his team performs invasive plant removal.

This summer Cliff plans to offer a workshop on how to snorkel effectively for invasive plants. He states, "If you can't stand in your boat or on a paddleboard to get a bird's-eye view of the plants, snorkeling is the next best way to patrol for invasive species," he explains.

The key to preserving Conway Lake's pristine waters lies in the collective effort of the community. As Cliff says,

"We all just need to be out there and looking all the time"

Boat propeller encrusted with zebra mussels (photo courtesy of USFWS Fish and Aquatic Conservation)



Animals Invade Too

Invasive plants are not our only concern for Conway Lake. We are also threatened by invasive aquatic animals. Among the most disruptive is the zebra mussel, which clings to and clogs water infrastructure, like docks, boat hulls, propellers, and water intakes. They live fast, die often, and have hundreds of thousands of offspring at a time. Other invasive animals that we watch for are Asian clams, the Chinese mystery snail, and spiny water fleas. Check our handout on invasive species on the CLCA website - find it at:

<https://www.conwaylake.org/invasive-species>

SHOREFRONT PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT



Last year we reported on our efforts to improve the Town ordinance on shorefront protections. The proposed changes were adopted during the April Town election, and carried as an amendment until they were embodied in the actual text of the ordinance for 2025 and beyond. In summary, the changes tightened and clarified the tree and shrub cutting in the first 50 feet of shorefront (the buffer), restricted the use of grass, fertilizers and other chemicals in the buffer, better defined what paths could be cut in the buffer, restricted dock lengths to 30 feet, and clarified the fact that the Town regulations apply to the shoreline buffer even if stricter than the State regulations.

One of the critical elements of maintaining our excellent water quality is to minimize unimpeded and polluted shorefront runoff. The vegetative buffer required of property

owners acts to filter nutrients, such as phosphorous, when rain water enters the Lake. DES had stated that the number one cause of increased phosphorous is shorefront runoff. We need to minimize this runoff to keep our Lake pristine.

We recognized early in the process of improving the ordinance that the regulations were only as effective as the integrity of the people who choose to follow them and the enforcement of those who do not. Our Town Building Department is responsible for all of the buildings in Conway and the Lake homes are only a small fraction of the effort. We have made concerted efforts to work with our Town officials to heighten awareness and to address violations quickly and strictly. Two examples of enforcement the Town carried out in 2024 that might have been missed in earlier years:

FIRST, MUDGETT ROAD. A relatively small parcel of of Town land on Mudgett shoreline had been dormant for years as initial plans to create a Town Beach had been abandoned. This land was bought at auction in July of 2023 and subsequently the new owners had the land clear cut down to the water's edge. Neighbors and the CLCA brought this violation to the attention of the Building Department on multiple occasions and The Town issued a remediation order. At some point in this process the owners had applied for a dock permit, but this was denied since the lot was undersized, and no building structure was allowable including an accessory dock. The Conway Daily Sun printed an article on this violation on April 30, 2024 illustrating how enforcement actions have teeth and can result in hefty fines and costly restoration.



View of Mudgett Rd clear cut from the Lake

SECOND, SUNSET SHORES ROAD.

Abutters were notified that a new owner of a shoreline property had filed plans to enlarge a three bedroom house and to build a large garage. The State (DES) had approved a septic system for the enlargement. However, unwarranted site construction activity was observed by neighbors who responded quickly and alerted the building department that heavy construction activity was underway and that work was quickly stopped by the Town. During the summer of 2024 the owner applied for a variance to Town Zoning as the garage and expanded house would have violated the 100 foot setback on buildings from the water's edge.

A hearing by the town Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) was scheduled and the neighbors prepared a detailed letter objecting to the variance and submitted that letter to the ZBA prior to the hearing. The hearing was held on September 18, 2024 and three neighbors, all CLCA members, spoke against the variance. Another 9 CLCA members were in attendance to bolster support of our opposition. The ZBA denied the variance request by a vote of 5-0 and cited the "negative impact" to the Lake and the "potential degradation of water quality" as some of the reasons for the denial. The owner requested a rehearing of the issue by the ZBA on October 16, 2024, but that request was also denied.

These two examples of Town enforcement action were undertaken with active CLCA involvement which, we believe, have helped elevate our concerns with Town officials. These interactions have given CLCA Trustees the opportunity to build some credibility with the Building Department and other key Town officials. In the past, the Town had approved some permits based on State approvals without scrutinizing the proposals in light of the more restrictive Town regulations. We believe these oversights are in the past and we will have vigorous enforcement of our shoreline as long as we stay vigilant and report violations effectively to the building and zoning inspectors.

UPDATE: The owner of the Sunset Shores Road property was properly granted a permit in January 2025 to enlarge his house and install his required septic system, all beyond the 100 foot setback. Plans for a new garage have been dropped. These plans have been reviewed in detail with the Building Department and while the expansion is not desirable, it is within code and should not have any further impact on our Lake water quality.

WATER TESTING

by Linda Witz

Starting in May and going through mid-September, early every other Sunday morning Linda and Dennis Witz could be seen in their boat out on Conway Lake. They were collecting water samples and the necessary data at five designated locations on the Lake (Paige Brook, South Cove, Gull Rock, Andrews Point and Dolloff Cove). The water samples and readings were then sent off to the Lakes Lay Monitoring program at UNH.

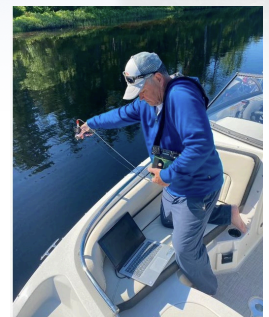
The results are in, and we are happy to report that the data indicate that Conway Lake continues to be a clean and healthy lake.

In Summary: the average water clarity was 5.5 meters (well within the excellent range 4.9 - 6.5); the average Chlorophyll A was 2.2 ppb (well within the excellent range 1.5 - 2.9). Total Phosphorus (ppb) was 3.9 ppb, considered excellent; Dissolved Oxygen 3.0 ppm (considered fair 2.3 - 3.5).

Along with the standard lake sampling for the Lakes Lay

Program, which includes real time turbidity, observations and water sample collection, a Spectral Evolution Field Portable Spectroradiometer was used to collect real time data for comparison to the lab testing (complements of Spectral Evolution and Dennis Witz).

On 8/2/24 Bob Craycraft, manager of the Lake Monitoring Program and his team joined the water testers to complete the testing that they do annually, which includes the phosphorus testing. It was a warm sunny day and after several hours on the boat a few of the UNH team members decided to cool off in the water. Upon jumping in, they declared this was the BEST lake they had swum in all summer! What a testament to the hard work happening to keep Conway Lake pristine.



Dennis Witz testing water with his Spectroradiometer

WATER QUALITY

CONWAY LAKE PHOSPHOROUS LEVELS RETURN TO THEIR PREVIOUS EXCELLENT LEVELS

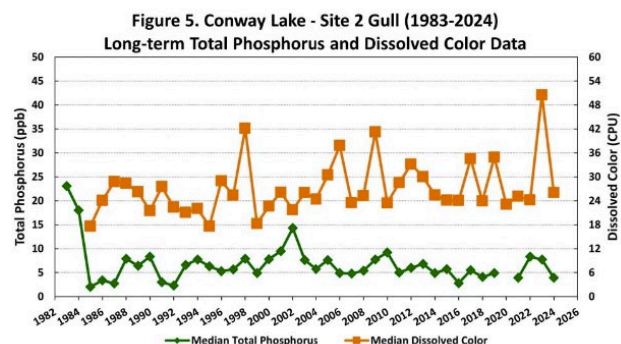
by Bill Petry

We are all relieved the troublesome phosphorous levels have come down to 3.9 ppb (parts per billion) in 2024. The chart to the right shows the last 40 years of phosphorous levels (green line) and the previous two years, 2022 and 2023 showed a sharp increase which was alarming and could have led to degraded water appearance and caused undesirable plant growth, algae increase, and risk of possibly toxic cyanobacteria blooms. This chart was taken from the NH Lakes Lay Monitoring Program 2024 report for Conway Lake. You can see the full report using the following link:

<https://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3021&context=extension>

Phosphorous is a common element found throughout the natural world and is an essential ingredient for healthy forests and ecosystems of all types. It has its beneficial aspects in the water column as well, as long as it isn't too much.

Other key metrics for 2024 are for clarity, again excellent at 18.0 ft., Chlorophyll at 2.2 ppm is below our five-year average and dissolved oxygen is 3 ppm, just about the average for our Lake. Dissolved O₂ is a measure of how fish thrive and higher levels are better, but the "fair" level is what we expect given that Conway Lake is a low water turn over lake, and it is never going to be great fish habitat, but there is really nothing practical to do about



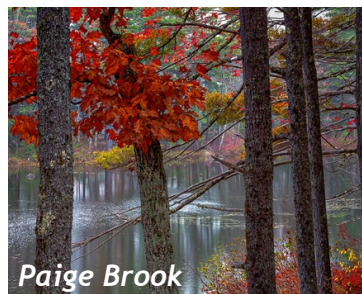
it. We have an attractive lake for many fish species and the fact that we often have four nesting pairs of loons indicates there is an abundant fish population to support these ravenous fish eaters. The table below shows five years of data for these key metrics.

In short, the key metrics for 2024 were all superior to 2023 and better or the same for the five-year average.

KEY WATER METRICS FOR FIVE YEARS

METRIC	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	AVE
Clarity (ft.)	19.4	19.7	19.0	14.7	18.0	18.1
Chlorophyll A (ppb)	1.7	1.9	2.0	3.0	2.2	2.2
Phosphorous (ppb)	COVID	3.9	8.3	7.7	3.9	6.0
Dissolved O ₂	COVID	2.4	3.9	2.0	3.0	2.8

STREAM PHOSPHOROUS TESTING



Each Spring and Fall we take water samples of the 15 tributaries that feed water into the Lake. These streams vary widely in flow rates and are scattered around the Lake - one for each catchment area as determined by Don Yurewicz, one of the CLCA

Trustees, and our resident geologist (and exceptional photographer). These streams contain phosphorous and as they flow through the forested land surrounding the Lake, they pick up more phosphorous from the soil, from fallen leaves and other vegetation. Slow, meandering streams pick up more organic nutrients as the vegetation soaks in the water and thus their phosphorous content is higher than the steep fast-moving streams that supply much more water at a much lower phosphorous content. In the spring we find the average stream phosphorous relatively low, as the snow melt and runoff has not had time to pick up much fresh organic nutrients. In the fall, just the opposite: drier conditions slow the flow rates and summer growth leaves a large vegetative load with high nutrients.

We monitor these streams and look for phosphorous content that is abnormally high for that type of stream and for each specific stream for which we have several years of data. If we find a stream with abnormally high phosphorous at a substantial flow rate, we investigate by exploring upstream to look for sources of pollution or toxic waste spills. So far, we have found nothing abnormal that is a cause for concern.

The average phosphorous results (ppb) for the tributary testing for 2024, spring and fall, are shown in the chart below which also contains the average for those streams for the past four years.

The spring 2024 levels are somewhat higher than the average previous four years, a cause for vigilance, but not alarm. And since we know the Lake phosphorous went down in 2024, the spring increase was readily absorbed by the Lake. The fall reading was right on the average, so that bodes well for Lake phosphorous for 2025. Incidentally, the spring 2025 tributary samples were taken in early May and sent to UNH for testing.

PERIOD	2020-2023	2024
Spring	14.2	15.9
Fall	21.1	21.2

LOON REPORT FOR 2024

by Rick Blank



Loon showing green neck ring

Last year the ice went out in early April and the loons returned the same day. We had four pairs establish their territories and nest building was active and on schedule for a productive year. We had a nest on Gerson Island after that pair decided, once again, that the Town Beach island was too busy and settled onto the more quiet location. The Thorne Island pair built a nest on one of the northern Thorne Islands out of sight of the Bald Eagle nest which has been high in the pines on the eastern shoreline. A nest was started on Boynton's island after that pair ignored two nest rafts floated in the vicinity. And we had an early nest on Gull Rock.

For some unknown reason, the nests on Gerson Island and on Gull Rock were abandoned. Eggs had been laid and they were collected after the safe three day abandonment period and turned over to the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) for possible evaluation. The Loon pair at Boynton's sat on their nest for some extended time, but no egg was observed and eventually

they moved on. Only the Thorne pair hatched a chick and unfortunately it was lost shortly after going on the Lake, presumably to a predator and likely one of two Bald Eagles patrolling the area.

The annual state-wide Loon census was conducted on July 20, 2024 and we counted 10 adults on our Lake vs. an average of 12 Loons in past years. In summary, the year started out with an encouraging number of four active nests, but we unfortunately had no chicks and a decreased census count.

This year the Loons once again returned as soon as the ice went out and we are very glad to have them in our midst. We have observed territorial behavior around the Thorne Islands and Gull Rock and expect Gerson and South Cove to follow.

We want to acknowledge the ongoing support of Brian Jarvis who has taken on much of the load of caring for our Loons, including hauling signs and anchors, ropes and nest rafts to help our Loons prosper.



Loon on nest at Gull Rock

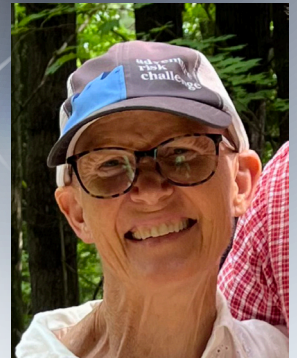


CLCA BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMINGS AND GOINGS



Last year three of our long-term Trustees resigned from the Board after many years of service:

Marnie Cobbs joined in 2018 and was our resident artist and our liaison with the Eaton half of the Lake. Our connections with the Town of Eaton were strengthened with Marnie's efforts and several property owners joined the CLCA. Marnie helped in many ways and was instrumental in our coming to a use agreement with Eaton and the Herreras who own the land off Potter Road known as the South Cove entrance. We cannot replace Marnie, but applications are open!



Marnie Cobbs



Sue West

Sue West holds the record for longest serving as she joined in 1988 after Nancy Earle attracted her to help with water testing. Since then, Sue has undertaken all roles needed and been a spiritual advisor for us all. She was our membership person for decades, helped with the then "weed patrol", published our annual newsletter and kept up with our incoming mail through the winter months. She started the welcome package for new Lake owners and made it a point to visit each new owner in person and gently persuade them to join the CLCA. We are all indebted to Sue for her unswerving dedication to the Lake and to the CLCA.



Julie Hoyt

Julie Hoyt also joined in 2018 and helped importantly with membership and communications. She also was a patroller for our AIS team and knows all the rocks having grown up on the Lake in her family house. Meg and Jim Garland, Julie's parents, are still enjoying their lakefront home and we will be happy to see Julie as she visits often. Julie remains a CLCA volunteer graciously helping with membership.

This year we have added two very talented Trustees who will help us carry out our mission:

Bette Jacques moved to the Lake in 2022 and built a house with her husband Rick across the lane from Sue West. They have become good friends which is a benefit for us all. Bette and Rick bring sculling to the Lake and we all have seen them rowing from one end to the other. They are keen to give lessons to the willing. Bette got involved with the CLCA right away by being on the weed patrol and joined the Board in 2025.



Bette Jacques

Linda Witz also joined the Board in 2025 and is the consummate CLCA volunteer who took up our Lake water testing duties two years ago. Collecting and processing Lake water samples throughout the summer is a major task and we are stronger as a Board for her selfless contributions.



Linda Witz

SOME NEWS YOU CAN USE

TAXES

Last year, all property owners in Conway experienced a significant increase in property taxes. While exceptions exist and abatements can be requested, the increase was generally consistent across the board. For the average Conway home, which is notably less valuable than a typical Conway Lake property, the hike translated to roughly \$1,000.

Two main factors contributed to the increase. First, the 2023 town-wide revaluation shifted the tax burden from commercial to residential properties. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, residential property values have surged – some doubling in value – while commercial properties have increased by only about 30 percent. Although the total tax revenue collected by the town remained unchanged, the revaluation caused residential tax bills to rise while commercial tax bills decreased.

Second, town and school spending continues to climb. While both budgets increased again this year, the rise was smaller than it might have been thanks to voter intervention. Conway operates under the SB 2 system, where voters choose between a default budget (essentially the previous year's) and budgets submitted by town and school officials. On April 8, voters approved the default budgets for both, a first in Conway's history. This decision saved approximately \$800,000 combined. Given the town and school budgets total \$15 million and \$40 million, respectively, the savings were modest – but the vote sent a clear message to local officials to rein in spending.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS

There has been no change in the status of short-term rentals. Without new case law at the state level, a ban on these rentals appears unlikely in the near future. Voters did, however, approve articles that clarified language in the town ordinances requiring all rental properties – both short- and long-term – to meet basic safety standards. Violators would face fines. Initially, the town planned to implement an in-person inspection program but has since opted for a self-certification process using affidavits. Even that approach is currently on hold, pending the outcome of a lawsuit.

The same group behind that lawsuit, which represents short-term rental interests, also sponsored ballot articles aimed at eliminating all inspection requirements. Voters decisively rejected those measures.

ANNUAL MEETING

Don't forget: This year's Annual CLCA Meeting is on August 2nd from 9:00 AM until 11:00 AM. It is hosted by Kin Earle at his home at 127 Baird Hill Rd. Kin arranges for chairs and a tent for your comfort. This year's guest speaker is the Executive Director of USVLT, Eric White. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

LAKE HOST SCHEDULE:

Our intrepid Lake Hosts started 2025 weekend inspections on May 3rd, and will go to seven day coverage starting on June 9th and continue through Labor Day. Weekend coverage will follow until Columbus Day.

MANY THANKS, again, to Don Yurewicz for his expertise and willingness to provide photography for the CLCA newsletter and several other projects. All the photos in the newsletter were taken by Don unless credited to others.

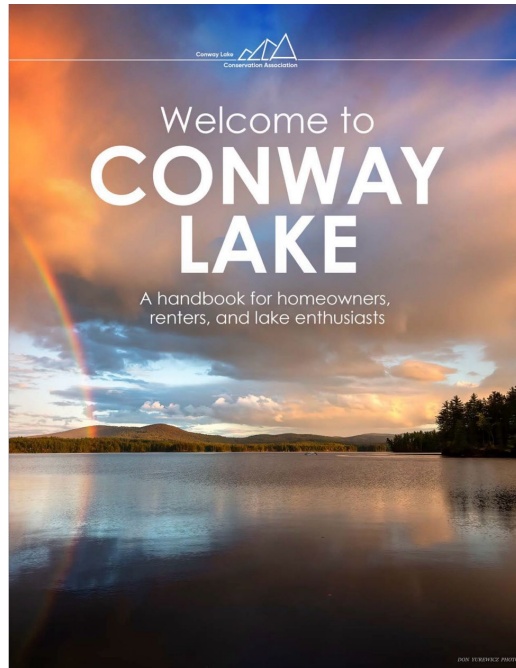
TOWN PARKING STICKERS

As a reminder, parking at the Town Beach and other recreational areas in Conway require a parking decal that can be purchased at Town Hall for \$5.00. They are enforced from June 14th through Labor Day.



CONWAY LAKE HANDBOOK

During the CLCA annual meeting last August, we unveiled a new publication “Welcome to Conway Lake. A handbook for homeowners, renters and lake enthusiasts.” It was created in an effort to be more proactive in welcoming new homeowners to the lake, directing them to the correct information and regulations, and encouraging them to adopt best practices in taking care of Conway Lake. When doing our research, we also found that longtime lakeshore property owners, lake enthusiasts and contractors did not know current shoreland regulations and where to find them. So within the pages of this informative handbook lie the answers to some frequently asked questions, QR codes to relevant property information, and ways that everyone can help keep Conway Lake pristine. In addition to rules and regulations, the handbook also contains generously donated items such as beautiful photography by CLCA members, three articles about the history of Conway Lake from the Conway Daily Sun, and unique artwork and poetry inspired by the quiet beauty of the lake created by our neighbors. There are also pages dedicated to the many wildlife species that also call the lake home.



Since last August, the CLCA board has delivered “Welcome to Conway Lake” handbooks to nearly all of the lakeside homeowners and CLCA members. In addition, copies of the handbook were personally delivered to several of the Town management personnel. We have worked to build relationships with the key members of the community to help protect the lake through legislation and education. A pdf of the handbook is available at conwaylake.org for those aforementioned community partners and for you to share with your friends and loved ones.

Production of this publication was truly a collaborative effort between the CLCA board of directors, CLCA members and various community partners. We would like to especially recognize Adam Gross for his thoughtful, elegant graphic design of the book and Don Yurewicz for not only the majority of the photography, but also for creating the map of the lake, the website posting of the Handbook, and for his guidance during the entire process. We hope you enjoy the book and perhaps keep it on your coffee table to educate and entertain your guests for years to come!

Bobbi Jarvis, Editor-in-Chief of
“Welcome to Conway Lake”

TREASURER'S 2024 REPORT

by Jim Proulx

Mars and Milky Way, Don Yurewicz

I'm pleased to support this great organization and wonderful cause in my first year as the new CLCA treasurer. Big thanks to Sumner Jones, who has mentored me in my new role and continues to serve on the board, but has turned the checkbook over to me after 10 years as treasurer.

My personal goal is to continue in the footsteps of the many past and present board members who have been good stewards of the hard-earned and generous donations and dues you've provided each year. Many thanks for making my job even possible. I will also remain vigilant that our expenses deliver the many key aspects of the CLCA vision you've come to expect from us each year.

As detailed elsewhere in this report, CLCA had another successful year, noteworthy for a "Great Save" by Judy in her front-line role as a Lake Host. She prevented the incursion of an invasive species into our lake! The news spread beyond our lake community, providing headlines for the Conway Daily Sun as well as the statewide organization NHLakes.org. This is just a single example of the work funded directly by your giving. As has been the case for years now, our largest expense category (\$28,622) goes directly to maintaining this Lake Host program, which will hopefully continue to "save" us from future invasive lake species and allow Conway Lake to continue in the pristine condition we all cherish. Other expenses have generally been stable.

One special project, last year's new Conway Lake Handbook, was a resounding success, even generating some additional operating income through sales last year. This book's creation, publishing, and distribution were primarily funded by several individual donations supplemented by our operating income. This contributed to our overall expenses coming in at \$54,369. The resulting small \$2,144 year-end deficit did, however, allow CLCA to receive numerous written notes of positive feedback about the Conway Lake Handbook from our lake community and beyond, and was unequivocally worth it! This is an example of how nimble CLCA can be when opportunities arise. We are proud that we have the flexibility in our resources to "seize the moment" when opportunities like this arise to help us deliver our CLCA mission.

On the revenue side, last year's income was \$52,225, coming in slightly greater than budgeted. This was led by the category of individual member donations, which generated almost \$4,000 more than projected last year. We simply would be unable to deliver all this good news each year without your continued generosity. We also continue to keep our mitigation reserve fund untouched. These funds now total \$64,243, which will ensure CLCA can quickly address any future major lake health issues.

I feel humbled and proud to support such a generous community and such important work. I look forward to continued success this year with our accounts and finances. Thank you all and see you on the lake!

CAVITY NESTING DUCK BOXES

Six years ago the CLCA started a project with the Tin Mountain Conservation Center (TMCC) of Albany to provide nest boxes on the Lake for cavity nesting ducks. The primary species of interest are Wood Ducks, Common Mergansers and Hooded Mergansers. These ducks are migratory and return to Northern New England in early Spring to breed and raise their chicks on our lakes and rivers. They prefer to nest in the hollows of dead trees near the waters' edge but have lost suitable habitat as waterfront owners typically cut down dead trees. And human presence and activity is threatening to the nesting ducks who will quickly abandon a nest to escape harm. The goal of the project is to build and install suitable nest boxes around a variety of Lake locations to attract these ducks who then return year after year and establish populations for all to enjoy.

THE NEST BOX

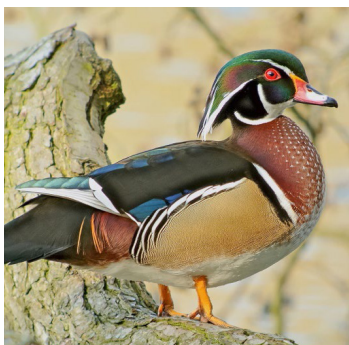
The Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers we wish to attract are 13" in typical length while Common Mergansers are often 18" in length. These birds need a large box to nest in and our specs are approximately one foot square in cross section and two feet in height. The opening is 3-4" in size and after a couple of days after hatching, the chicks have to scamper up the inner wall to take the plunge to the water below if they want their parents to continue to feed them. Somehow they manage.



Nest Box, one foot square by two feet tall

Nelson Cormier of TMCC built and installed ten nest boxes on the shorefront properties of CLCA members who volunteered to be hosts for the nesting birds. Joe Berry of the CLCA sponsored the effort by generously paying for the nest box materials.

THE DUCKS



Male Wood Duck, courtesy TMCC

Wood Ducks are colorful birds who occasionally have nested on Conway Lake. In 2021 a Wood Duck used a nest box on Paige Brook, fledged a brood of 8 chicks and seemed to do well in the area but moved elsewhere on the Lake later in the summer. We observed three separate broods on

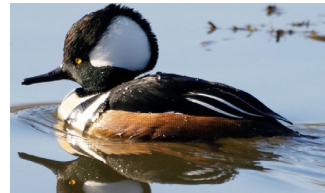
the Lake in 2023, none of whom used our nest boxes. We are hopeful these shy birds will return in 2025.

Common Mergansers are the largest of the three species and have been observed on the Saco River near Weston's beach many times. They make an appearance in early Spring on Conway Lake, but never seem to build a nest. Like Loons, the Mergansers are divers and catch their prey underwater after chases of a minute or more.



Male Common Merganser, courtesy TMCC

Hooded Mergansers are stately birds who also dive for fish and are seen infrequently in early Spring on Conway Lake, but none have been seen nesting successfully on the Lake. We did have a Hooded Merganser lay two eggs in the Gross's nest box in 2024, but the nest was abandoned before either egg hatched.



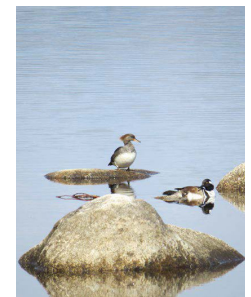
Male Hooded Merganser TMCC



Hooded Merganser egg in nest box 2024

Tom Gross observed both Hooded and Common Mergansers on the Lake this year and was able to take photos of both with a long lens and lots of patience. These birds are shy and could very well be nesting in one of our boxes, but we do not check until the second week in June, after they have had more than the 6-7 weeks needed for fledging.

While we have had no real success in reaching the goal of having populations of these ducks present on Conway Lake, the nest boxes are well-built out of cedar and very durable. They have held up to harsh winter weather and violent summer storms and are ready for homeless ducks to inhabit. We will watch for activity and repair or remove as our host's request. For now, we are still hopeful as the migrating ducks find Conway Lake more suitable than the dwindling habitat options they face in the ever-expanding human presence in our lakes and rivers.



Pair of Hooded Mergansers; by Tom Gross 2025

Conway Lake



Conservation Association

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Don't Forget
CLCA ANNUAL MEETING
SATURDAY, AUG. 2th, 2025
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
At Kin Earle's: 127 Baird Hill Road
Chairs and Tent for your comfort