

The Clary Lake Clarion

Volume 11 Issue 1

The Newsletter of the Clary Lake Association

Spring/Summer 2020

President's Message

After a very successful first year owning the Clary Lake dam, we were all looking forward to another busy and productive summer season this year. Then the Coronavirus pandemic happened, and life as we know it changed, seemingly, overnight. Arriving in mid-winter with little warning, we suddenly found ourselves living under a stay-at-home order and social distancing, and planning for our summer events for 2020 was put on hold while we waited to see what was going to happen. We decided early on that our Courtesy Boat Inspection and Water Quality Monitoring programs should continue after making some changes to accommodate social distancing guidelines, but our plans to enter a float in the Whitefield 4th Of July parade again, and hold another Ice Cream Social and on-the-lake Coffee Klatch should be canceled. Finally, out of an abundance of caution, the Board decided at its May meeting to cancel this year's Annual Membership meeting as well. The decision wasn't an easy one. We discussed putting off deciding for a while to see how the summer developed; we discussed the feasibility of trying to gather together our Membership in a safe and socially distanced venue, but the logistics just seemed too daunting and need to announce one way or another in the Summer newsletter forced us to come to a decision. While Maine is somewhat less affected by covid-19 infections than other States, we nonetheless have a steadily rising number of infections and a rising death toll keeping pace with them; and what with the expected influx of out of state visitors this summer and the possible worsening of the pandemic here in Maine, we felt it necessary to put the health and welfare of our Members first and cancel the meeting.

While our Annual Meeting and potluck supper has always been our primary summer event, we're about much more than that one event. Our stated purpose is to preserve, protect, and enhance the ecology, natural beauty, and quality of Clary Lake and its watershed and that remains our primary focus all year long. Without the Annual Meeting to bring us together, we need to look for other ways to stay active and engaged, as individuals and as an organization. Our Membership Committee is working to come up with some alternative events that we can safely participate in this summer. Keep an eye on our website for news!

Respectfully, Dave Knight, President



April runoff resulted in a lot of water going over the Clary Lake dam! Photo by G. Fergusson 15 April 2020

2020 Annual Meeting Cancelled

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic currently gripping the globe and out of an abundance of caution, the Board has decided to cancel this year's Annual Membership Meeting, deciding at their May meeting that the risk to our members from trying to maintain a business-as-usual stance this year was just unacceptable. We considered putting off the decision for a while to see how the State's guidance might evolve but decided that we just couldn't put off making a decision and planning for the meeting indefinitely. We also considered setting up a meeting with everyone maintaining a safe social distance from each other but concluded we really couldn't guarantee that people wouldn't mingle too closely and that it was better to just cancel the meeting outright. We deemed holding the meeting wasn't as important as keeping our Membership healthy and out of harm's way.

Several important pieces of business are normally conducted at our Annual Meeting and on which the Membership would normally vote: the election of officers and the approval of a budget for the coming year. We considered using traditional paper ballots mailed to our Membership or trying to set up some sort of online voting system to address these matters but decided it really wasn't worth the time and money. It so happens that this year there is only one Director position opening up and the Board feels comfortable with making an interim appointment to fill this position. Similarly, the Board can adopt an interim budget for the upcoming 2020/2021 financial year based on last year's (*continued on page 4*)

Clary Needs an Invasive Plant Patrol Program

For years our primary concern for Clary Lake was getting the water level restored, and it was an all-consuming endeavor. With our successful purchase of the dam in the fall of 2018 and the subsequent repairs made to the dam, our dream finally became reality, but that landmark event does not mark the end of our stewardship of Clary Lake, it is just the beginning. Last summer, with the State boat launch back in service after years of being unusable, working with the State we started up an all-volunteer Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) program to help guard against the chance introduction of invasive aquatic plants to Clary Lake. We're continuing our CBI program this summer, you can read about it elsewhere in this newsletter.

While our CBI program will help guard against the chance introduction of invasive aquatic plants into Clary Lake, it doesn't guarantee that unwanted plants won't still make it into Clary. We can't staff the boat launch every day and check every boat and trailer, so we need to be on the lookout for unwanted aquatic plants in the lake, where they grow. For that we need trained volunteers.



Water Chestnut (Trapa natans L), one of Maine's Eleven Most Unwanted Aquatic Plants.

That is where an Invasive Plant Patrol program comes in. Lake Stewards of Maine (formerly the Volunteer Lake Monitor Program or VLMP) has taken the lead in promoting the State's Invasive Plant program and has been instrumental in helping draft legislation to address the threat invasive plants pose to Maine lakes. LSM offers free training and certification, educational materials, other resources, and technical support to groups and individuals across the State of Maine. This year, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, no live in-person IPP workshops will be held but they are offering an online IPP course.

We'll be getting to work setting up an Invasive Plant Patrol program this coming summer and will be posting information about it on our website soon. If you spend time on Clary Lake in your kayak, canoe, or motor boat, please consider getting involved in this important initiative! You can make a difference!

Thank Goodness They Didn't Close Mother Nature!




Ann Holland social distancing on Clary Lake.

No matter what your personal 'take' on the current situation that is rocking our world, it's safe to say that all of us have had to adjust the way we live on a daily basis... and for the foreseeable future. It is a time of great uncertainty, lack of trust, and certainly frustration and disruption to life as we've come to know it.

The loss and suffering of so many of our fellow humans can weigh heavily on our good natures; and we can turn to history, to politics, to science and be left with the same inexorable answer to any question we may have about our future... "I just don't know." Such times require a pause... a return to simplicity, an inner reflection, a deeper meaning, a common cause.

We of the Clary Lake Association know all about 'common cause'. After all, we weathered many years of watching as our lake was drained, our wildlife adversely affected, and our creature comforts of enjoyment and recreation in/on/and around our beloved lake suspended. It was our common cause, our common purpose, our persistence that transformed a devastation into a resurgence of well-being. In some ways, our Clary Lake story is not so different from the *(continued on page 5)*

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Establishing Fish Passage into Clary Lake

By George Fergusson

Several months ago the Midcoast Conservancy [MC] in conjunction with the Atlantic Salmon Federation [ASF] filed a grant application with the NOAA [National Oceanographic & Atmospheric Administration] to provide funding to study the feasibility of establishing fish passage into Clary Lake. This is the second time they've applied for a grant for this purpose; the first time was in the Spring of 2019. That first application was turned down. The ASF has been instrumental in reestablishing fish passage in the Sheepscot River watershed and elsewhere in the State. Their projects in this area include the partial removal of the Head Tide Dam in Alna completed last fall, the removal of the Coopers Mills Dam last summer, and the purchase, repair, and installation of a fish ladder at Branch Pond in China at the headwaters of the West Branch of the Sheepscot River. That project is still underway.

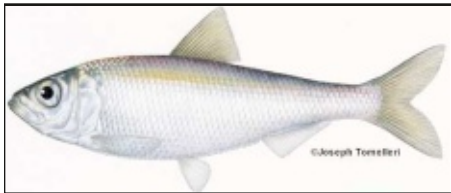
When we refer to establishing “fish passage” we’re talking about the installation of a fish ladder and associated infrastructure to facilitate the migration of anadromous fish (fish that migrate up rivers from the sea to spawn) from the Sheepscot River upstream into Clary Lake. As it stands now, there are substantial physical obstacles to fish getting into Clary Lake including the lower mill pond dam, steep falls below that dam, and of course, the Clary Lake dam itself. Because of these obstacles (one of which is natural) it is unlikely that unrestricted fish passage into Clary Lake has ever existed, though the American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*) who as the saying goes can migrate across a wet lawn have been able to get into Clary Lake without trouble. The fish we are primarily referring to are Alewives or River Herring. River Herring is a collective term used to describe both anadromous alewives and blueback herring. The alewife is the more common of the two species in Maine. Both species are native to Maine rivers and are an important ecological and economic resource in the State of Maine.

Alewives have co-evolved and co-existed with other native fish and wildlife in Maine’s streams, rivers, ponds and lakes for thousands of years. Alewives are members of the herring family; their close cousins are shad and blueback herring. Alewives have slender bodies, and they normally grow to 10 – 11” in length, and weigh about half a pound. Repeat spawners can be as large as 14” and weigh a pound or more. Alewives are grayish green on

their back, and silvery on their sides and belly. They’ve got a single black spot just behind their eye, and their tails are forked. They migrate into fresh water in the spring to spawn and then return to the ocean to repeat the cycle. Their eggs hatch in 5-6 days and the fry feed and grow quickly; and incidentally, they provide a great food source for the local game fish. Later in the summer after the fry have gained some size, they too head down stream to return to the ocean.

Other species of fish that occasionally make their way into freshwater lakes are Lamprey eels, a much-maligned anadromous (and boneless!) fish. Lampreys nest and spawn in the same running water using the same gravel beds as used by Atlantic Salmon and rarely venture into lakes and ponds because the nesting habitat just isn’t there. Atlantic Salmon in fact often use Lamprey nests when the eels are done with them. Lamprey eels can easily go anywhere that American eels can go so there is every reason to believe they have already ventured into Clary and found the habitat unsatisfactory.

By all accounts, the introduction of Alewives into freshwater lakes generally leads to improved water quality or at the very least, to no decline in water quality, and plenty of success stories abound. According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, “Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) studies in more than a dozen Maine lakes with natural or reintroduced runs of alewives have not shown water quality decline that can be attributed to alewives, according to Barry Mower, a fisheries biologist and water quality specialist. It is well-substantiated that the major factor causing algae blooms in our lakes is the introduction of phosphorus. There are many sources of phosphorus in our lakes -- and most are directly linked to residential development. When adult alewives migrate into a freshwater pond or lake, there is an influx of phosphorus to the lake. However, the majority of the spawning alewives return to the ocean, taking phosphorus with them. Additionally, young alewives that grow in freshwater ponds and lakes incorporate phosphorus from lakes into their bodies. That phosphorus is removed when the young migrate to the ocean.” (continued on page 4)



Alewife (*Alosa Pseudoharengus*)



(Annual Meeting, continued from page 1) budget which will allow us to continue operating. This interim budget will remain in effect until the next Membership meeting. We will post the Association's 2020 balance sheet, statement of revenue, and budget comparison with the proposed budget to the CLA website so our Members can see for themselves how we fared during the previous year, and what the coming year will look like.

Our Annual Meeting also signifies the end of one Membership year and the beginning of another: as per our bylaws, our Membership year runs "from the start of one annual meeting to just prior to the start of the next annual meeting." That language presumes that we will actually have an annual meeting every year. As it turns out that's a bad assumption! Our Bylaws also say "The Annual Meeting of the Members of the Corporation shall be held on the first (1st) Saturday in August or at the call of the President." To dispel confusion over when our membership year ends/starts, this year our 2020/2021 Membership year will run from Saturday August 1, 2020 (the first Saturday in August) until the Saturday August 7, 2021. Those of you who have traditionally paid your dues at the Annual Meeting are encouraged to mail in your dues using the remuneration envelope enclosed with this newsletter. We encourage everyone to send in your Membership dues early! Annual dues are (still only!) \$25 per Member which entitles you to one vote; additional family members if they wish can also pay dues and be counted as a voting Member. You can also sign up or renew your Membership online using our secure PayPal payment processing system. Notice that we no longer ask for separate Summer and Winter addresses (though we still keep multiple addresses on file where appropriate) as they have been an endless source of confusion over the years about which address to use when sending out a mailing. Therefore please provide your primary mailing address and also please include email addresses for you and your family if you have them as email makes contacting you fast, free, and easy!

While our Annual Meeting is canceled, summer is still going to happen. Let's make the most of it.



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(Alewives, continued from page 3)

(source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.)

During the Water Level Petition proceedings back in 2012, the Department of Marine Resources [MDMR] recommended that fish passage be established into Clary Lake. At the time, such a project was the furthest thing from anyone's mind but now that we own the dam and the lake level has been restored to its historical norms, it's something worth considering. Clary Lake has in the past experienced nuisance algal blooms and is currently considered by the DEP to be at "High Risk" for algal blooms in the future. It has been suggested that the introduction of Alewives into Clary Lake could help mitigate this issue. The MDMR stocked Clary with Alewives back in the 1980s and 90s. Some of you will remember the vast schools of small black Alewife fry that were seen swimming along the shore of the lake. They provided a lot of food for the game fish in Clary. One wonders if stocking isn't still a valid approach to growing the Alewife population in the Sheepscot River watershed.

The Clary Lake Association Board has provided MC with a "letter of support" for this initiative, understanding fully well that any use of the Clary Lake dam for such a purpose will ultimately require approval by the full CLA Membership. It is also likely the Maine DEP will weigh in on the project during the feasibility study to assess the impact that the operation of a fish ladder might have on the Water Level Order and Clary Lake's water level regime. Installation of a fish ladder might require modification of the Order (something we personally are loath to consider at this time). The operation of a fish ladder requires outflows in the Spring when the adult fish are entering the lake to spawn and somewhat lesser flows later in the summer and fall when the adults and young fry are heading back to the ocean. My own preliminary analysis suggests that the flows required to operate a fish ladder are generally consistent with the minimum flows we're already required to release (which makes sense if you stop and think about it!) and could likely be maintained without requiring changes to the existing Water Level Order.

Keep an eye on the Clary Lake Association website for additional information about the pros and cons of establishing fish passage into Clary Lake.



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Trudi Hodgkins	Susan Webb
Frances Hodsdon	John S. & Darleen A. Williams
	Arlene & Randy Wing
	Stan York
	Total: 156

(*Thank Goodness, continued from page 2*) larger picture we see playing out before us. It took personal sacrifice, collective courage, perseverance and time to right the wrong.

Before the hidden forces of pandemic took us by storm, Clary Lake Association gatherings and events were planned to bring us together... for coffee and donuts, ice cream, parading and the like. In keeping with the suggestions and mandates from our health professionals, we must rethink how we celebrate our lake and keep our gratitude fresh. There is some comfort in realizing that it is not so difficult to 'keep our distance' while out swimming, canoeing, boating or kayaking.

There are tentative plans to schedule a group paddle up into the marsh/channel, now full and teeming with life and while our Annual Meeting has been cancelled, there's no reason why we can't still engage in social distancing on Clary Lake.

Perhaps now, more than ever in our lives, we can see how utterly susceptible we are to the forces of Nature. So let us be utterly susceptible to the beauty of our Lake, continue to celebrate its vibrancy and be keenly aware of how fortunate we are to have lives that it touches.

Stay safe... and get out and enjoy 'your' lake.

Respectfully,

Margaret Fergusson, Program Committee



The Clary Lake Association is a 501C(3) nonprofit corporation duly registered in the State of Maine dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing the natural beauty and quality of Clary Lake and its watershed. Membership in the Association is open to anyone and costs \$25 per year per person. Donations to the Association are tax deductible.

Current Association Officers:

President: David Knight	president@clarylake.org
Vice President: Randy Wing	vicepresident@clarylake.org
Treasurer: Mary GingrowShaw	treasurer@clarylake.org
Secretary: George Fergusson	secretary@clarylake.org
Newsletter: George Fergusson	editor@clarylake.org
Association Board Address:	board@clarylake.org
Current Board Members are: Kelsie French, Jack Holland, Steve Relyea, Malcolm Burson, and Ellis Percy	

5/25/20

Earth

By Margaret Fergusson

Oh, to manifest a pure and primal presence
as if swimming through sacred soil,

Undulating, unadorned through the veins
of all that is living.

Soaring in animated abyss
in communion with the cosmos,

Embracing every clue...calculating..
cataclysmic catastrophe...compassionate clarity.

Discerning the questions
with ferocity,

Daring to detail the answers...
humbled to science...heralded to heart.

The great beasts...blaring
as malevolent microscopics maneuver,

Blinded in human arrogance, permeated in petty perceptions
as the unseen multiplies with untapped wisdom.

The Great Books...offerings of insight
eonic in their reach...each age...ageless...perennial,

Remaining...a sliver of collective courage
within the turbulent, teaming throngs.

This moment...nothing novel
voluminous history attests,

What if an equanimity could reign,
and all the subjects loyal?

And subjects and kings
disregarded their titles.

No special treatment,
no immunity to our existence,

All in awareness
of the futility of separateness.

Space and time...
annihilated in the moment of now,

Now...
will we save Her?"