



CHEBACCO LAKE & WATERSHED ASSOCIATION *Newsletter*

A Quarterly Publication of the Chebacco Lake & Watershed Association

December 2006

From the CLWA President's Chair

It is now Wintertime and Chebacco Lake has risen to Spring water levels. There are several reasons for this. We have had the wettest November in 100 years, and the lake will rise about three inches for every inch of rain we receive. But there are other factors. First, the outlet at Alewife Brook in Essex has been dammed by a beaver colony. The beaver have managed to block up our fencing, and have also built dams further downstream. The lake is not able to drain and flush itself out. The CLWA Board of Directors has engaged the services of a trapper to remove the colony from the outlet. This action will help us to maintain the outlet area that we have been working on and have been concerned with for the last five years. We hope to bring the water level down to a more normal level over the course of the next few months. We are also continuing to work on long-term plans to maintain the outlet.

We need your help in three key areas: First, we need every household on and across the street from the lake, in Hamilton and Essex to be members of the Chebacco Lake & Watershed Association. As this year ends and 2007 begins we need to show Town State and Civil officials that we are an active, working association and that we have serious concerns about the long-term health of our properties, lake and watershed.

Second, we need residents of Hamilton and Essex to provide the CLWA with their ideas, concerns, input and labor. We will be meeting with our State Reps and Senator and will be seeking the aid and cooperation of Town officials to help us solve the water level and water quality problems. Without your support, and without some unity on the lake, we will lose the lake to pollution from flooded septic systems storm run-off and erosion of the shoreline.

Third, we need new representatives on the CLWA Board. The bylaws of the CLWA call for more representatives from Essex and Hamilton. There is not a huge commitment of time and workload and we know many of you have skills, concerns and talent that will help us all. Consider joining the Board of Directors, please. You will make a difference!

Board members will be holding an open house on different sides of the lake to give all of you a better idea of what our concerns are, who we are, and to listen to your concerns and ideas. Please watch for your invitation and plan to attend one. It will take only an hour or so, and we promise it will be worthwhile.

Thank You,

Dave Kerr

President

Chebacco Lake & Watershed Association

Annual Fall Cleanup

On Sunday morning, Oct. 22nd, ten volunteers picked up quite a bit of trash during the semi-annual shoreline cleanup. The sides of Chebacco Road from Round Pond to the State boat ramp as well as the woods and shoreline in that area were covered. Quite a few bags of trash were collected along with some building debris. The prize from the fall cleanup this year was a complete 4-cylinder auto engine that Mike Wade and Dave Kerr removed at the old Hamilton Town Beach.

The Hamilton DPW promptly hauled everything away the next day. Trash was also picked up at the old Essex beach area off of Red Gate Road.

Many thanks to the volunteers—Nancy Doyle, Vitaly Schreuer, Joyce and Francisco St. Hilaire, Sara and Isabella Zink, Shirly Slater, Mike Wade, Sue McLaughlin, Sheri Lamkin and Dave Kerr.

CLWA Website

Contact us and read updates on our website at www.chebaccolake.org.

Issue Highlights

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Committee News

There is a lot of news to report this fall. As you read earlier, we once again face a water level crisis, and your Board of Directors is working hard to alleviate the situation. Board members Sue McLaughlin and Dave Lash have been working with an ad-hoc committee, formed by the CLWA, Mass. Audubon and Eight Towns and the Bay to develop a management plan for the Chebacco Lake Watershed. The committee is identifying and cataloguing the different problems that our watershed area faces. These include nutrient levels, weed growth, shoreline erosion, over-development, and improper landscaping around homes. Please watch future newsletters, check our website, Chebaccolake.org, and attend one of our open houses to find more out about this work and what our future role may be in it.

Dave Kerr, Sue McLaughlin and Dave Lash all attended the Hamilton Conservation Committee meeting on November 15th. At that meeting we informed the ConCom of the water level problems and the problems with the outlet. We also received a commitment from the ConCom to publish a set of guidelines for us to distribute to you, which outline State laws regarding landscaping, new construction and lawn and yard care for living next to wetlands. The ConCom is the agency that enforces the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and it is always good to know what you can and cannot do before undertaking the above-mentioned projects next to the lake.

Important Changes to Membership

We have made some important changes to our membership plan. There will be no dues increases but we have voted to make all memberships expire on January 31st. If you paid your dues after August 1, 2006, you will not have to renew the membership until January 2008. Memberships paid before that date will expire at the end of January 2007, and need to be renewed before that date. This change makes it easy for everyone to remember to renew and helps the CLWA maintain accurate records and consistent funding levels. Renew your membership with the only voice that lakeside residents have with local and state government, and agencies. Please renew your membership or join us for the first time. Together we can keep our lake healthy and beautiful for years to come.

Wildlife Note

Please don't feed the ducks and geese. They are wild animals, not part of a petting zoo. They will not migrate if they are getting handouts and can end up dying when the lake freezes.

Septic Tank Tips

- Use of chlorine bleach or antibacterial soap will destroy the beneficial bacteria in your septic tank.
- Pumping your septic tank every few years will prolong the life of the leaching tank or leaching field and will also help protect the lake.

A Few Reminders

Permits

When planning any work on your property, if it is next to a lake, pond or any wetland, you should check with the local Conservation Commission to see if a permit is necessary. Some work also requires a permit from the State. Some types of work that may require a permit are changing the grade, removing trees, installing or altering a retaining wall, additions to a house or outbuildings, septic system installations or renovations, and fence or driveway installation.

Purple Loosestrife

It's not too late to remove any purple loosestrife from your shoreline.

This is a VERY INVASIVE plant that is rapidly spreading around the lake and is also in the outlet.

Each plant produces many seeds each year.

Pull up the plants if you can or at least snap off the plants and dispose in a trash bag.

Designing With Nature-Landscaping for a Healthy Lake

More About Trees

In our spring 2006 newsletter, I wrote an article entitled "*Plant a Tree to Help Celebrate Our Lake*". The article elaborated on the benefits of planting trees and shrubs on our property, such as their role in eliminating sediments and pollutants from the groundwater running into our lake. In this newsletter, I would like to continue a discussion about trees, but more about the importance of preserving existing trees on your site.

The trees around the lake definitely contribute to the landscape character of the area. Can you imagine how sterile the vistas would be if every property owner cut down every mature tree on their site? Not only would this be extremely detrimental to the health of the lake but also to the aesthetics as well.

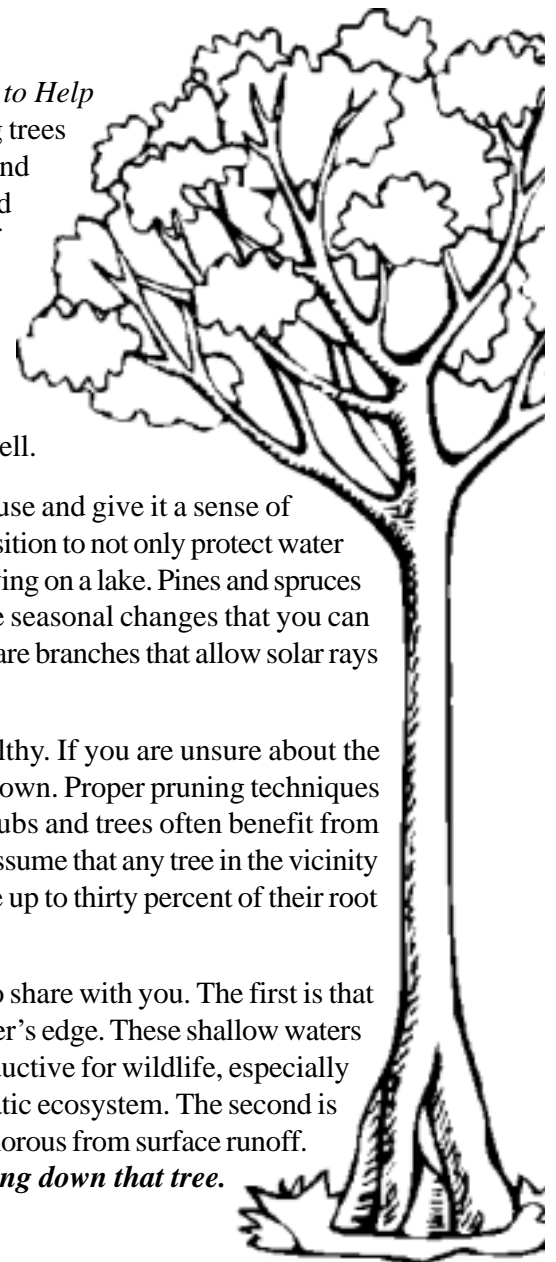
If you look around the lake notice how nicely a mature tree can frame a house and give it a sense of scale. A mix of mature trees, shrubs and low growing plants is the best composition to not only protect water quality and provide wildlife habitat, but visually it is the most compatible to living on a lake. Pines and spruces provide year-round screens for privacy. Deciduous trees provide some nice seasonal changes that you can enjoy: leaves that provide shade in the summer and color in the autumn and bare branches that allow solar rays to light and warm the house in the winter.

Maintain and prune trees that are situated near the house to keep them healthy. If you are unsure about the health of a tree, consult a professional before you make a decision to cut it down. Proper pruning techniques can also help you frame a vista or scale a tree to compliment your site. Shrubs and trees often benefit from heavy pruning. If you are doing a construction project, do not automatically assume that any tree in the vicinity will need to be cut down. Certain varieties of trees and shrubs can often have up to thirty percent of their root systems disturbed without any adverse affects.

Here are a few interesting facts about trees along the lake that I would like to share with you. The first is that they provide the shade that helps maintain cooler temperatures along the water's edge. These shallow waters heat up easily in the summer sun. Because the shallow waters are more productive for wildlife, especially fish, it is important to maintain cooler temperatures to sustain a healthy aquatic ecosystem. The second is that a 50 foot buffer zone of grass traps only 25 percent of nitrates and phosphorous from surface runoff.

Trees and shrubs collect 80 percent. So, please think twice before cutting down that tree.

By Robyn Kanter



Fiberglass birch bark color canoe. Please call (978) 468-3549 to claim.

FOUND

South Hamilton, MA 01982

P. O. Box 2344

Chebacco Lake & Watershed Association

Chebacco Lake & Watershed Association Membership Application

There will be no dues increases but we have voted to make all memberships expire on January 31st. If you paid your dues after August 1, 2006, you will not have to renew the membership until January 2008. Memberships paid before that date will expire at the end of January 2007, and need to be renewed before that date.

New **Renewal** **Choose one:** Member \$25 Patron \$50 Sponsor \$75

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Lake Address (if different) _____

Telephone Number _____ E-mail Address _____

Please circle all that apply to your household: Lakeside resident / Property within 500' of lake /
Seasonal resident / Non-resident property owner / Sport or recreational user of lake area /
Recreational user of Chebacco Woods

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Please send completed form and dues to: CLWA, P. O. Box 2344, So. Hamilton, MA 01982