

# Friends of Lake Williams Newsletter

Fall 2007

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Friends of Lake Williams  
P.O. Box 216  
Windsor, CT 06095

## Message from the President

It's with great reluctance that we close our cottage and move back home to face another New England winter. The season of 2007 seems to have ended too soon, but I find myself saying that every year. This summer the weather was exceptional and it carried into a record-breaking fall. It isn't often that we have water skiers, and swimmers still enjoying the water into October. I only hope we don't have to pay for this bonus time with record snow fall.

This season, as usual, Aquatic Controls treated twenty-five acres of the lake. This is the amount they are permitted to treat by the Department of Environmental Protection. At our request they concentrated heavily on Mary's Cove, an area which had not previously received adequate attention. It appears the treatment was successful and the milfoil in that cove has been knocked back. We should all keep in mind that our treatment plan will never get rid of the milfoil but rather it is an attempt to control it from overtaking the lake. To that extent we continue to see excellent results.

During the early fall I had a few calls from members expressing concerns over an abundant weed cropping on the north side of the lake, near rock island. I had Aquatic Controls come out and take a look at it. They explained these weeds were common in the late season and we shouldn't be overly concerned with them.

Our organization along with the Town of Lebanon should be proud of the fact that due to our treatment program Lake Williams has been saved from a certain overgrowth of invasive weeds. We must also remember that without continuing our efforts we will lose our lake in a relatively short time.

I want to wish everyone a great (but short) winter and look forward to our next season at the lake.

Steve Looby

## Futile Hunt for a Goose Dinner

FLW Board of Directors Member Jack Clayton witnessed an unusual sight early this summer on the lake. While he was out cruising in his boat, he came upon a dog that was enthusiastically swimming after a pair of geese. The dog had apparently started the chase for a snack on the shore and was not deterred when the birds entered the water. Jack recounted that the dog did not seem to be aware that his foolish dog paddling was no threat to the geese in their own element. They have webbed feet. Sadly for the dog, he doesn't. The geese have negotiated the waterways their entire lives. The dog cut his swimming teeth by chasing an occasional stick thrown into the shallows by his master if he was lucky. The geese are fast in the water. The dog's swimming capabilities are not what anyone would characterize as lightning speed. In concluding his story, Jack quipped: "If the dog had been lucky enough to get close to his prey, the geese would have pulled their trump card. They can fly!" The score of this contest was shaded toward the home team: Geese 1, Dog 0.

## Report from the Water Quality Committee

By Steve Looby

The Water Quality Committee continued its periodic monitoring of the lake water. Made up of members Jack Zappulla, Frank Catalano and Steve Looby, testing is done at least three times a year in order to monitor any changes in the lake. The sampling is done in three different areas of the lake at three different water levels. Water is collected from the surface, a depth of four feet and a depth of seven feet. It is then tested immediately for temperature, PH levels, conductivity and dissolved oxygen. These readings are then compared to prior samples in order to

determine any changes which may be occurring in water quality. At least once a year a sample is also submitted to Columbia Lab to confirm our readings and give added information such as phosphorus, ammonia and nitrate levels. Water sampling this year revealed excellent results. The test showed that we have consistently maintained our high quality of water.

The water clarity is also tested each time with what is known as a Secchi Disk. The disk is approximately eight inches in diameter and is painted in alternate black and white quadrants. The readings are taken from the deepest area of the lake, near the dam. The disk is lowered into the lake by unwinding a rope which is attached to its center. A measurement is taken at the point where the observer last has sight of the disk. Our September testing revealed an astonishing new record of 12 feet eight inches, over four feet deeper than samples taken last year.

The only problem area still seen to be the increasing number of beer cans, plastic bottles and bait containers we are finding in the lake. We encourage all members to pick up any debris they see in the water and be careful of trash which may be blowing from their properties or boats. The public spots along Route 207 still appear to be the worst areas of pollution. We will continue our efforts with the town to have trash receptacles placed there.

## Connecticut Federation of Lakes (CFL) Hosts Northwest CT Meeting

*By Paul Cote*

On October 12, 2007, this reporter attended the CFL Northwest Meeting for the purpose of collecting information for the FLW newsletter. The round table discussions primarily focused upon the issues of the northwest region of the state but many of the issues also affect Lake Williams and other lakes wherever

they may exist. Of particular interest were the presentations on "Low Impact Development (LID)," and an update on the State's Invasive Aquatic Plant Protection Program. Sean Hayden of the Northwest Conservation District explained how LID techniques can be used to reduce phosphorous and nutrient loading to a water body. Brochures and handouts were available on a variety of subjects addressing lake management, invasive weed control, biological controls for Eurasian milfoil, a Guide to Invasive Aquatic Plants in Connecticut and lake survey maps created by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES). Various Department of Environmental Protection and other environmental professionals made themselves available prior to the meeting, during the break and following the meeting to address questions and concerns of the attendees. I will be sharing much of the information I collected with you in this and future newsletters.

I wish to extend the gratitude of FLW for this informational meeting and for other initiatives undertaken by the Confederation of Lakes (CFL) to expand the knowledge of organizations such as ours, and for living up to the name "The Voice for Our Lakes" that they display on their web site at [www.ctlakes.org](http://www.ctlakes.org)." CFL also expresses the following thought on their web site home page: "Formed in late 1995, the CFL is your partner, your resource, your sounding board, your clearing house and even your advocate in local, state, and national matters. The CFL wants to help your pond and lake and their watersheds to be healthier now and in the future."

I was struck by the CFL's activism in setting up this meeting and throughout the presentations but particularly during the round table discussions. I have sent in an application for membership that I collected at the meeting. Applications are available on their web site for anyone else interested in joining CFL.

## Origin of Lake Williams

*By Paul Cote*

Did Lake Williams always exist? Is it man made? I think it is man made because some "old timers" on the lake spin yarns of how bad it was for residents during the repair of the dam many years ago. From this, I assume the dam is necessary for the lake to exist and the lake's birth can probably be traced back to the creation of the dam. The old timers tell of receding shorelines and the influx of fish eating birds that swooped into Lebanon to feast upon the fish. All of the lake's fish species became "sitting ducks" for the birds in the increasingly shallow water. Concerned lake residents like Leigh Rider were instrumental in restocking bass when dam repairs were completed and normal water levels returned. Based upon these stories I can only surmise that only a stream or a brook would exist without the dam. Stories are told that the lake bottom once existed as farmland. There is another story that the rock island at the northwest section of the lake was created by farmers who piled their stones in one location as they tilled the land. There is another tale about the small island that is located in the approximate center of the lake. There is a remnant of a small structure on that island and it is said that it once was a trapper's cabin. When did the lake first come into existence? When was the dam created and when was it repaired. Why is it named Lake Williams? Is it named after famous Lebanon resident William Williams who is one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence? This reporter is seeking historical information to present the facts to you in this newsletter. Wouldn't your trips to the lake or cruises in your boat with guests be more enjoyable if you could spout some of this history and point out the important spots on the

lake like an experienced tour guide? My visits to the Lebanon Library were not fruitful in answering most of my questions, even with the gracious help of the library staff and their computer system. Sadly, the world-wide-web is also barren of information about the lake. My next step is to solicit the help of the Lebanon Historical Society and I have already sent a query to the Lebanon Town Hall. If anyone has information that would be useful to bring some of these questions to light, or if you know where I can find relevant reference documents, please contact me. Together we can separate fact from fiction and reveal some of the lake's mysteries.

## A bug is a conservationist's friend?

By Paul Cote

Wouldn't it be wonderful if an insect existed that loved to eat Eurasian milfoil above all other plants? Wouldn't it be wonderful if this insect were native to the region that encompasses Lake Williams?

Believe it or not, such an insect does exist. Researchers in states in northern New England and across the country became aware that milfoil in some lakes was declining when no control measures were taken by man. Their research led to the discovery that a native milfoil weevil existed in the lakes where the milfoil was in decline. Apparently the native insect feeds upon native milfoil, but when the Eurasian variety came into existence, they immediately became connoisseurs of European food and shunned our native food variety. Other states have studied the phenomenon and are experimenting by actually introducing the weevils to combat the invasive weed. Weevils are being offered for sale on the internet, and so far, approximately twenty states have approved the introduction of the weevils into a water body within their boundaries.

When I attended the Northwestern Connecticut Lakes Gathering sponsored by the CT Federation of Lakes and the Lake Waramaug Task Force, Inc., I obtained a handout published by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) on the subject of Biological Control of Eurasian watermilfoil with the Milfoil Weevil. It was written by Michelle Marko, Roslyn Selsky, Greg Bugbee and Jason White and contained many interesting facts such as: 1. All life stages of the weevil damage watermilfoil. 2. So far, weevils have been found in all Connecticut lakes that contain watermilfoil. 3. The weevil reproduces rapidly and can have several generations each year, leading to rapid population growth. 4. Approximately two to four weevils per stem of milfoil are needed to control milfoil populations. 5. The weevil population will naturally control itself with the rise and fall of milfoil density. 6. The size of the weevil is approximately the size of a small lemon seed.

The CAES has been funded to survey all of the state's lakes and their task is ongoing. In addition to identifying invasive aquatic plants, and conducting water quality tests, they will also test for the existence of weevils and approximate their numbers. Let us hope that Lake Williams is on the "places to eat" for these wonderful critters and when the lake is tested by CAES, their numbers will be great. As a group, FLW needs to learn more about these helpful insects and what factors we can control that will make their stay at Lake Williams enjoyable.

## Frog's Eggs?

By Paul Cote

During the past summer season I noticed a growth on branches and some dock lines immersed in the water near our dock. They were gelatinous globs that my grandchildren insisted were frog eggs they learned about in school. Since I have seen frog eggs, I agreed with

their observations. I was even more convinced as they pulled one of the branches out to examine one of the blobs more closely and I could see that it was made up of a distinct collection of individual units. Later in the summer I became suspicious. If these are actually frog eggs, shouldn't they have hatched into a throng of tadpoles? Why had the frogs deposited their eggs in harms way in the exposed part of the lake? Don't frogs always leave their eggs in the quiet and heavily vegetated areas of a lake to protect their offspring from predators?

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, Penny Hermann, FLW's secretary, sent me a copy of the Candlewood Lake Authority newsletter. In one article there was a picture of the blob, and the mystery was lifted.

I decided to do some research and found a web site that provided more detailed information at <http://www.bio.umass.edu/biology/cn.n.river/bryozoa.html>. I contacted Douglas G. Smith (retired), who is Assistant Dean of the Arts and Sciences Advising Center as well as Faculty Advisor at the University of Massachusetts. He granted FLW permission to use some of the information and pictures for this story.



Are these alien life forms the web site asks? No just bryozoans (*Pectinatella magnifica*). Bryozoans are a member of the animal phylum Ectoprocta (common names: bryozoans, moss animals). The majority of bryozoans are marine (several thousand species), but one class is found exclusively in fresh water. Three species of this class have been found by divers in the Connecticut River and there are about fifty that inhabit fresh water. What seems to be an individual is

actually a colony of zooids. The colony is gelatinous, firm and slimy to the touch. The inner gelatinous mass is 99% water. The surface appears divided into rosettes, each with 12-18 zooids. The colonies form on submerged logs, twigs, even wooden docks.



Herpetologist Brian Kleinman holds the bryozoan colony he found in a mucky channel along the banks of the Farmington River. Source is: [http://cttrips.blogspot.com/2005\\_09\\_01\\_archive.html](http://cttrips.blogspot.com/2005_09_01_archive.html).

Finally, there is some good news concerning the existence of these so called moss animals in our lake. Bryozoa have only recently been getting major scientific study but some freshwater varieties are thought to be useful indicators of water quality. *P. magnifica* is said to like water which is eutrophic (that is, it wants to find food in the water) but it will not exist in water that is contaminated. If this is true, let us hope that bryozoans will thrive in our lake for a very long time.



Photo of Jill Miller holding a *Pectinatella magnifica* in Lake Cochituate, Natick MA; printed here by permission of A. Richard Miller (<http://millermicro.com/bryozoa.html>).

## The Spa at Grand Lake

By Paul Cote

When you are cruising on the lake in your boats near the dam at the south end of Lake Williams or as you are driving down Route 207 in your motor vehicles in the same area, have you ever wondered about the large white stately building that imposes itself so gloriously into the background scenery?

The Lebanon Historical Society tells us that in the early 1900s, a small hotel was built across from Lake Williams. The hotel was greatly expanded in the late 1920s when it was owned by the Liebman family. Called Grand Lake Lodge at that time, the complex could serve 250 people a day. It was sold in 1957. After a fire in 1976, it was closed but in the 1990s, it was renovated and reopened as the Spa at Grand Lake.

A web search for "The Spa at Grand Lake" provided the following. The Spa is the only true full service destination spa in Connecticut and is located in a scenic and rural setting overlooking Lake Williams. It is located on 85 acres of beautiful country property surrounded by plush woodlands. Come and enjoy a vacation getaway as you lose weight and de-stress. The Spa includes aerobics, swimnastics, yoga, Pilates, nia, kickboxing, 75 rooms, TV, air conditioning, Jacuzzi, exercise equipment, sauna, indoor & outdoor pools, tennis, three meals, and complimentary massage every night.

And now you know.

## Lake Williams Updates

**Milfoil Treatment Status** - Another section of the Lake will be treated with herbicide in 2008. As you probably know, FLW has partnered with the Town of Lebanon every year to split the annual cost. With the help of its members and lake residents, and FLW, the areas with the heaviest infestations

requiring attention has most likely been identified, FLW asks its members and other users of the lake to help in this process by marking any plants that you see with any empty plastic container that has a cap and a handle that can easily be tied with a piece of line and a rock for an anchor. In this way, we can not only help in the eradication process, but we can also warn other boaters to avoid passing near these buoys with their motored boats. Milfoil fragments chopped by propellers and released into the water will float and be carried to other locations to grow into another nuisance spot.

Here is another way that you can help. If you are not a member of FLW, please consider membership because annual membership fees are used to fund FLW's efforts toward maintaining the purity of the lake and warding off threats to its usefulness. Secondly, you can be vigilant about the growth of milfoil while using the lake. Sightings can be reported to any FLW board member and the information will be used to make treatment decisions for 2008. There are many resources on the internet, including our own CT DEP, where you can go to learn how to identify milfoil and to learn more about this nuisance.

Lastly, boaters should get in the habit of inspecting their boats, live wells, bait buckets and propellers to remove any vegetation found before launching or moving to another body of water.

**Membership** — The FLW annual membership drive will kick off again in the spring. The organization's fiscal year is July 1 to June 30. New memberships are accepted at any time during the fiscal year. Once again, articles will be placed in local newspapers and in Lebanon Life to spur the process. Perhaps we can play up the aspect that FLW will be celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> year of existence. As always, members are encouraged to recruit new members. Please discuss the merits of belonging to the group with neighbors, visitors or other lakeside

landowners. All of these individuals will derive the most benefit from maintaining lake quality.

FLW currently enjoys a strong membership of approximately 128 people. To apply for membership, please obtain an application on line through links provided on the Lake Williams Campground web site at [www.lakewilliamscampground.net](http://www.lakewilliamscampground.net).

**Boating Guidelines Update** – FLW’s boating guidelines will be updated and presented to the next board meeting for approval. The idea of creating the guidelines and disseminating them to lake users germinated because FLW recognized that there are navigational hazards on Lake Williams that need to be pointed out, especially to first time users of the lake. In addition, boaters noticed that some of their peers were navigating in a manner that was not courteous in some instances and other boat operator’s were downright unsafe. Enforcement of the rules is not FLW’s role, but perhaps FLW could perform a service in this area with education. Board member Jack Clayton developed the first hazard map and guidelines and it was digitized for printing by Paul Cote. The map is intended to be beneficial not only to first timers, but also to all lake users. The map reinforces Connecticut Boating Guidelines and at the same time provides recommendations for safe and courteous powerboat operation.

During the CFL’s Northwest gathering, someone from the State pointed out that Connecticut’s Boating regulations contains rules specific to many waterways in the rear of the book. Unfortunately, there are no guidelines for our lake in the manual. Perhaps the book only includes lakes with State boat launching facilities.

A copy of FLW’s guidelines and map is posted at boat launches and can also be obtained at the Lake Williams Campground office. It also includes by reference some of the rules and regulations from the State’s Handbook.

Updates to the new FLW map will include: An overlooked hazard to sailboat operators. Power lines cross between the northeast shore and Fox Island. Joe Geary, a new seasonal camper at Lake Williams who enjoys sailing brought this to our attention. He was gracious enough to measure the height of his mast when he was preparing his boat for winter, and it is 26 feet. He said he was sailing at a relatively slow speed and his mast appeared to strike the lines at the 23 foot mark. There is some slack in the power lines, meaning the height of the lines from the water’s surface will vary somewhat, so FLW will approximate the height in the guidelines but will at the same time strongly caution all sailboat users to either avoid the area entirely or at least be extremely cautious in that part of the lake if your boat is equipped with a tall mast. As reported in an earlier newsletter, the new map will also recommend strongly that no motors be used in the extremely shallow and weed choked north end of the lake because it contains a large amount of milfoil, and milfoil that is fragmented by motors will tend to migrate and grow in other areas of the lake.

## Reflections on the 2007 lake season

*By Paul Cote*

As we start to close out our summer homes or begin to prepare our year round homes on the lake for the winter, we can reflect on what a wonderful season we have enjoyed. The weather seemed to cooperate for most weekends unlike years gone past where we had to settle for only a few sunny weekends in the midst of a string of dreary and rainy ends to the week. When it did rain, I cannot recall any long protracted stretches of days on end with not sight of the sun.

The fishing was good at the start but seemed to tail off as we entered late September and early October. There weren’t a lot of

opportunities to photograph prize catches. Fishing veterans who I spoke with were only marginally pleased with the season’s results. You know the ones because their boats are always somewhere on the lake with the owner’s beating the surface of the water into froth with all types of lures.

Near the Independence Day Holiday, we experienced another wonderful boat parade organized by Board Member Frank Catalano. Many boaters took the time to decorate their boats, some secretly, to make a grand entrance at the parade starting point. At the end of the parade, in the deepening darkness, the winning boat was selected by the loudest applause received from the participants as the top nominees were presented. Everyone was surprised when it came to light that the Pirate Captain of the winning boat was Brian Rider. Many of the participants not affiliated with Lake Williams Campground did not know him or did not know that his Dad had purchased a newer boat. He was as successful in disguising himself and disguising the boat in that “Pirate” theme. For a few days following the parade, no one felt safe navigating the lake waterways because a few of the pirates were still lurking. “Cut your engine, lay to and prepare to be boarded” was a command we expected to hear any moment.

Glorious sunsets or sunrises seemed to be rare this season as I was always prepared with trusty camera to capture any picture that presented itself. Evening cruises just before sunset were still enjoyable despite the lack of brilliant sky coloring and we can all thank the cooperative weather for enabling many such pleasurable treks.

In September and October there seemed to be a bumper crop of acorns falling for people blessed with oak trees on their property. Raining acorns disturbed many a lakeside resident and they pummeled the roofs whenever a breeze would appear, or whenever those rascally squirrels would disturb and loosen them as

they scampered about seeking their breakfasts. When oak seeds begin to accumulate in the walkways, one has to be careful of each step because the sheer numbers makes it feel like walking on ball bearings.

The leaves are beginning to fall signaling the end. As a reminder, when you rake and clean up the fallen residue, they should not be blown into or raked into the lake. Leaves, acorns, grass clippings and other debris contain high concentrations of the nutrients phosphorus and nitrogen, which are the most common cause of lake pollution in urban lakes.

For the sake of our lakes, bag your leaves, grass clippings and other small pieces of yard waste. Dispose of them on your designated yard-waste pickup day. Even better, start compost pile or invest in a mulching blade for your mower. Do not mow, sweep, or blow leaves and other yard waste into the street. Keep curbside drains and gutters free of debris. If you have a lawn service, please be sure they comply as well.

Remember, "Only rain should go down the drain." Don't let pollution happen.

## Do you have favorite pictures of Lake Williams?

The newsletter committee is seeking pictures either for the newsletter and/or for the FLW Web site. If you have a favorite Lake Williams picture and want to share it with others, please forward it to the newsletter committee (see contact information on page 7). Perhaps you have a unique picture of activity on the Lake, animals in the wild, a fisherman's catch that stands out from the rest, etc. If you have a short story to pass along to supplement the picture, it would greatly enhance the value of the addition.

## Join FLW

Thanks to our members for their support over the past year. Please renew your membership, and if you are not currently a member, please consider joining this worthwhile organization. If you are a member and are aware of other members who have not renewed, please remind them. Lets all work toward maintaining a strong, viable and successful FLW. This, in turn, will assure that the management activities needed to control the quality of the lake environment will be jump started and monitored for effectiveness. Please clip the below section of the newsletter and forward it to the following address:

For the 7/1/2007 – 6/30/2008 fiscal year:

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Mail check and include the above contact information to Friends of Lake Williams, c/o P.O. Box 216, Windsor, CT 06095

## More on CFL's Volunteer Secchi Disk Monitoring Program

*By Chris Mayne, CFL*

The following was provided by Chris Mayne in response to FLW

newsletter committee questions about the volunteer monitoring program. The program is still active, although we need to get more lakes participating. The program started as a way to get people involved in their lakes. Although you can't have a real understanding of your lake by just measuring Secchi disk depth, you can get a sense if there is something wrong or if conditions are improving by looking at long term Secchi disk data. Secchi disk with other measured parameters can provide a lot of good information to help analyze a lake. We opted to get people taking Secchi disk measurements because they are relatively inexpensive and just about anyone can learn to collect Secchi disk depths. By collecting Secchi data from lakes from around the state, it gives the CFL a little bit of insight into the water quality issues that CT faces and what lake groups are currently active in the state. The Secchi disk data that is collected is compiled into an annual report that I write and send out to participants. I also have sent the data to the National Secchi Dip-In data bank in the past. I need to send the last two years of data to the National data bank but they were having trouble this year with their servers and didn't think they would have the budget to keep the program running. However, enough people volunteered and now it is back on line. The State isn't involved in this program, it's a CFL initiative. A representative from the CT DEP sits on the board of the CFL and receives a copy of the report.

## Advertise Your Business with Friends of Lake Williams

For \$25 per year, you can advertise your business and show your support for Friends of Lake Williams in this newsletter. Please send your business card and a check for \$25 to the FLW address shown on page 1 at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> column.

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## The Newsletter Committee seeks your help

The Newsletter Committee requests your help in producing this newsletter. Articles or ideas concerning the lake, or information relevant to FLW's mission will be welcomed. You don't need to write the article. If you prefer, provide the facts from which news stories can be developed. FLW Committees are also requested to provide input after completing any significant activity such as identifying where invasive weed infestation is located on the lake, stories related to the lake treatment process, the results of water quality testing, etc. Please send your facts, articles or ideas for articles to:

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Oakdale CT 06370-1819  
E-mail: [cotehome@snet.net](mailto:cotehome@snet.net)