

# The Lake Matters

The official publication of the Lake St. Catherine Conservation Fund  
May, 2010

## New Organization Aims to Restore Lake

By now, many of you have heard of the Lake St. Catherine Conservation Fund. We began forming as a new organization early in the year, and we are already boasting a roster of fifty members! Our aim is to bring back Little Lake St. Catherine to its former beauty and accustomed use. Through careful study, professional advice, and cooperation with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, the Conservation Fund is pursuing both traditional and innovative means of bringing about restoration to the lake, which is rapidly deteriorating due mostly to the natural process of eutrophication.

The LSCCF is headed by local residents, three of whom have previously occupied positions of importance with the Lake St. Catherine Association. The movement began when a local property owner tackled the problem of clearing the lower channel, and through the interest of other lake residents, the momentum grew naturally into the establishment of the Lake St. Catherine Conservation Fund.

The group has already put in place arrangements to have the outlet channel at the south end of the lake cleaned up this season. In addition, we are gathering information from several lake management contractors who specialize in biological, chemical, or mechanical methods of alleviating lake problems. We have currently arranged for Allied Biological, an established firm in the area of lake rehabilitation, to survey the lake and present a report of their analyses and recommendations. We are also engaged with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Darrin Fresh Water Research Institute of Rensselaer Polytech. A recent presentation from Earth Specialty Products of Glens Falls

demonstrated the advantages of hydraulic dredging. This company has been doing work on Lake George for some time. Their representative has toured the lake and a pilot project proposal for this summer is being prepared.

Further, many of us participated in the Back Roads survey of the watershed last year to determine the sources of adverse runoff into the lake system.

Before committing to any projects, however, we hope to work actively with lake residents to develop a lake use plan by which we will be able to formulate a master strategy.



Lake St. Catherine  
Conservation Fund  
Wells & Poultney, Vermont

*You'll see our logo on the web site*

It is our pledge to keep all our activities visible and accessible to all of our members, and our bylaws are designed to make sure that the membership has a powerful voice in the organization as well as the annual selection of officials and directors. As a move toward keeping the members current, we have already established a web site. While it is still being expanded and refined, you are invited to visit the Lake St. Catherine Conservation Fund on line at [www.lakematters.org](http://www.lakematters.org), and please let us hear from you with your questions, concerns, and ideas.

*It's all for the sake of the lake!*



## ***What can we do about the lake?***

### **The process of eutrophication**

The LSCCF has been investigating many different methods of lake restoration, and we find that lakes all over the world are experiencing the same loss of use as our Little Lake and other parts of the lake system. The deteriorating condition of the lake is a process known as eutrophication. This process takes place over time as vegetation decays each season and builds up nutrient-rich sediment, which in turn provides a fertile base for more vegetation. This cycle is exacerbated by factors outside the lake as well. In a natural state, much of the surrounding land absorbs sediment, phosphorous, and nitrogen run-off into the lake. But with increased development of houses and paved areas, these substances find their way into the lake in increasing amounts, encouraging the eutrophication process to accelerate even faster. Last year many of us took part in a Back Roads Survey, conducted in cooperation with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and documented the many places where the watershed area feeds into the lake. Our findings have been formally presented to the state, and the state is formulating plans to control runoffs where possible.

### **Controlling the eutrophication process**

We have learned that there are numerous procedures being used throughout the world to halt the process of eutrophication and bring lakes back to accustomed use. The use of chemicals, such as has been done in Lake St. Catherine, can effectively kill specific vegetation. Weeds can also be removed by hand-pulling, and by suction harvesting, a process that was tried two years ago on Lake St. Catherine. But simply removing or killing weeds does not stem the eutrophication process.

Actual removal of the sediment and other matter can be done by several procedures, such as hydro-raking, mechanical dredging, suction dredging, and hydraulic dredging. Each of these procedures can be effective, but those which create the smallest disturbance to the lake bottom are least likely to have negative side effects. It is generally believed that large-scale dredging can cause undesirable changes in the lake's biosystem.

Modern technology has recently turned to other methods based on greater scientific understanding of the lake eutrophication process. These new lake treatments involve aeration of the

lake sediment, the use of dyes that filter out ultraviolet light and inhibit weed growth, and a process called bioremediation, which uses enzymes and bacteria to effectively diminish sediment and increase water depth.

### **What actions have the LSCCF taken?**

While many of these procedures have been used effectively to rejuvenate lakes around the world, the LSCCF is gathering information from various expert sources to see what is best for our lake, what will be allowed by the state of Vermont, and what we can afford. As mentioned earlier, in the next few weeks we hope to have several professionals out to survey our lake and present their analyses and prescriptions for returning the lake back to its former beauty and usefulness.

Additionally, we have been working with limnologist Larry Eichler of the Darrin Fresh Water Institute of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, who has provided us and the Lake St. Catherine Association with a core sample, which gives a picture of the history of the lake based on analysis of the layers of materials that exist in the lake.

We have been in an ongoing dialogue with Jason Shea of the Army Corps of Engineers, and are considering having the Corps provide us with their perspective on how we should proceed, as well as possible assistance with funding of any projects we take on.

We believe that our best activity right now is becoming educated about all the factors involved in restoring our lake and using that information to make intelligent, well-founded decisions about implementation.

Soon our website will display a list of links that members can follow to visit informative web locations. We encourage our members to become knowledgeable in the area of lake management.

## **Meeting: May 29**

Our first membership meeting will be on Saturday, May 29, at 10:00 AM in the all-purpose room at the Wells Village School.. We set this date to coincide with Memorial Day weekend, hoping that many members will be able to attend.

At this meeting we will be holding an election of officers, voting on acceptance of the

bylaws, and updating members on this year's activities. Your attendance is most important.

Our meeting should be the beginning of a great new season at the lake, and the beginning of a hopeful new direction for all the residents of Lake St. Catherine.

## *The LSCCF Personnel*

We'd like to introduce you to the eleven members who have been working to build the LSCCF into an effective and committed organization. Here they are at a recent meeting.



*Left to right: Ron Dreher, Bill Frye, Bob Short, Bill Steinmetz, Al Cote, Max Emmons, Tim Makepeace, David Emmons, Lee Evans, Fran Gilman (Not pictured), Bill Rozensky*

**Bill Steinmetz, acting President.** Leading our organization is Bill Steinmetz, a resident of the lower channel whose heart is truly in the restoration of the lake. Bill has a professional background in engineering, and has great experience in working with non-profit organizations.

**David Emmons, acting Treasurer.** Dave lives on the east side of the Little Lake. He has been a trustee with the Lake St. Catherine Association for six years, and has spent untold hours learning about both traditional and cutting-edge procedures being used around the world to rejuvenate lakes like ours.

**Ron Dreher, acting Secretary.** Ron has been a trustee with the Lake St. Catherine Association for two years and has been closely involved with the Strategic Planning Committee. Ron is also a Lister for the town of Wells. Thus, Ron has a keen understanding of the issues involved in lake management from both sides of the political arena.

**Bob Short.** Bob is a long time resident of the east side of the Little Lake. Bob is also a true student of the current methods of lake management. His perspectives on potential lake projects are most valuable.

**Bill Frye.** Bill, who lives on the west side of the lake, is a retired businessman who has a keen understanding of the

important matters pertaining to the proper running of an organization like ours.

**Fran Gilman.** Fran lives in Rutland, but is often at his west shore camp. Fran has been a trustee of the Lake St. Catherine Association in charge of water safety and the distribution of buoys. He also conducted boating safety classes for young people who were interested in getting boating permits.

**Al Cote.** Another long-time resident, Al lives on the channel just a bit south of the bridge. Al has taken the responsibility to be our official water quality person. He will be participating in any surveying, testing, or water sampling in which we engage.

**Bill Rozensky.** Although Bill doesn't have lakefront property, he has been one of our active leaders. As a Wells resident, Bill understands the importance of a healthy lake, and has offered his experience in working with people in government.

**Tim Makepeace.** As a local contractor, Tim has many acquaintances and associates around the area. Tim has taken on the duties of being our membership chairperson.

**Lee Evans.** Lee's New Jersey family has summered on the lake for nearly 30 years. With his background in teaching

English, Lee is the publicist for the LSCCF, creating the web site, the newsletter, and assisting with other written matters.

**Max Emmons.** Max, coming from a younger generation, uses his technological talent to assist with the web site and other technical matters. Max is a great worker who's willing to take on tasks of many different kinds.

# A letter from our acting president....

Dear fellow Lake Saint Catherine advocate:

I am pleased to write to you about our shared passion – Lake Saint Catherine and its future. A number of us formed the Lake Saint Catherine Conservation Fund to assess the condition of the lake and take an active role in seeing that the lake is restored to an acceptable level (legally referred to as “accustomed use”).

We have learned a great deal since forming the Conservation Fund. One of the lessons is that change is hard to achieve—even change that would improve the environment, the condition of the lake and our community. We see that degradation of the lake is occurring through siltation (and other aspects of eutrophication in places), increased congestion through plant growth and unwanted beaver activity. For the longer term issues we are preparing a Strategy for the Lake this summer that you will be asked to help develop.

For the shorter term challenges, we are taking action. A work party will clear the lower channel from two beaver feed lines this spring. Water quality sampling will begin this week to keep a careful watch on conditions. Hydro-raking permits from various organizations will keep the State and our organization busy this summer.

We will be busy. We need your help. We look forward to your active membership and your attendance at our May 29<sup>th</sup> members’ meeting.

Thanks again,  
Bill Steinmetz, Acting President



## To the members of the LSCCF...

We are delighted with the response from so many of you who have shown your support and confidence by joining the Lake St. Catherine Conservation Fund, and we welcome you enthusiastically. We hope you will be rewarded as we embark upon this effort to improve the future of the lake. We know it will be a long, gradual process, but we are confident that together we can accomplish our goals.

Here is a list of our membership at the time of this writing. We are hoping to increase our rolls to at least one hundred by the end of our first season. If you have joined us, please encourage your neighbors on the lake to do the same.

Juli Eekhoff  
Patricia Sickler  
Harold Bates  
William Rozensky  
Charles Pascarella  
Barbara Hall & George Garner  
Tom & Laura Clark  
Owen & Sophia Thomas  
Robert & Carole Loffredo  
John & Paul Pesale  
Judy Sabella & Tom Flanagan  
Loren & Jo-Lynne Bartholomew  
Paul & Jacqueline Dufresne

Tim Makepeace  
David and Janet Emmons  
Michael & Joan Fucito  
Rita Devine  
Ron & Judy Dreher  
Lee & Susanne Evans  
Bill & Judy Steinmetz  
Frederick & Lisa Dreher  
Bruce Abrams & Jon Chase  
Allen & Linda Clark  
Bob & Tina Peterson  
Dianne & William Kudrez  
Robert Short

Kay McNeil  
John Moreno  
Anthony Rogers  
Michael Noonan  
Arthur & Sandy Michels  
Fred & Charlotte Capron  
Francis & Laurel Gilman  
Douglas & Jean Poray  
Kathy & Gil Saddler  
Gerard & Jackie Riso  
Charlie & Marilyn Boyle  
Raymond & Elaine Guhl  
Tracee Oakman Rupe

Robert & Margaret Huss  
Bill Frye  
Anita Stubbings  
Thomas Bradder  
Raymond & Karen Tatko  
Charles & Barbara Vengrove  
Max Emmons  
Christopher Kostyun  
Alfred & Donna Cote  
Doug & Jean Gilbert  
Jean & Donald Hart  
Brian & Katherine Lyford  
Edward & Barbara Corrigan

# ***Little Lake St. Catherine -- a Reminiscence***

Lee Evans

We were full of anticipation and excitement as the spring of 1983 came around, for we were about to begin our new adventure—indeed, our dream—our own cottage on Lake St. Catherine in Vermont! My wife Sue and our three kids were eager to see what the place would look like in the greenery of warm weather, for we had purchased the camp on a bitter cold January day complete with deep snow and frozen lake.

As soon as the weather warmed up, we were swimming off the shoreline, and then leaping off the dock we had soon built. Within a week or so, we met our neighboring families, and in short order there were actually ten youngsters running around, catching frogs, splashing in the lake, fishing, and playing kid games. It was a joyful and idyllic place to be, and all of the children became fast friends and grew to love the lake. Summer days stretched on with campfires at night, all the kids giggling and toasting marshmallows, and the grown-ups developing friendships that have lasted ever since.

But the focus of all activities was always the lake. With a float about fifty feet off shore, the kids would swim out and back, diving off the platform, playing king-of-the-mountain, and just loving the lake. Kids and adults alike all had our turns rowing around the lake catching bass, pike, perch, sunnies, and bluegills.

It wasn't long before the kids all learned to water ski, some at the young age of seven. Tubing, kneeboarding, and skiing became daily fun, and there were almost always a few boats zipping around the lake with someone in tow. I myself loved it when one of the kids would row me down to the south end of the lake, where I'd jump in and get my exercise by swimming back home to the northwest corner.

At almost any time it was wonderful enough just to be at lakeside, looking across the water at the mountains rising up from the

far shore, and there was a particular thing about the lake that my wife loved. In the morning, looking out our window across the lake, the sun would shine a certain way on the little ripples in the water and create a delightful glistening that Sue called “diamonds.”

Life at the lake is different now. Weeds that reach the surface prevent those little ripples and there's hardly a “diamond” to be found. Thick areas of lily pads grow bigger each year, and encroach ominously on our waterfront properties.

The kids are grown now, most with children of their own, but the unfortunate growth of plants and buildup of silt prohibit their little ones from swimming in the lake. If anyone even tries to walk into the water, within six feet from shore, they are shin-deep in muck and weeds. The daily parade of skiers and kneeboarders has long since disappeared. Even tubing seems to have become unpleasant with weeds tangling up propellers and dragging at the tubes. Years ago, many Saturday mornings brought a veritable armada of bass boats along our shoreline, where serious fishermen competed for trophy bass. But nowadays it's uncommon to see anyone trying to pull fish from out of the tangled mess. Now when we motor away from the dock with our boat, we watch apprehensively as our propeller churns up an ugly trail of black muck. Getting to the channel usually requires at least one stop to clear the propeller of weeds.



So it is with fondness yet sadness that we look back at our picture albums and remember the beauty of the lake only twenty-seven years ago. And so it is now that we join with others as we begin to take up a great project to see the lake restored to magnificence. I truly believe that, as it is true in so many places, Little Lake St.

Catherine can once again be a vibrant, clean

waterway hospitable to wildlife, and also a place for recreational delights for us humans.

## By-Laws

We have completed the task of creating the bylaws for our organization. These have been designed to maximize membership involvement in our organization and minimize any opportunity for excessive executive power. To this end, you'll see that the Board of Directors is essentially the decision-making body, and that the offices of president and vice-president are elected annually by the membership. At our first members' meeting, we will formally vote to accept them as written, or amend them if needed. Please take some time to visit our web site at [www.lakematters.org](http://www.lakematters.org) and look over our bylaws carefully so you can cast an informed vote on May 29.



## *What's in a Name?*

Many people have suggested that our name is not a good indicator of what we are all about—restoring the lake. Originally the name was chosen as part of the project to clear the lower channel. As the organization began to take on a wider scope, however, it appeared to many that a name that shows our purpose would be more appropriate. We ask our members to consider the matter of our name, and provide us with suggestions for a better name. You can send them to us by email at [lakematters@comcast.net](mailto:lakematters@comcast.net), or bring your ideas to our meeting on May 29.

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*Our thanks go out to all of you who have shown your support and become members. We hope you have enjoyed reading our first newsletter. We are including the form below for those who read this newsletter and would like to join the cause and support us with their membership.*



## Lake St. Catherine Conservation Fund

Wells & Poultney, Vermont

Please join today!

Please make checks payable to:  
The Lake St. Catherine Conservation Fund  
P.O. Box 52, Wells, VT 05774

Annual membership starts at \$50. We call this the Silver Level. Gold membership is \$100, Platinum membership is \$150, and Commercial membership is \$300.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Camp # \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contribution amount: \_\_\_\_\_

**The small self addressed envelope is included for your convenience if you would like to respond with a donation and become a member of the Lake st. Catherine Conservation Fund**