



The Lake Matters

June 2018

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LSCCF Moves Ahead with Second Harvester

Big news! We have purchased a second harvester to work the Little Lake! The first harvester, which we bought last year and used over the summer season was successful in reducing a notable amount of the milfoil and other nuisance vegetation. This led to improved navigation and a prettier lake for all to see. Everyone found this improvement most encouraging. But even with all the volunteer work, it was clear that more harvesting time was needed to keep up with the summer growth. But we thank Fran Gilman, Paul Labas, Bob Short, Tim Makepeace, Gary Melen, Lee Evans, Tyler Manning, Grady McDermott, and Joel Pliner, who all volunteered their time to help with the harvesting project.

Then last fall LSCCF director Paul Labas saw an opportunity to bid on another harvester, one which is in excellent condition. His bid was successful, and he went ahead with the purchase. Now the LSCCF is buying the machine from Paul. This unit is a 1987 Aquamarine model 200, (see photo) and it was previously owned by the state of Michigan. This harvester spent most of its life in storage, was extremely well-maintained, and had minimal hours of use. To make it an even better deal, the machine came with extra parts and a trailer.

Now the LSCCF is deciding how best to utilize the two harvesters. Last year, since nearly all the harvesting was done by volunteers, the actual usage was less than optimal, even after we contracted Green Mountain Building Services to run the harvester for additional hours. One option being considered this year is to hire an employee to operate the harvester on a full-time work schedule. Another consideration is that the second machine could be used by volunteers to augment the cleanup process, and possibly clean up navigation lanes right from people's docks.

All of this comes at a great cost, and some further financial strategy will be needed, as well as more hands-on help from members. Director Joel Pliner has secured some grant money to help fund the program, but much more is needed. The details will be discussed further at our Annual Meeting on July 14. If you'd like to help out with the harvesting, please let us know.

We are looking to an even cleaner, more navigable lake as we head into the 2018 season.



Aeration Report

We now have completed six seasons of aeration on the east side of Little Lake, and two and a half seasons on the west side. The aeration system has continued to reduce sediment and deepen the lake at a fairly consistent rate of about a foot per year in the aeration zones. Aeration works by increasing the dissolved oxygen content of the water column, causing beneficial bacteria to rapidly decompose the organic sediments that have filled in Little Lake over hundreds of years. As decomposition happens, the lake deepens. The most recent depth measurements show an increase in depth of 4 feet 2 inches at the diffuser sites on the east side of the lake, with depth increases averaging 3 feet 10 inches at the midpoints between the diffusers. On the west side, we show an average of 2 feet 10 inches in greater depth since starting two and a half seasons ago. We know that the lake is as deep as 40 feet to hard bottom in some areas, and that many of the plants that thrive in the shallow waters will no longer grow once the critical depth is reached. Some of our board members have also said that they have observed a definite decrease in milfoil, especially in the northeast part of the lake, and they attribute that to the effect of aeration.

When Director David Emmons reports measurements, he also gives his observations of the lake conditions. His remarks note that while almost the entire lake bottom has plant life, there is noticeable decrease in milfoil and other plants in some areas, and that the water column is very clear. Curly leaf pond weed still thrives over much of the lake.

This year marks the end of our aeration permit, and we expect the state will renew it and approve further expansion of the system. The Department of Environmental Conservation reviewed our aeration project last winter, and appears to be considering another evaluation this June before they will commit to extending the permit. Their current plan is to tour the aeration system again this June, and that after the 2018 season, all data would be assessed to make a decision on whether or not the systems will be authorized in the future under another permit. If they can be reauthorized, the Department could review proposals for future aeration projects as well. However, with the success we have had and the data we have accumulated—some of which has been verified by Rensselaer's Fresh Water Institute—should easily help them to a positive decision. In

addition, as a result of our lead, at least one other lake that we know of has done some preliminary testing of aeration, is proceeding with plans for their own aeration system, and is applying to the state for a permit.

Wells Voters Support the LSCCF

The LSCCF once again is most grateful to the citizens of Wells, who again this year granted \$20,000 to help fund our efforts to restore the lake. Their show of confidence in our current work to restore the lake in an environmentally friendly way is encouraging. Clearly the people of Wells see the value in protecting their precious Little Lake.

Our Eye in the Sky

In 2017 the LSCCF hired a drone service to help record the progress achieved by our aeration and harvesting programs. The service, performed by Rick Armitage of Rick's Technology Solutions, began by taking aerial footage of the aeration zones and the entire area of the Little Lake. On a second occasion, Rick got a view from above as Vice President David Emmons took VT State Representative Robin Chesnut-Tangerman and ANR's Ethan Swift out on the lake to do a survey of the aeration zones. Here's the view from the drone.



Then at the end of the 2017 season, another survey of the lake was taken by Rick of the whole Little Lake. Rick will be putting together a “before and after” video to show the changes that have taken place over the season. Rick has said from the footage he has taken, it's evident that the lake is better than it was during his first visit.

President's Letter

2017 was an amazing year! Little Lake has not looked or functioned so well in many years. It was amazing.

It was amazing for the Conservation Fund and for the Little Lake of Lake Saint Catherine. A total of 26 diffusers added oxygen to the bottom of the lake increasing dissolved oxygen levels, healthy fish/plant balance and most importantly, depth. We are measuring increases of depth to the 'soft bottom' of the lake of one foot per season, although the change varies by location. We are pleased that the State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Secretary Julie Moore now officially recognizes aeration has no negative environmental impacts. We are disappointed that the Agency still does not recognize the positive impacts, including increased depth, but we are going to win her over with documented data and science.

It was also an amazing year as we started harvesting excessive weed growth. In fact, over 1,000 cubic yards of plant material was removed by 'Millie' and exported to garden composting duty. Think of a football field covered over by aquatic plants to a depth of one foot! That's the fruit of the first year of harvesting in 2017. Moreover, it will only get better in 2018 ...

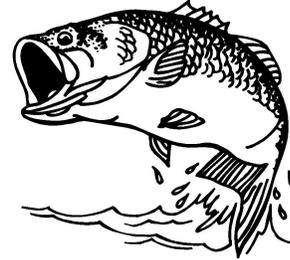
We have added a second harvester. 'Millie, Too' will also be active on the Little Lake in 2018. We hope to more than double the amount of harvested plant material, and along with aeration see even more improvement in our lake's ecology.

We owe a big thank you to many for this progress – the voters in Wells who continue to vote us funds, our members, and even the State of Vermont who is funding a part of our cost of harvesting. A special thank you to our Board members and other volunteers who have done the hard work in transforming our lake from an emerging wetland (swamp) to a healthy, functional lake that we all can enjoy and take pride in.

2018 is already another amazing year! If you haven't already joined by supporting and volunteering please do so. The next generation

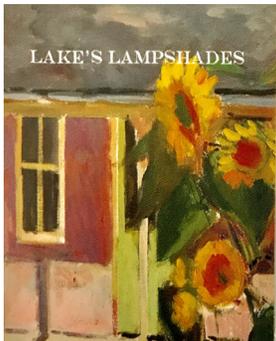
is already thanking us. Let's build on 'amazing' and bless those who will inherit this amazing lake environment.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve, Bill Steinmetz, President, LSCCF, Inc.



Hydraulic Dredging Still in the Picture

Our dredging permit is still in force, and we are still actively working toward its implementation. We currently have state approval to do an area approximately 100 feet by 500 feet in the northwest part of Little Lake, the area that has suffered the worst filling-in. Certain matters are still to be solved, such as the location of a dumping site, the impact on wetlands, and of course the cost. However, recently one of our members discovered that there is a dredging machine that is self-contained. It's an amphibious machine that can go into the lake, dredge material, load it into its own hopper, and then drive out of the lake to a dump site. If one becomes available, we will have a better chance to proceed with the dredging. We are checking now with the state to see if that process will fit within the limitations of our permit.



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Annual Meeting

The date for this year's Annual Members Meeting has been set for July 14. As usual, we will hold election of the board of Directors. All of the current board members have committed to serving for another year, and the Nominating Committee (Sue Evans [chair], Sue Ritchie, and Karen Melen) has proposed the following slate of ten candidates: Bill Steinmetz, David Emmons, Lee Evans, Bob Short, Fran Gilman, Tina Peterson, Tim Makepeace, Dennis Stark, Paul Labas, Joel Pliner, Robin Barley, and Michael Marine. Nominations from the floor are also welcomed at the Annual Meeting.

Agenda items include the Treasurer's Report, Secretary's Report, progress reports on aeration, harvesting, and dredging, current lake restoration activities and budget, and the Coalition of Vermont Lakes seminar coming up in August.

In addition, we will be holding a vote on a proposed amendment to the by-laws. President Bill Steinmetz observed that as we have grown we have entered a phase where our budget includes much higher spending than was anticipated ten years ago when we began. As a result, the by-laws lacked the kind of control needed to address large expenditures. Here is the existing article followed by the proposed revision:

8.6 Special Duties of Committee Chairs. *At the direction of the President, each committee chair shall prepare and submit a budget request before December 1 of each year. Subsequent adoption of the annual budget by the Board of Directors will constitute authorization for the respective committees to spend up to the approved budgeted amount without further approval; provided, however, that the chairs shall review and approve all bills for disbursements connected with their committees' affairs before submitting them to the Treasurer for payment. Committee chairs shall also prepare and submit to the Secretary, as soon as possible after September 1, brief written reports describing the principal activities of their committees during the current fiscal year.*

8.6 Special Duties of Committee Chairs. *At the direction of the President, each committee chair shall prepare and submit a budget request before April 1 of each year. Subsequent adoption of the annual budget by the Board of Directors will constitute authorization for the respective committees to spend up to a limit of \$500 on any adopted budgeted item without further approval; provided, however, that the chairs shall review and approve all bills for disbursements connected with their committees' affairs before submitting them to the Treasurer for payment.*

Expenditures exceeding the \$500 limit must be submitted to the Board of Directors for final approval. In the event that time constraints prevent the assembly of the board for the consideration of such large expenditure, then an email notification to all Directors and subsequent email vote shall suffice. In the event that an expenditure must be made in greater haste, the decision to make such expenditure shall be by unanimous agreement among the Committee Chair, the President, and the Treasurer. Board members shall be notified immediately by email of the disbursement.

Further, any contractual agreements proposed by a Committee must be approved by the Board

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Meet Our New Candidates for Board of Directors

Robin Barley and Michael Marine have both accepted nominations to become new members of the Board of Directors. Let's meet them both. Robin's place is on the east side of Little Lake, and Michael is a full time resident on the middle channel. Both have shown great interest and support for the LSCCF.

Robin Barley



I fell in love with Lake St. Catherine and purchased our home in the fall of 2002. The year round out of doors activities and natural beauty was the attraction.

The love affair with the lake may actually have started in 1961 when my family vacationed here to visit with my maternal grandparents who were the innkeepers at the Two Editors Inn in Poultney. Some great memories.

My primary residence is in Landing, NJ, and I work in technology sales for Rocket Software located in Waltham MA. I am a Sales Specialist and support our account executives throughout North and Latin America. When not too busy with work I enjoy play dates with my two beautiful grandchildren (and a little golf and tennis too).

I am thrilled to see such progress with the conditions in the lake and eager to help with the LSCCF efforts in any way that I can. I respect the time and dedication this group has invested in the lake remediation and I look forward to helping.

Michael Marine

Michael and his wife, Carmella, have had a place in Wells since 2000, but after retiring in 2016, they now enjoy life in Vermont

nearly year round. After serving in the Foreign Service for 32 years (27 overseas), Michael headed Sabin Vaccine Institute, a non-profit based in Washington, DC dealing with neglected tropical diseases, for seven years.



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How to Keep Up with the LSCCF

If you're wondering why you haven't been able to find us on the Internet anymore, here's the solution: we are no longer www.lakematter.org. Our web address has been changed to www.lakematters.com.

But there's more! You can now also keep up with our other news on Facebook, where you can easily "like" what you see and comment as well. Some of our members also use our Facebook page to ask questions.



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The Value of Volunteers

Since our inception in 2009, virtually all of the work we have accomplished has been attributable to volunteers, who have given generously of their time, their efforts, and even their money. Over the years, Directors and members have shown their dedication to our cause of restoring the lake. Bill Steinmetz has led the group from the beginning guiding our progress and holding or attending meetings locally and statewide. In implementing our aeration systems, Bob Short, Tim Makepeace, Fran Gilman and others set up the compressor, built sheds, and installed diffusers all over the lake. Joel Pliner, Bill Frye, Dennis Stark, Julie Bishop, and Lee Evans were doing permit applications, applying for grants, writing newsletters and pamphlets, and meeting with locals, keeping books, and more. Tina Peterson spent hours scheduling and delivering water samples to our lab rep. David Emmons, Joel Pliner, and Bob Short are often out on the lake taking measurements, checking systems, taking water samples, recording observations, and filing state reports. Paul Labas, a board member for just a year now, has been the spearhead in obtaining the harvesters, while he and other members have been out on the harvester spending hours helping to reduce the nuisance vegetation in the lake and keeping navigation lanes open. And over the years, once a month, the board was at the table on a Saturday morning making it all happen. We thank all of our volunteers for their steadfast commitment to the cause, and we also thank all our members for their support and for their extra contributions. Right now, about 60% of the folks on Little Lake are members. We would love to expand our membership to 100% of the Little Lake residents.



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