



End of Season Letter

November 2023

Kathleen Sciarappa President, MLPA

<https://www.mirrorlakenh.org/>

“Stay close to the serenity of a lake to meet your own peace of mind.” Munia Kahn, poet

Greetings Friends,

Sipping tea, watching the leaves turn, and enjoying the movements of the lake while thinking about 2023.

Rain Didn't Bring the Expected Gloom and Doom

The stillness of autumn allows us to reflect on connecting with the lake, the land, the mountains, and each other as we conjure memories of summer and embrace (or some just brace for!) the coming winter. We had a marvelous summer on Mirror Lake even as 14 of the 17 summer weekends featured rain. Rainfall records for NH were set on Mt. Washington! We enjoyed some uniquely warm and perfect fall days this year perhaps as repayment for summer rains. Amazingly, although we monitored Mirror Lake carefully, we did not experience any cyanobacteria blooms. As of September 2023, there were 59 cyanobacteria advisories issued for other lakes by NHDES, up from 47 NH lake advisories in 2022 and 44 NH lake advisories in 2021. But thankfully, there were no advisories for cyanobacteria on Mirror Lake this summer.

Our Heroes: Lake Hosts and Weed Watchers

How can we ever thank our local heroes who roll up their sleeves and work so hard on our behalf? We all noticed the very high-water levels, which in turn led to shoreline erosion on most properties this year. The nutrients in the eroded soil, combined with stormwater runoff, put the lake at risk for too much phosphorus but our protective countermeasures may have helped offset problems with cyanobacteria blooms. Kudos to



Lake Hosts Al Hardiman, Denise Bowdidge, Denise Ferriman, and coordinator Larry Gil for providing the first line of defense. Special appreciation for getting the safety signs posted on Route 109 to remind cars to slow at the boat launch. Exceptional thanks to Carl Hesler, Jr. for adding funds to the MLPA Lake Host Program allowing for Lake Host expansion. More on Carl's special trail blazing gift is detailed below. Special thanks to our Weed Watchers: Claudia and Tom Bissett; Jeanne Freeze; Al Hardiman; Kip Lachner; Glenda Philbin, Tina Urv and Norma Milne, Chair. Their eyes-

on, hands-on efforts are remarkable!

Another Kind of Hero: Legacy Builders

We're so grateful for each membership and donation and very impressed with a unique gift from Carl Helser, Jr. who broke new ground this year by using a portion of his Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). His generous donation allowed MLPA to pay Lake Hosts at a higher rate for longer periods of time. As a result, we were able to attract very capable and loyal Lake Hosts! Regarding RMDs and QCDs: If you are age 73 or older you must, by law, withdraw minimum taxable amounts from your retirement accounts each year. You have the right to make a charitable contribution to any non-profit organization such as MLPA 501(3)(c) if you choose. Amounts that qualify as a QCD are not reported as income or charitable donations on your tax return. Your limit for donations with significant tax advantages: \$100,000, but smaller amounts work very well, too. If you are in a position to donate your RMDs as QCDs Mirror Lake is a great option.

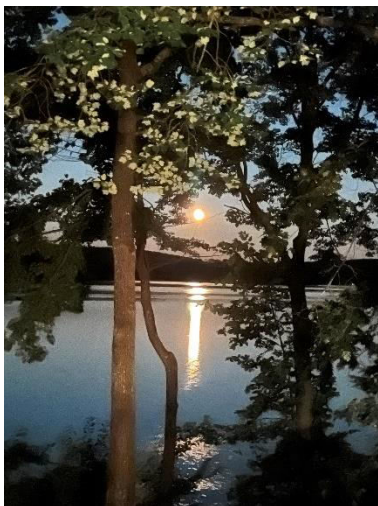
We've made progress in the areas of membership and finances! This year we sadly lost Bill Tryder and Ron Freeze but made gains to the treasury as family and friends made donations to the MLPA in their names. We appreciate these legacy donations and the honor they bring to Bill and Ron who were great supporters of the lake. This kind of legacy is very valuable and long-lasting. Beyond memorializing, it's amazing how many of our MLPA members donate far more than what the envelope calls for:

Regular Membership \$25; Supporting \$50; Sustaining \$75; and Benefactor \$100.

MLPA

PO Box 311

Mirror Lake, NH 03853



We are so grateful to our supportive members! Many of our members join at the Benefactor level, contributing \$100, which is so gratifying. Yet, we regularly have members who go far beyond giving \$100. We don't even have a category for their generosity! We gratefully recognize our super donators: Len & Mary Bonfanti; Doris Briggs; Dusty Davies; Carl Hesler Jr; Gene Kelley; Diane Mullen; Brad & Kathy Ness; Tom Perry; Gary & Glenda Philbin; Stephen & Kim Plante and the Kimball family.

Thanks to our robust membership we can comfortably move forward with plans to bring even greater protection to the lake and its surrounding land and wildlife. Kudos to Steve Scapicchio and Duncan Sutherland for their work with membership, the website and general guidance of the organization. Our

Finance Committee, comprised of Len Bonfanti, Robin Muench, Seamas Oscalaidhe, and Kathy Sciarappa have had many thoughtful discussions about how to maximize our resources. We're astonished and encouraged by people who give, give, give and thank you all.

What's the Mirror Lake Water Really Like?

MLPA has two areas of focus: **Clean water** and **Land Conservation**. Those who monitor the water quality: Tom Bissett, Steve Cloutier, Larry Gil, Al Hardiman, Fran O'Donoghue, Steve Scapicchio and Val Zanchuk plus Kathy Sciarappa made significant progress this year beginning in March during "The Tableau Meeting" where the team gathered with experts from UNH--Bob Craycraft and Amanda McQuaid-- along with other experts from around the state: Amy Smagula (NHDES), Bree Rossiter, and Don Kretchmer, to map out the meaning of 40 years of data gathered from Mirror Lake and its tributaries. Tableau is a software program owned by Val Zanchuk who has entered and graphed much of the water data collected over many years. Our suspicions that the Mirror Lake 43-foot Deep Hole, plus the tributaries, are major culprits in the nutrients issue were deepened. We set up a plan to confirm the specifics and help us understand how to best protect the lake. If

you attended the annual meeting, have "core sampling" done, which revealing a clearer understanding meeting also made it evident that accomplished 11 of the 12 goals (septic systems) of the original developed by Geosyntec and are



you may recall that we voted to is a costly but accurate method for of the chemistry of the lake. This after ten years of work we have (we do not yet have community Watershed Management Plan now ready for Phase Two.

Consequently, we have engaged FB Environmental and are currently working with Certified Lake Manager, Laura Diemer, to create the Mirror Lake Watershed Management Plan II. It is our hope that the Tuftonboro

Selectmen will craft a warrant article for the 2024 Town Meeting held in March to help fund the development of the management plan via a state revolving fund. There would be no cost to the town of Tuftonboro but would allow MLPA to access \$100,000 of federal monies, without needing to repay it, via the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SWSRF.)

Beyond officials and volunteers it is really property owners who keep the lake safe when residents institute Best Management Practices including simple techniques such as not using fertilizer with phosphorus; planting blueberry bushes and such near the shoreline; leaving property “natural”; properly maintaining septic systems; using rain gardens and rain barrels to “slow the flow”; limiting paving or using pervious (flow through) materials rather than impervious materials (concrete, asphalt, manufactured wood) on the property. All are effective ways to keep phosphorus from the water.



Let’s not forget to applaud Mirror Lake as being crystal clear; full of the right kinds of aquatic life; a favorite of those who love fishing; and listed online as the 5th most beautiful lake in New Hampshire <https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/new-hampshire/most-beautiful-lakes-nh/> Mirror Lake is known to be so clear and reflective that it certainly earns its name! New Hampshire’s beautiful lakes keep tourism strong, and Mirror Lake is part of that economy.

Protecting Land and Wildlife

The MLPA Land Conservation Committee heartily thanks Ann Torregrossa for her years as chair and welcomes John Dawson to the leadership role. Committee members include Ann and John plus Dusty Davies; Larry Gil (Tuftonboro Conservation Commission); Gene Kelley; Robin Muench; Gary Philbin; Steve Scapicchio (Chair, Tuftonboro Conservation Commission); Kathy Sciarappa; and Julie Tryder. Together we have been monitoring land sales and remain grateful to the Tuftonboro Conservation Commission and Moose Mountain Regional Greenways for their roles in putting lands in and around Mirror Lake into conservancy. Several properties are currently in process while one key piece of property, surrounding the only outlet to Mirror Lake connecting our lake with Lake Winnepesaukee, has been protected this year. The more land we can protect and keep in its natural state, the better for the lake. Heartfelt thanks to landowners who engage in placing properties under conservation while enjoying significant annual tax advantages and the assurance they are protecting important land for future generations, in perpetuity.

Fun, Fun, Fun!



Beth Argeros, with support from Fran O’Donoghue, planned some wonderful events on Mirror Lake. From the July 4th Boat Parade, complete with a terrific patriotic band; to the Mirror Lake Boat Socials; then the Bistro 19 Mingle; followed by the Dock Socials; and ending with the Mirror Lake Yard Sale, Mirror Lake came alive! Our first Mirror Lake Mingle was a big hit at Bistro 19 next to the Kingswood Golf Club. The 40 attendees enjoyed hors d’oeuvres, and discussed their favorite aspects of Mirror Lake while sharing what they do as property owners to protect the lake. Beth and Nick

Argeros had informal conversations regarding the unique properties of Mount Shaw including the “ring dikes” formed by an ancient volcano. Viewed from above, the Ossipee Mountain range appears as a near perfect

circle. Who knew that beneath the mountain gracing our beautiful shores lies a dormant volcano that produced the only ring dikes known in North America. The last volcanic eruption was 90 million years ago.

The Mirror Lake Community Church graciously opened its front lawn to host the Mirror Lake Community Yard sale on Saturday of the Labor Day weekend. Eager sellers set up tables with interesting items including fur coats; hand crafted items; paintings; household items; and free donuts. With its location on Route 109, and a sign posted on the church lawn for the days leading up to the Yard Sale, we had plenty of people stop and shop. Even though it was quite a rainy summer, that particular Saturday was one of the prettiest days of the season. Lots of folks asked if this will be an annual event and it is hoped that it will be. So, save your items for next year's Mirror Lake Yard Sale which could be better than ever.

Interesting Neighbors

Our resident eagles make it clear that Mirror Lake and the surrounding land and wildlife are robust. After all, they are on the top of the food chain and have had plenty to keep them going over the years. As long as eagles are interested, we're in great shape. And this year moose were added to our wildlife! The last documented sighting of moose dates back to the early 1990s and many of us saw the video of our new resident. So, how about that!



Where Have Our Babies Gone?

We all heard the mournful wails across the lake this summer, and the piercing maniacal wails, and wondered if this was the start of a territorial battle between two male loons. Turns out, according to Senior Biologist John Cooley from the Loon Preservation Committee, the battle may have been between two females! Invading, unpartnered loons may search for years before finding desirable partners and good places to raise a family. Male or female, the challenged loon is in a kill or be killed situation while the third loon merely looks on awaiting the outcome. The combat distracts loons from nesting thus the fluffy chicks we love to watch never came to be this year or last. Mr. Cooley explained that loons live a long time and look ahead when uncoupled. The intruder may have spotted Mirror Lake last year when we also had no chicks and returned to claim a partner and the lake. Had the invader won, the remaining resident would have stayed on with a new mate. It appears they were a threesome for much of the summer but the war cries at night confirmed the struggle for dominance lived on. After July, when the nesting season had passed, local loons unhampered by caring for chicks sought socialization and began planning for the future while examining the quality of the Mirror Lake habitat. Since there are so many lakes in our region, we tend to have a lot of visiting loons who may be friend or may be foe. Loons can take stock one year, then return another year to begin a battle. Mr. Cooley describes our situation as "textbook" as seen in the 200 loon pairs the Loon Committee tracks over about 350 lakes. A typical pattern is for a loon pair to hold a territory and produce chicks for about a decade before partners stop surviving the winter or appear vulnerable to other loons. The loon lifespan ranges from 20-30 years. Mirror Lake loons spend winters on the ocean in Portsmouth and we can only hope things get sorted out for next year. The Loon Committee commended Mary Ann Murray for her work with the loon signs; Beth Urda, Larry Urda and Gail Nemec for their consistent monitoring of the nest; and T.R. Wood, plus his son Everett, for their willingness to help in the future. John Cooley also expressed how much the Loon Committee members all love Mirror Lake.



Looking Sharp with MLPA Swag!

It seems more and more Mirror Lake residents are wearing hats, shirts, vests, and such with Mirror Lake logo. We're working with a local vendor, Calico Graphics, to design a spot next year on the website for those interested in purchasing MLPA apparel and swag online. Thanks to all who made purchases, which are mostly sold at cost, as MLPA receives one dollar per item. It is our intention to build community relationships and social events, consequently, apparel is kept at a low cost to members to encourage participation.



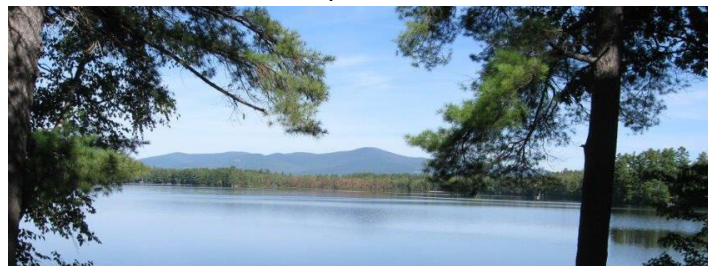
the

Ten Hardworking Individuals

Much appreciation to our **Mirror Lake Protection Association Officers and Board of Directors**: President, Kathy Sciarappa; Vice President, Val Vanchuk; Secretary, Fran O'Donoghue; Treasurer, Robin Muench and Directors Gene Kelley; Larry Gil; Steve Scapicchio; Steve Cloutier; Ann Torregrossa and Dusty Davies. If you know any of the board members, please take a moment to thank them. They all do far more than attend an occasional meeting. I'm so humbled by the many residents who have shared their appreciation for the work done by MLPA. Thank you.

How to Help

With all this help, could we use even more? Why, yes, we certainly need more people to get involved with MLPA. We do notice many of us come from a similar generation and while very wise, we are also quite "mature." If you would like to volunteer or you have tried to volunteer in the past and there wasn't a response for some reason, please be in touch with Kathy Sciarappa kathleensciarappa@gmail.com It is my sincere hope that our organization will steadily grow as more people, particularly those in the younger generations, offer their voices and helping hands. We promise not to overwork you. Do your children and grandchildren love coming to the lake? Maybe they would be willing to help long distance, working from home. It won't hurt to ask. The lake could really use your and their support!



Please visit the MLPA website for updates; loon calls; maps of the lake; and important information!

<https://www.mirrorlakenh.org/>

Warmest regards,

Kathy Sciarappa President, Mirror Lake Protective Association

