Saturday Pond Watershed Association
40 Ridgewood Terrace   Otisfield, Maine 04270

SPWA Annual Meeting Minutes – July 21, 2024

Attendees: Ellen Attaliades, Bill Bramswig, Amy Brown, Diane Burak, Lourdes Engel, Tom Engel, Dick Greenleaf, Jerry Haber, Susan Haber, Karin Kelly, Patrick Kelly, Diane King, Phil King, Dave LaFleur, Sue LaFleur, Joan Lennox, Scott Lennox, Abby Marble, Jeri Markarian, Steve Markarian, Jerry Mulvey, Trudy Mulvey, Betty Wantz, Eric Williams, Bob Wright, Wanda Wright, Will Young, Julie Ywoskus

- **Introductions – Lourdes Engel:** Lourdes introduced herself as the SPWA president and introduced the SPWA trustees. Attendees introduced themselves.

- **Treasurer's Report – Amy Brown:** Treasurer's report was discussed and approved.
  - **Dues Collected:** $860
  - **Donations Collected**: $185
  - **Donation Made:** Donated $100 to Lake Stewards of Maine to support lake education and plant patrol training
  - **Balance:** $953.48
  - **Membership:** There are 67 SPWA members

- **Saturday Pond Dam Report – Lourdes Engel:**
  - **Current Status:** The dam needs repair to the right sluiceway wall. The town of Otisfield has committed to fixing the wall, but we do not have a schedule for when that will occur. Lourdes will communicate with the Otisfield selectboard members for a timeframe.
  - **History:** Eric Williams shared that the SPWA was formed when Gary Dyer and Saturday Pond residents went to the town to ask for the dam to be repaired and the request was granted.

- **Water Testing – Steve Markarian**:
  - **Water Clarity Testing**: Steve uses a Secchi disk to test the pond water clarity. He has tested for clarity 6 times so far this year and the results have been good.
  - **Phosphorus Testing**: To test for phosphorus, Steve takes a sample of water from the deepest part of the pond and sends it to the Maine state lab. Steve describes the detailed process for collecting the water sample. Our phosphorus level is very good this year. High phosphorus levels are from fertilizer runoff which then creates algae.

- **Invasive Aquatic Plant Monitoring – Sue LaFleur:** Sue shared her history of monitoring for invasive aquatic plants which began in 2012 when she was trained by Pixie Williams. She is currently a Level 2 Certified Aquatic Invasive Specialist.
  - **Plant Monitoring Process:** Invasive aquatic plant monitoring involves knowing what native plants we have in Saturday Pond and then looking for anything that is not native. Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM) provides invasive plant training and assists if we identify plants that we do not think are native.
  - **Native Plants:** The same native plants have been in Saturday Pond for many years. The concentration and location of certain types of plants changes from year to year. It is important to leave the native plants where they are and not to rake them or pull them out. They are an important part of the pond ecosystem.

- o **Invasive Mussels:** We have Chinese Mystery Snails in Saturday Pond. Residents seem to think that their numbers are decreasing. We do not currently have the much more problematic Zebra Mussels. However, they will eventually be introduced in Maine.
  - o **Protecting Our Pond:** To protect Saturday Pond from invasive plants and mussels, it is important to carefully clean and inspect your boats, fishing equipment, etc. before putting them in the pond. Clean, Drain, and Dry is a Maine state law designed to protect our waters from invasives.
  - o **Getting Involved:** There are several SPWA members who regularly monitor Saturday Pond for invasive plants. People who are interested in learning more about monitoring for invasive plants or to join a plant paddle can contact Sue or send an email to saturdaypondloons@gmail.com We currently have no invasive plants in Saturday Pond.

- **Ice In / Ice Out Dates:** Ice in was December 7, 2023 and ice out was March 16, 2024.

- **Fireworks Ordinance Proposal:** Otisfield currently does not have a fireworks ordinance. There was a proposal for an ordinance presented at the most recent selectboard meeting. A few members expressed concern that fireworks disturb the loons and also leave residue possibly including harmful chemicals in the water.

- **Saturday Pond Loons – Julie Ywoskus:**
  - o **Official Loon Count:** Diane Burak, Amy Brown, Sue LaFleur, and Julie conducted the official loon count on July 20 at 7am. This is the time that all loons are counted on all lakes in Maine. We had two loons. This is the number we have seen most of the season.
  - o **Maine Audubon Loon Restoration Program:**
    - ▪ **History:** This is our second year of participation in the 5-year Audubon grant program. Lakes who had not had a chick in 5 years were asked to participate. Our last chick was in 2014. In April 2023, our nesting raft was launched and placed in an area that loons had nested before. Last year, our loons did not use the raft, did not nest, and did not produce a chick.
    - ▪ **This Season:** In spring 2024, SPWA trustees refurbished the raft adding dirt, plants and moss and our loons begin nesting on the raft on May 26. We did weekly monitoring and submitted reports. The lake community supported by keeping their distance from the raft, and eventually staying out of the cove. Chicks are normally born after 27 days, however our loons nested for about 42 days. On or around July 14, our loons abandoned their nest and left one non-viable egg.
    - ▪ **What Now?:** Audubon asked that we keep a distance away from the raft and not touch the egg. Egg collection is not allowed/permitted by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife under state law. Audubon may come to get the egg for testing (we are not allowed to touch it). Our loons may nest again this season …usually not in the same place, but possible and they may use the nesting raft next year or may choose another place.
  - o **Protecting Our Loons:** Residents on Saturday Pond's waterfront received two Audubon brochures (How Close is Too Close? and Living in Loon Territory) that contain important information about how to protect loons. This information includes:
    - ▪ Keeping distance from loons (Audubon suggests 150 feet)
    - ▪ Learning loons' relaxed, concerned, and stressed behaviors and moving away from loons who exhibit concerned or stressed behaviors (squared off head, tremelo, penguin dance, etc) …..
    - ▪ Boating slowly near loons. Boat collisions are a leading cause of death of loons.
    - ▪ Not harassing loons… this is a Maine law.

- **Pond Wildlife:** SPWA members have reported seeing a wide variety of wildlife around the pond including moose, deer, otters, bears, foxes, eagles, hawks, and owls.
    - ○ **Brown Tail Moths:** Attendees were asked to leave their outside lights off through August so to not attract Brown Tail Moths.

- **SPWA Communication:**
    - ○ **SPWA Annual Newsletter:** Everyone in the watershed received a copy of the SPWA newsletter in July. People can email any newsletter suggestions or content ideas.
        - ▪ **Pond View Retention Pond History:** One of the newsletter articles was about the Pond View retention pond. Eric Williams explained that the Pond View Association spent $34K last year to make repairs to DEP specifications. This helps to settle out the runoff before it enters Saturday Pond
    - ○ **SPWA Website –** SPWA's website is www.saturdaypond.org
    - ○ **SPWA Email –** SPWA's email address is saturdaypondloons@gmail.com.
    - ○ **Saturday Pond Facebook Page –** Saturday Pond Loons is a Facebook page where members can post information about Saturday Pond
    - ○ **Dock Drop Packets:** SPWA trustees distributed a packet of information about pond safety, etc. to Saturday Pond docks in June 2024.   If attendees did not receive a packet and would like one, they can email saturdaypondloons@gmail.com

- **Otisfield Resilience Committee:** The Otisfield Resilience Committee identifies and applies for grants to support Otisfield residents with climate change issues. The committee has invited all residents to meet at the Otisfield Community Hall on July 27 at 11am to discuss future grants.

- **SPWA Stickers:** The SPWA is selling Saturday Pond stickers for $2 each.

- **SPWA Board of Trustees Nominations:** Attendees voted to approve the nominations of Amy Brown, Susan Haber, and Steve Markarian for terms expiring in 2026.

 By: Julie Ywoskus