A Trip Down Jordan River

On a calm, sunny day at the end of July, Neil and Peggy Jensen launched their classic silver canoe on Sebago lake near the intersection of Routes 85 and 302 and paddled up the Jordan River. The water was high enough for them to traverse the entire river to the Mill Street dam, which channels water from Panther Pond into Sebago Lake.

Peggy recently replaced her husband as president of the Raymond Waterways Protective Association (RWPA). Founded in 1967, RWPA protects and improves the water quality of Raymond’s lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams and fosters watershed stewardship. In recent years, the RWPA has led the charge to eradicate invasive milfoil from Raymond’s lakes. Most of its work has focused on the shores of Sebago Lake that fall within the town of Raymond.

Peggy and Neil’s 30-minute journey confirmed all the good work done by volunteers and staff of RWPA’s Diver-Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH) program over the past 11 years. “You would not believe your eyes. There is no visible milfoil from the dam to the sharp turn just above the last house on the river on the Route 85 side,” says Peggy. “So thrilling!”

The trip was also a visual catalog of spots where the DASH team pulled, sucked, dug, and blanketed invasive milfoil out of existence. “As we paddled up the river, we kept saying things like: ‘This is where [the milfoil] was so thick we could almost walk on it!’ ‘This is where Bob French used his potato fork where it was just too deep to reach.’ ‘Oh, this is where the Agawam guys picked up those tarps that were heavily covered with silt.’ And, ‘Here’s where we used the burlap and then had the regrowth that surprised us.’”

Much of the brush and fallen trees that once clogged the waterway are now clear, thanks to Sebago Trails Paddling Company, which operates at the foot of the Jordan River. During their journey, Peggy and Neil saw many kayakers and paddleboarders enjoying the clear, open waters of the river, also known as Panther Run.
Ongoing Work

This summer the DASH crew removed most of the remaining patches of milfoil just above the Route 302 bridge in the broad area near the Sebago Trails dock. Besides harvesting large sections of the invasive plant, the team used scuba gear to swim along the bottom to comb out every bit of variable milfoil. This type of painstaking work pays off—it keeps the milfoil from taking root, literally. They also put down 2 large sections of benthic barrier tarps to kill off the dense patches of invasive variable milfoil.

After 11 years, the DASH program has almost finished the eradication phase of its work, and now enters the maintenance phase, which requires ongoing vigilance. Says Neil, “When invasive water plants get a long head start, as they have in Sebago Lake, we can never get every last bit of the roots and seeds. And milfoil fragments drift in from other parts of the lake. So, if we don’t stay on top of it, the milfoil will come back just as thick as ever.”

DASH Annual Survey – Lots of Progress, But More Work Required

In the spring, the DASH crew uses aerial view maps, gridded off, to record the invasive variable milfoil they find. They judge the density of milfoil in each cell of the grade grid and rate it on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means no plants and 10 means chock full of plants. They then sum the numbers in the grid and divide by the number of cells x 10320 (32 grids x 10) to determine the percentage infestation. They remove the sparsely spaced plants as they find them. (See table below for results of the DASH 2020 survey.)

Bayview Straight Canal had the highest rate of infestation in the spring and DASH work reduced milfoil there by more than half. But, it is clear that more work needs to be done—not just on Bayview Straight Canal but all our hotspots. Although the percentages are falling into the single digits across the board, maintenance is perpetual as long as there are other parts of Sebago with infestations that can seed new growth in these highly sensitive areas.

To keep our lakes perpetually free from milfoil, please consider making an annual donation to RWPA. Milfoil doesn’t take a year off, why should you? Contribute here. http://raymondwaterways.org/rwpa-donate.htm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Fall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayview T Canal</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayview Straight Canal</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason Cove</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Harbor Marina</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turtle Cove</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dingley Brook</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DASH 2020 Survey Results
RWPA Announces New Board of Directors and Board Members

The following individuals were elected as officers for a one-year term:

- Peggy Jensen – President
- Locke Macdonald – Vice President
- Marie Connolly - Treasurer
- Lisa Hall - Secretary

Retiring president, Neil Jensen, remains on the Board and will oversee the DASH program and the web site. New Board member, Wayne Eckerson, will oversee the publication of the quarterly newsletter. Vice President Locke Macdonald will continue to run the Courtesy Boat Inspection program.

Other board members are Elwood Beach, who sends out the thank you cards to donors, and Holly Hoglund, who has been working on the tedious task of reconciling old member lists. Board members serve three-year terms. If interested in serving, let us know! Contact us at info@raymondwaterways.org.

Featured Waterbody: Thomas Pond

Thomas Pond is adjacent to U.S. Route 302 on the border of Raymond and Casco, Maine. The shoreline is developed with residences and seasonal cabins, and there is a boat launching area near the highway where the pond overflows into Sebago Lake. White perch, chain pickerel, smallmouth bass, and largemouth bass thrive in the shallow portions of the pond; and land-locked Atlantic salmon use the deeper parts of the pond preying on rainbow smelt.

(Courtesy Wikipedia.)

Area (acres)

533

Perimeter (miles)

7.4

Mean depth (feet)

22

Max depth (feet)

64

Invasive aquatic plants

none known

Number of dams

1

Lake elevation (meters)

85

Length of shoreline (meters)

10,367

Secchi reading (transparency)

6.1 (good)

Trophic state (water quality)

38 (good)

(Courtesy, Lake of Maine)
CBI Program Conducts Nearly 5,000 Inspections

Invasive aquatic plants, such as variable leaf and Eurasian water milfoil, hydrilla, and water chestnut, are serious threats to Maine’s waters. These plants are so vigorous and propagate so fast that they can crowd out native plants, affect fish populations, and make swimming and boating difficult, if not impossible. When that happens, costly control measures are needed.

The state has developed a program to reduce the risk of spreading invasive aquatic species (IAS) including plants, fish and small-bodied animals. It’s the Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) Program, and it’s our first line of defense against these species. Inspectors educate boaters about IAS spread prevention and assist boaters with inspecting boats, trailers, and gear, removing anything found. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) oversees and distributes grants to local CBI programs. While DEP provides training, protocol, and some funding, none of this prevention work can be done without the hard work and financial support of local residents.

RWPA provides CBI inspections at four public boat launches in Raymond: Sebago Lake on Rt. 302, Panther Pond on Mill Street, Crescent Lake on Rt. 85, and Thomas Pond on Rt. 302. These launches are manned mostly on weekends from Memorial Day through Labor Day. This past summer we had 9 paid inspectors and two volunteers who worked 1516 hours and did 4937 inspections. There were five plant specimens found, none of which were identified as invasive.

Next spring RWPA will hire more Courtesy Boat Inspectors (CBI). If you’re over 16 and looking for some fun work outdoors (or a service project) or know someone who will be looking, you can contact RWPA any time at info@raymondwaterways.org

Panther Pond Elects New Officers

Panther Pond Association held its annual election remotely due to COVID-19 guidelines. The New Board consists of:

Harry Loring – President
president@pantherpondassociation.org
C- 207-650-5730

Jim Brennen – Vice President
vp@pantherpondassociation.org

Pete Leitner – Environmental Officer
Environmental.officer@pantherpondassociation.org

Jen Miller – Secretary
secretary@pantherpondassociation.org

Linda Howard – Treasurer
treasurer@pantherpondassociation.org

Also, due to Covid-19 guidelines, there was no annual meeting. Let’s hope for better conditions next year!
Update on Replacement of Mill St Dam

The Mill Street Dam regulates the water flow from Panther Pond to Sebago Lake via Panther Run.

Approximately 30 years ago the dam was rebuilt by CPM Contractors of Yarmouth. Many of us can remember the temporary dam or cribwork that was constructed to facilitate the rebuild. The primary purpose of the dam is to provide sufficient water flow for the salmon run which occurs in late October to mid-November. It is also used to maintain a consistent water level for Panther Pond and Crescent Lake. The dam is controlled and maintained by the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W).

Over the past 30 years the concrete dam has slowly deteriorated. IF&W has attempted to make repairs where needed but has concluded that the deterioration far exceeds the ability to effectively make repairs. A year ago, IF&W obtained budgeted funding from the state legislature to begin engineering and a competitive bidding process to replace the dam.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 has changed some of the best laid plans. The State now has a fiscal/revenue challenge. At this time, it is unknown what the State’s spending priorities will be and where the replacement funding stands. Panther Pond Association will continue to work with our representative in the legislature, Jessica Fay, who also serves on the IF&W committee in Augusta.

Use Phosphorous-Free Fertilizer

Phosphorus is like junk food for algae causing it to grow out of control, turning lakes green, lowering water quality, and even killing fish. Even if you live far from the shorefront, all storm water eventually makes its way to our waters, with half draining into lakes and the other half draining in rivers and bays.

The easiest thing you can do to limit phosphorous in our lakes is to use “phosphorous-free” lawn fertilizer. Every bag of fertilizer has a 3-digit number on the label. Make sure the middle number is 0. For example, 10-0-10 has equal parts nitrogen and potash but no phosphorous. Use that!

According to Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), most soils in Maine have enough phosphorous to keep a lawn lush and green. They recommend phosphorous only when establishing a new lawn, re-seeding, or when recommended by a soil test from a lab. They also recommend using only half the amount of fertilizer recommended on the bag; if the response isn’t suitable, apply the remainder. More is not necessarily better.

Rather than fertilizing, the Maine DEP recommends leaving grass clippings on established lawns to serve as natural fertilizer. New lawns need more nitrogen so a 10-0-0 mix is ideal. We know many lakefront owners are replacing lawns with natural and native plantings. Who wants to mow a lawn when you can be swimming, fishing, or resting comfortably in a hammock?

For more information, see https://www.maine.gov/dep/land/watershed/fertilizer/index.html.
Thank You!

Special thanks to Raymond’s Public Works Department for help with moving and storing our DASH boat and to the Fire Department for sharing their compressed air equipment so our divers can refill their SCUBA air tanks without having to drive to Portland. And also, to Peggy and Neil and Peggy Jensen for volunteering as courtesy boat inspectors during Labor Day weekend at Thomas Pond and Mill Street.

Loon Count

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lake</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Chicks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panther</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescentv</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond Pond</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Pond</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notched Pond</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Audubon’s Annual Loon Count in 2020

About RWPA

Founded more than 50 years ago, the Raymond Waterways Protective Association is dedicated to protecting and improving the water quality of Raymond’s lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams and fostering watershed stewardship.

Our web site: raymondwaterways.org
Contact us: info@raymondwaterways.org
Our mailing address: PO Box 1243, Raymond, ME 04071

Raymond Pond (lower left), Crescent Lake (middle right), Panther Pond (middle-left), Thomas Pond (middle top- barely visible), aand Sebago lake (top).