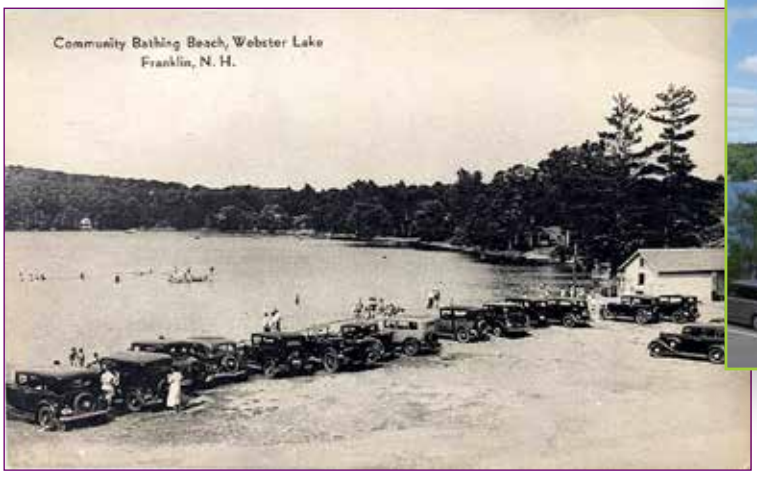
WEBSTER LAKE ASSOCIATION
Franklin, NH

2023 Fall Newsletter

Then & Now

Since buying our place on Webster Lake, I've seen these old postcards many times and thought it would be fun to take some photos of what these views look like today. These are just a few in this series of old Webster Lake postcards.

By Mark Field



Lake or Pond:
What's the DIfference?

Originally published by NH DES

From a regulatory viewpoint, there is no distinction between a lake and a pond. Both are surface waters of the state and subject to the same water quality standards. From a naming convention, there is no precise difference between a lake and pond, although waterbodies named "lakes" are generally larger and/or deeper than waterbodies named "ponds." From an ecological or limnological perspective, there is a difference between the two. The difference, however, is somewhat arbitrary and not consistent or precise.

Regulatory

The water quality of the surface waters of the state, including all lakes and ponds, is regulated through statutes (RSA 485-A) and rules (Env-Ws 1700). These laws and regulations make no distinction between lakes and ponds. Both must meet all the same water quality standards.

Naming

The term "lake" or "pond" as part of a waterbody name is arbitrary and not based on any specific naming convention. In general, lakes tend to be larger and/or deeper than ponds, but numerous examples exist of "ponds" that are larger and deeper than "lakes." For example, Echo "Lake" in Conway is 14 acres in surface area with a maximum depth of 11 feet, while Island "Pond" in Derry is nearly 500 acres and 80 feet deep. Names for lakes and ponds generally originated from the early settlers living near them, and the use of the terms "lake" and "pond" was completely arbitrary. Many have changed names through the years, often changing from a pond to a lake with no change in size or depth. Often these changes in name were to make the area sound more attractive to perspective home buyers. Examples of ponds that are now called lakes include Mud Pond to Mirror Lake in Canaan, Mosquito Pond to Crystal Lake in Manchester, and Dishwater Pond to Mirror Lake in Tuftonboro.

Webster Lake. Photo by Val Perkins

Limnology

In limnology (the study of inland waters), surface waters are divided into lotic (waters that flow in a continuous and definite direction) and lentic (waters that do not flow in a continuous and definite direction) environments. Waters within the lentic category gradually fill in over geologic time and the evolution is from lake to pond to wetland. This evolution is slow and gradual, and there is no precise definition of the transition from one to the next. Early limnologists in the late 18th and early 19th centuries attempted to define the transition from a lake to a pond in various ways. Area, depth or both were an essential part of most definitions, but what area or what depth differed. Some used thermal stratification: a lake is a body of water that is deep enough to thermally stratify into two or three layers during the summer in temperate regions such as New Hampshire. Others used plant growth: a pond is shallow enough that sunlight can penetrate to the bottom and support rooted plant growth across its entire width. Some included all plant growth, including submerged plants; while others said a pond was shallow enough to support emergent or floating-leafed rooted plants throughout. Although we won't attempt to define the distinction between a pond and wetland here (it is an even less precise distinction), a pond with emergent plants throughout would frequently be considered a wetland or marsh by many observers.

Limnologists today recognize that nature can't be divided into precise, neat categories and Accept the fact that there will never be a precise definition. However, they also recognize that "deep" lakes and ponds function differently than "shallow" lakes and ponds, and modern limnology texts often discuss the two separately. The generally accepted definition of a "shallow lake or pond" is that class of shallow standing water in which light penetrates to the bottom sediments to potentially support rooted plant growth throughout the waterbody. Lack of thermal stratification and the presence of muddy sediments are also common characteristics of this class of water. In contrast, a "deep lake or pond" has both a shallow shoreline area that may potentially support rooted plant growth and a deeper portion where sunlight does not penetrate to the bottom. These waterbodies frequently stratify into distinct thermal layers during the summer.

NH Mooring Permit Law

Retired Captain Tim Dunleavey, Marine Patrol

When the residents of a lake community are interested in controlling boat moorings placed on New Hampshire public waters, the lake must be added to the laws regulating moorings under NH RSA 270:61 and 270:61-a. This process requires a petition to the NH Department of Safety containing a minimum of 25 signatures from residents or property owners of each affected town in which the lake is located.

A proper petition will initiate a public hearing where verbal and written testimony is accepted. If the petitioners are successful in meeting the considerations (RSA 270:61-a) of the Commissioner of Safety, the body of water will be added to the list of those lakes requiring mooring permits.

When a lake falls under the jurisdiction of the mooring permit law, only those persons who own shorefront are eligible to apply. Shorefront is defined as any property recognized as a legal building lot by a municipality, having shore frontage on public waters.

"Shorefront property" shall include:

(A) A lot on the public waters that is divided by a road so that the buildable portion of the lot is on the opposite side of the road from the public waters or divided by an exclusive right-of-way which has been acquired as a result of an eminent domain proceeding which resulted in the break or loss of property between the property owner's residence and shore frontage.

(B) A lot of record with not less than 50 feet of frontage. A lot with less than 50 feet of frontage may be included if the lot owner obtains the written consent of the abutting property owner that the abutting property may be included in the footage calculation. Such consent shall be signed by both parties, notarized, and filed with the mooring application. Shorefront property shall not mean a deeded right-of-way, nor shall it mean lots not contiguous to the shore with any other type of legal shorefront access. For the purposes of this subdivision, property owned in common by condominium associations or other groups shall be deemed owned by the group and shall not convey any rights under this subdivision to its individual members.

All shorefront property owners must apply for a mooring permit. To be considered, the application must:

(A) Demonstrate to the satisfaction of the director that a need for the mooring exists:

(1) Either by furnishing the director with proof of a boat registration for each mooring requested, or for persons owning boats not requiring registration, proof of boat ownership for each mooring requested; or by showing that circumstances exist which require that a mooring be available for intermittent or temporary use; and

(2) By verifying that no other viable and safe alternative exists for securing the boat in question; and

(B) Show to the satisfaction of the director that he has legal access over land to such mooring; and

(C) Show to the satisfaction of the director that such mooring will not be sold or leased except as provided in RSA 270:67; and

(D) Furnish any additional information required by the director to determine that a proposed mooring meets the requirements of this subdivision. Moorings are not "grandfathered", non-transferrable from one owner to another, and can't be rented.

After your initial application is approved, permits can be renewed on an annual basis. The initial application fee costs $125 with an annual renewal fee of $25 per morning.

Anyone with specific questions regarding a mooring permit can reach the mooring program at 603-293-2037, press option #3.

Take Lake-Friendly Actions **Along the Shoreline**

Originally published by NH Lakes

Do you own or manage a property along a lake or pond? If yes, check out these lake-friendly living tips which will help you keep the water clean and healthy while enhancing the look and value of your shoreline property!

Do not bathe yourself or your pets in the water.

Soaps and shampoos will add unwanted nutrients and other pollutants to the lake. Even camping soaps or biodegradable soaps may contain undesirable pollutants. Bathing in the lake can introduce bacteria scums and particulates.

Avoid attracting waterfowl.

Feeding waterfowl will attract more to the site. A single goose can create up to four pounds of waste per day. Waterfowl waste can contain significant amounts of phosphorus (the nutrient which fuels plant and algal growth). Fecal matter can contain harmful parasites and bacteria that can contaminate swimming areas causing what is commonly called "swimmers itch" for some people. Waterfowl are healthier when they consume the foods they naturally forage.

Make shoreline property unattractive to waterfowl. Grassy lawns attract geese and ducks. Providing barriers, such as dense shrubs, between the shoreline and the property will discourage waterfowl from visiting the lawn.

Do not remove aquatic plants without a permit.

Aquatic plants help prevent erosion by stabilizing lake bottoms and shorelines with their roots and by absorbing wave energy. Aquatic plants are also important for fish spawning and nursery areas, and provide habitat for the insects and other organisms that support the entire food chain of the lake.

Lily pads commonly expand their range as the lake shoreline fills in with sediment and gets shallower. They can grow taller, and can grow in deeper water. They are not harmful, but residents can be concerned. If you wish to have them cut back (or cut them back as shoreline residents), you are encouraged to call the Wetlands Bureau to verify if any permitting is needed. A Wetlands Bureau inspector can be reached at 603-271-2147.

Avoid dumping sand or creating new beaches.

Sandy beaches that are not naturally occurring will not last. The sand will either be carried away by water currents or will slowly settle into the bottom of the lake, where it will contribute to the rate of lake filling-in and aging. The addition of sand along the shoreline will smother bottom-dwelling organisms, alter the food chain, destroy fish spawning and nesting sites, and damage fish gills. As the lake becomes shallower, more sunlight will reach the lake bottom, which can lead to increased plant growth. It is illegal to dump sand or create a beach in New Hampshire without a permit from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES).

For information on permits or general questions, contact DES at (603) 271-2147.

Fall 2023

WLA Purpose

The WLA exists for the purpose of preserving and protecting our lake. We are not a homeowner's association that requires membership and dues, with rules and regulations governing properties and residents. We are an organization whose membership and dues are voluntary. We educate residents on ways to keep the lake healthy so that future generations will be able to enjoy it for years to come. Rules and regulations regarding lakefront property are governed by the State of NH, the Shoreline Water Quality Protections Act created in 1991, and the City of Franklin. Marine Patrol is the governing body for water safety and boating regulations. The WLA is not an enforcement organization.

WLA Resources

Boater Education Classes	603-267-7256
Boater Safety/Marine Patrol	603-293-2037
Franklin Municipal Services	603-934-4103
Exotic Plant Concerns	603-271-2248
The Loon Center	603-476-5666
Shoreland Concerns	603-271-2147
Water Quality Concerns	603-848-8094
Weed Watcher Volunteers	603-271-2248
Wetlands Concerns	603-271-2147
Webster Lake Association	603-671-7961

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