Webster Lake
Franklin, New Hampshire

2026 Spring
Newsletter

Back in the Day...

by Nancy Wolcott

If you lived in a cottage on Webster Lake between 1880 and 1920, you wouldn't have had electricity, indoor plumbing, or telephones, and were probably using a horse and buggy instead of a car.

But in the wintertime, you would be looking out on something that other people in Franklin might envy you for: a whole lot of ice to keep your food cold and fresh. Until, that is, you were reminded of certain wording in your deed.

"Prohibition as to cutting of ice on Webster Lake as set forth in Deed recorded at Book 720, Page 161, Merrimack County Registry of Deeds."

Artwork created with ChatGPT

Why? Because during that era ice harvesting was an important industry in any towns and cities with access to lakes and rivers. Franklin had three large icehouses located on Webster Lake by 1892.

As Steve Walsh mentioned in an article he called "The Ice Business" in the Fall 2022 WLA Newsletter, these icehouses were served by a railroad spur track off what is now the Northern Rail Trail. "The spur ran down the embankment, crossed Route 11 and ended next to the icehouse where Lagace Beach is today." Two of the ice houses were owned by the Worcester Ice Company and the Lawrence Ice Company.

"Bradbury Prescott," Steve goes on to say, "who built our cottage and many of the others along Webster Avenue, was also in the ice harvesting business. In later years when he sold these cottages, he put a restriction in the deeds forbidding the new owners from entering the ice business on Webster Lake."

Ice was cut in January through February once it reached about 12 inches in thickness. Workers would mark a grid on the ice and use hand saws or horse-drawn cutters to cut blocks over 2 ft. x 3 ft., sliding them along ice channels to shore, then storing them in icehouses packed with sawdust. The icehouses would preserve the ice through the summer and supply the town year-round, as well as storing it to ship by rail to cities as far away as Boston.

Photo courtesy of the Franklin Historical Society

Milfoil Remediation on Chance Pond

Photo credit: Bonnie Moore

Chance Pond is the outflow of Webster Lake, and at present there is milfoil at the dam end of Chance Pond. Milfoil is an invasive weed that is dangerous for other native plants in the water. While the pond is below the lake in the water flow, kayaks, boats, and fishing gear used in Chance Pond is often then used again in the lake, hence the danger of introducing milfoil to our lake.

In the summer of 2025, the Webster Lake Association in conjunction with the Division of Environmental Services hired a team of divers to remove the milfoil. Unfortunately, the preferred method—Vacuum-Assisted Removal—was not possible because the boat needed for the equipment was too large to be launched in Chance Pond. Instead, the two divers manually dove to remove the milfoil; given the constraints of time, however, they were unable to successfully remove most of the growth.

A committee of Shawna Pinette, Bonnie Moore, and Bruce Browne pursued a grant from DES for a chemical application to remove the milfoil. The result was a matching grant; the costs are split between the Webster Lake Association and the state of New Hampshire.

The company approved by the state, SOL, will be conducting the application of herbicide using their specially trained team. We will keep members up to date on the progress of this action.

We can all help in this effort by using the Clean, Drain, and Dry method on our own watercraft and fishing gear when we recreate in Chance Pond.

Who Owns the Island?

The island in Webster Lake near Griffin Beach is a privately owned. You might think that since the state owns the water, it might also own the small island, but it has been privately held for many years.

Small in size at .11 acres, the island is officially described in tax records as having “rolling topography; vacant, rocky, small trees.” What makes it interesting to most folks is the 319 linear feet of waterfront.

Since 1970, the island has been owned by four different entities; it is now registered to the James Delaney Trust.

Photo credit: Erin Sterbens

Fish in Webster Lake

By Bruce Browne

Do you ever wonder why there are folks fishing in Webster Lake from ice-out until a thin film skims the surface in the Fall? There is an abundance of fish in our lake, and that isn't by accident. In addition to natural fish breeding in the lake, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department restocks the lake with several types of fish and does so yearly.

The last date for which we have statistics is 2024 and it is revealing: the state has six fish hatcheries (one presently closed for renovation) that supply the lakes and rivers with young fish.

According to the NH Fish and Game 2024 Stocking Report, Webster Lake received:

- 2,000 Brown Trout (1+ yr old) on 4/10/2024 from New Hampton Fish Hatchery
- 1,000 Rainbow Trout (1+ yr old) on 4/30/2024 from Warren Fish Hatchery
- 1,000 Rainbow Trout (1+ yr old) on 5/22/24 from Warren Fish Hatchery
- 3,905 Brown Trout (1+ yr old) on 10/7/2024 from New Hampton Fish Hatchery
- 250 Brown Trout (2+ yr old) on 10/24/2024 from New Hampton Fish Hatchery

The weight of all these fish, with one report missing, is 2,063 pounds!

The license you must purchase to fish in NH waters helps fund this important Fish and Game service.

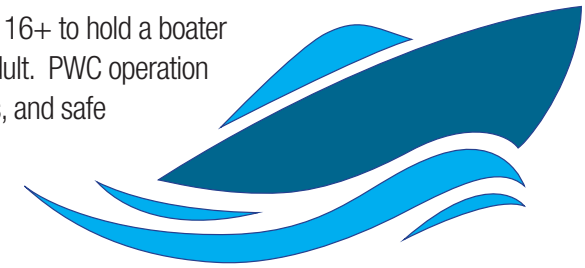
Don't Forget Cyanobacteria. Be vigilant. Cyanobacteria (microscopic organisms that thrive in warm, nutrient-rich water) can produce toxins with effects from nausea and headaches to life-threatening poisoning, and it is worsened by development, fertilizer runoff, and climate change. WLA President Bruce Browne will be including an informative article with his next email. Be sure to check it out.

Boating Reminders

By Mark Lorenze

As the boating season approaches, it's always good to refresh our understanding of NH boating regulations to keep everyone safe on the water. Listed here are the most commonly asked-about rules:

- One wearable U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket is required per person. Children 12 and under must wear them, as must everyone on personal watercraft (jet ski, kayaks) .
- Anyone 16+ operating a boat over 25 HP, must carry a valid, approved boating education certificate.
- New Hampshire PWC (Personal Watercraft/Ski Craft) laws require operators 16+ to hold a boater education certificate, with no minimum age if accompanied by a certified adult. PWC operation is limited to sunrise-to-sunset, riders must wear USCG-approved life jackets, and safe passage laws require headway speed
- Vessels must travel at "headway speed" (slowest speed to maintain control, max 6 mph) when within 150 feet of swimmers, other vessels, shorelines, or docks. This includes the passage between Loon Island and shore.



- Lights on bow and stern of all watercraft are required between sunset and sunrise.
- All sailboats 12 feet or longer, or any sailboat with a motor, must be registered with the NH Department of Motor Vehicles.
- Sailboats always have the right of way over motorboats.
- Be on the lookout for not so easily seen kayaks, canoes, SUPs and swimmers.
- Be considerate of others and use common sense.

Let's all have a fun and safe 2026 boating season on Webster Lake.

Boat Parade

The annual Boat Parade will be held on Saturday, July 4th at 2:30 p.m., starting at Griffin Beach and moving in a clockwise direction around the lake. The Raindate will be Sunday at 12 p.m. The theme of this year's event is "Celebrating the Nation's 250th anniversary." Prizes of $250, $125, and $75 will be awarded for the best three boats decorated in this theme immediately after the event. Judges will be in the WLA boat near Loon Island. An announcement will be made.

Each competing boat must have a number. Numbers will be available at the Breakfast on the Beach (8-11 a.m. that morning on Griffin Beach). And the number must be posted directly above the maritime registration on your boat, on the PORT side, which will be the side facing the onlookers and judges.

If you would like to be one of the five judges, please contact Bonnie Moore at biskmoai@yahoo.com. Judges can not have a boat in the contest.

Breakfast on the Beach

This event is being reinstated this year, and will be held from 8-11 a.m. on Saturday, July 4th in the Steadman Pavilion at Griffin Beach. Breakfast sandwiches, coffee, donuts, and tea will be available. Boaters will also be able to pick up numbers for the Boat Parade.

Anyone interested in setting up and breaking down tables, etc., please contact Mark Lorenze (marksggl@gmail.com).

Calendar of Events

WLA Board of Directors Meeting
Saturday, June 13th, 9am

Breakfast on the Beach
Saturday, July 4th; 8-11 am

Boat Parade
Saturday, July 4th
2:30pm meet at Griffin Beach
(Rain date Sunday, July 5th at Noon)

WLA Annual Yard Sale
Saturday, July 18th
181 Webster Lake Road
9am-3pm
Drop-off items at 181 Webster Lake Rd.,
Friday, July 17th, 3pm-6pm

Annual Meeting
Saturday, August 1st
Franklin Elks Club, 125 S. Main St.
9am Coffee, 9:30am Meeting

Annual Ice Cream Social/Food Drive
Saturday, August 15th, 2-4pm

WLA Board of Directors Meeting
Saturday, September 12th, 9am

Webster Lake Association
PO Box 44, West Franklin, NH 03235
www.websterlakenh.com
Email: info@websterlakenh.com
Phone: 518-477-0823

Boats & Books

Webster Lake now has its own book club—called "Boats and Books". We'll be meeting once a month during the summer and into the fall, reading books chosen by our members. We have so far enjoyed: "Tom Lake" by Ann Patchett, "This Tender Land" by William Kent Krueger, "The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck, "The Space Between Us" by Thrity Umrigar. If you would like to join the book club, contact browne.brucec@gmail.com. The location of meetings moves around to members' homes.

REMINDER: Fireworks are always a concern, as Independence Day Celebrations approach. In keeping with the WLA's mission to preserve and protect our beautiful lake, we ask that if you choose to discharge fireworks, please do so away from the lake. The chemicals and debris from fireworks can be harmful to the health of the lake. Please be mindful that fireworks create loud noises which can cause distress to pets, small children, and lake wildlife. The City of Franklin has an ordinance stating fireworks should not be discharged after 9:30pm.

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	518-477-0823

Board of Directors

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Bonnie Moore - Vice President
Shawna Pinnette - Secretary
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