

Gregg Lake Watershed Management Plan

“WHAT WAS I THINKING?”

Joan Gorga, Project Manager

To quote singer-songwriter Christine Lavin, “What was I thinking?” Christine is known for her deep and serious analysis of the problems of everyday life, and the title of her song has become the new theme of my life.

Somewhere around ten years ago, acknowledging my fond attachment to Gregg Lake, I decided to show up for a Lake Host training session at the Town Beach (*What was I thinking?*). Lake Hosting has never really been my thing—I’m too shy and quiet (don’t laugh!)—although nearly everyone I’ve met putting in a boat or kayak at the boat launch has been very receptive and thanked us for making the effort to protect the lake. We need Lake Host volunteers whose time provides a match for the Lake Host grants Antrim Recreation Director Celeste Lunetta has been applying for every year since Marlene and Jerry Schultz submitted the first application sometime around 2005. If we don’t get volunteers, we won’t be able to keep up the program.

Lake Hosting led to my showing up at a Weed Watcher training Celeste arranged. Now that’s my kind of thing! I’ve spent many happy hours drifting around in my kayak examining the aquatic plants of Gregg Lake and communing with the loons. *Potamogeton spirillus?* Cool! So far, we have no known aquatic invasives in Gregg Lake, although, with cooperation from Camp Chenoa and Harbor Camps, we have been beating back a small patch of purple loosestrife that has tried to establish itself on the shore. With our small but dedicated group of Weed Watchers and the keen eyes of fishers and paddlers watching for lake changes, we should be able to spot the arrival of an invasive before it becomes impossible to eradicate. What a great excuse—“Sorry, no can do...I have to go out and do a little Weed Watching

now.” I use it often.

When I made the mistake of informing Celeste that we had bought a house (with indoor plumbing and electricity!) and were becoming full-time Antrim residents, she invited me to join the Antrim Parks and Recreation Commission to represent the area around Gregg Lake. I showed up at the next meeting, and before long found myself Chair (and Celeste’s boss) because no-one else wanted to do it, *and* they all promised me there was nothing to it. (*What was I thinking?*)



Ben Pratt and Joan Gorga head up the channel on April 18, before ice out, to do the first round of water quality sampling on Gregg Lake for the year. Photo, Frank Gorga

A few years ago, several Antrim residents, both full- and part-timers, mentioned concerns about recent algal blooms, as well as observed changes in fish populations. Investigating the algal blooms for a December 2015 *Limrik* story introduced me to the state’s Volunteer Lake Assessment Program, and somehow I was drawn into spearhead-

ing the VLAP testing for Gregg Lake, which Bob Southall had led for the Gregg Lake Association since 1997. When a notice came out through the VLAP office about funding being available to develop an EPA-approved watershed-based management plan, I thought it sounded like a great idea, as it seemed like a good time to assess both where Gregg Lake stands and what we might do to restore and protect its water quality. (*What Was I Thinking?*)

When I put out a few feelers (hopefully more like the lovely pitcher plant sending up its striking purple flower to entice visitors than the ubiquitous, and also carnivorous, bladderwort entangling one’s feet, but others may feel differently) to see if anyone else was interested, a number of Gregg Lakers jumped on board. We quickly assembled a Core Group and a larger Gregg Lake Watershed Management Plan Committee, submitted a pre-proposal, inter-

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viewed with members of the state Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), and submitted our full proposal for grant funding in January 2017. It took some time for everything to work through the system, but on December 6, the Governor and Council finally approved our grant agreement, which includes \$25,000 in funding to develop a Watershed Management Plan for Gregg Lake. The advantage of having an EPA-approved Watershed Management Plan is that funding then becomes available for more costly projects that will protect or enhance the water quality.

In February, with support from NHDES, we published a “Request for Qualifications” to hire a consultant to guide us through the process of developing a Watershed Management Plan, and on May 10, we were thrilled to sign a contract with Forrest Bell Environmental Associates. That’s five tasks now completed out of the forty-four listed in our grant agreement. (*What Was I Thinking?*)

Next up: a Kick-Off meeting to present the process of developing a Gregg Lake Watershed Management Plan to the stakeholders—the Town of Antrim, the Gregg Lake Association, the White Birch Point Association, NH Audubon, the Harris Center, Harbor Camps, other watershed landowners, fishers, boaters, and anyone with an interest in the future of Gregg Lake. We have a great and hard-working Core Group,

currently made up of Peter Beblowski, Diane Chauncey, Melissa Lombard, Helen Perivier, Ben Pratt, Cathy Spedden, David Ward and myself. A number of other people and groups have agreed to work with us as we proceed with developing the Watershed Management Plan with the guidance of our consultant and NHDES, and anyone who’d like to participate is welcome. We’re learning the process as we go. The Kick-Off is tentatively scheduled for July 5; location to be announced. Please join us!

We need people who use the lake to share their thoughts and concerns. Have you been fishing on Gregg Lake for ten—or fifty—years? Have you noticed any changes in the fish you catch? Do you kayak on the lake? Have you noticed changes in the aquatic plants? Is there anything else you’ve observed that we should consider as we develop a long-term plan for protecting the water quality of Gregg Lake? Please come to one or more of our upcoming meetings, fill out our surveys and/or contact one of the Committee members.

The Committee has also been hard at work preparing additional documents, summaries and materials in accordance (mostly...we’re trying!) with NHDES regulations, and we’ve begun to post some basic information about Gregg Lake and the processes we’re going through on a website at gregglake.org. More will be posted as it’s developed and approved by NHDES.

So...if you see me stumbling around town or, more likely, floating around Gregg Lake, with eyes glazed and unable to focus, strumming my guitar and humming Christine Lavin tunes, it may simply be the result of countless hours spent staring at a computer screen. (Strum...Strum...*WHAT WAS I THINKING? It’s a good thing they can’t read my mind...*)

Funding for this project, but probably not for this article, was provided in part by a Watershed Assistance Grant from



the NH Department of Environmental Services with Clean Water Act Section 319 funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. ♦

New Maple Syrup for sale



We made lots of new **maple syrup** in our **Old Pound Road Sugar House** this season. And we still have a small supply left from the 2017 season at discounted prices! Give us a call at 588-3272 or e-mail at levesque@inrslc.com and we can meet at the sugar house to get you the syrup you want. We also sell **maple candy** and **maple butter**.



Old Pound Road Firewood is nearly sold out of firewood for delivery in the fall of 2018. We had a flurry of calls as people ran out of firewood at the end of the winter this year.

Old Pound Road Sugar House and Firewood

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Grampa’s Farm Words

Dawne Hugron

I remember learning some farm words from Grampa Elmer Merrill while helping with barn chores. See if you can figure out what these farm terms mean:

- Scuttle**
- Gee**
- Haw**
- Stanchions**
- Blue Vitriol**

Answers can be found on page 28. ♦