



May 1, 2020

Dear Friends,

I hope this note finds you and yours safe and healthy. If you're anything like me, I'm guessing that by now you're hungry for news about something *other* than the current coronavirus pandemic, so let me take this opportunity to let you know what's going on with the Winnisquam Watershed Network (WWN) and our plans for the upcoming summer. We have several new projects to tell you about as well as building on the success of our existing ones. And although the current situation has changed the way we do things, you'll be happy to know the WWN is still hard at work protecting our lake.

#### Invasive Species Management

For the past two years the WWN has been working with NHDES to implement a long-term [variable milfoil management plan](#) for Lake Winnisquam, and we're happy to report that we're slowly making progress. Variable milfoil is an invasive plant so ongoing management is essential to reduce its density and prevent spread. Last year we switched to using a new herbicide, ProcellaCOR. It appears to be even more effective than the Navigate 2,4D previously used, and is safer for the environment and human health. In August 2019 our licensed contractor applied it to dense milfoil growth in the channel at the northern end of the lake (near the loon sanctuary), in Jay's Marina, and in Ephraim's Cove. Follow-up monitoring revealed minimal regrowth last season. We're eager to see what this season brings but anticipate that the milfoil at the northern end of the lake and in Ephraim's Cove can be managed with diver-assisted harvesting this year. That's a huge success for our lake as the amount of milfoil in those two areas has been greatly reduced. Our 2020 program calls for the application of ProcellaCOR in June to the milfoil growth near the Winnisquam outlet in Tilton, in the Sunray Shores area and, if needed, in Jay's Marina. This work will be performed by SOLitude Lake Management, the company that's been doing all the good work over the past three years. It will be followed by up to 25 days of diver-assisted harvesting by Aqualogic Inc. to remove less dense areas of milfoil in the lake. Aqualogic has performed our diver assisted harvesting for the last several years too. Bids for the 2020 program total \$43,520 and we have been awarded a \$17,408 Exotic Plant Control Grant from NHDES that will fund up to 40 percent of the work. We're in the process of lining up matching contributions from each of the five municipalities on the lake and are also soliciting contributions from neighborhood associations and our members.

In addition to managing the milfoil, the WWN is proactively working to keep other invasives out of Lake Winnisquam. Last year we had more than 30 volunteer [Weed Watchers](#) patrolling the shoreline and near-shore areas of the lake looking for any new species and letting us know of any suspicious sightings. We're hoping all of our Weed Watchers will participate again this year and

welcome new volunteers as well. Weed watching is an easy way for you to help protect the lake while maintaining social distance - all you need is a boat, kayak or float, a pair of sunglasses and a sunny day. Please [let us know](#) if you are interested in participating in the program. We won't be holding an in-person training session this year, but can provide you with online training resources and our Weed Watchers reference kit.

Our [Lake Host](#) program is another important line of defense against invasive species. Our trained Lake Hosts inspect boats being launched at the public ramp in Laconia to ensure they are not carrying any invasive hitchhikers. The WWN is currently hiring Lake Hosts to work weekends this summer. Our lakes must continue to be protected against the ongoing threat of invasives so Lake Hosts have been classified as essential workers. [NH LAKES](#) has identified a number of CDC-recommended measures that we'll implement this year to protect our Lake Hosts while allowing them to perform this important function. Funding for this program comes from a grant from NH LAKES and support from our members. Please [let us know](#) if you know of anyone looking for a great summer job, or if you would be willing to serve as a volunteer Lake Host on weekdays when the boat ramp is quieter. Even a half-day a month would be a big help, and we will provide (remote) training.

### Water Quality Monitoring

We'll resume our summer water quality monitoring programs next month at five sampling stations in Lake Winnisquam and at nine tributary streams that drain into or out of the lake, although we will need to incorporate social distancing measures to protect our volunteers this year. We're therefore not looking to add volunteer water quality monitors at this time but are immensely grateful to our current volunteers for their continued participation in our monitoring programs. The [data generated by these programs](#) helps us to assess long-term water quality trends and identify pollutant sources to the lake and provides a foundation for watershed management planning.

### New Activities

In terms of newer undertakings, the WWN is partnering with the Lakes Region Planning Commission to start laying the foundation for a Watershed-based Management Plan for the Winnisquam watershed. Funded in part through a grant from the Pardoe Foundation we are in the process of gathering and refining data pertaining to watershed characteristics and water quality, which will serve as the primary input for a water quality model. We've also contracted with an environmental consultant, FB Environmental, to provide technical assistance through this process and are pursuing additional funding to support further development of the plan. Once complete, a watershed-based plan will identify causes and sources of pollution to our water resources and map out steps that we, as a community, can take to prevent and mitigate impacts. It will also make us eligible for grant funds under the Clean Water Act to implement some of the recommended measures.

We are currently working on a handout to let people recreating on or near Lake Winnisquam know how to identify a potentially harmful algae bloom, such as can be caused by cyanobacteria. Cyanobacteria are naturally present in most of our lakes, but as lake nutrients increase they can grow in colonies to form surface blooms. Some cyanobacteria can be toxic in high concentrations. The WWN feels that it's important to educate the public about the potential risks associated with harmful algae blooms, while at the same time continuing our efforts to preserve water quality and address sources of nutrient input to the lake. We were recently awarded a Grow Grant from the New England Grassroots Foundation to support this effort.

Please mark your calendars for the WWN's first annual Lake Winnisquam cleanup day on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Our hope is to have individuals or teams from all around our lake participate and help to remove trash and debris from the water. Stay tuned for more details and signup information – this is a great activity for neighborhood groups, even if you need to take social distancing into account. We're also recruiting certified scuba divers that can help us remove debris that is too deep for swimmers to get at so please [contact us](#) if you can help in that capacity or know of any trash that should be added to the divers' list (we'll need specific locations). We'll ask all of our teams to share photos of what they collect and will award prizes for the most trash collected and the most unusual item(s) at our Annual Meeting on July 25<sup>th</sup>. We're hoping we'll be able to hold our Annual Meeting in person (and outdoors) this year but will keep you posted as that time approaches.

We want to extend our thanks to [Jay's Marina](#), [Winnisquam Marine](#), [Meredith Whole Living Center](#) and [Meredith Village Savings Bank](#) who have demonstrated their support for a healthy Lake Winnisquam by joining our business sponsorship program. We hope you'll join us in thanking them and encourage other area businesses that you frequent to [sponsor us](#) as well.

And finally, a sincere thank you to all of you who support our efforts through your membership, contributions and volunteer efforts. Our programs depend on your [continued support](#) and we appreciate your generosity. We're all living in uncertain times these days, but what is certain is that by working together we can ensure that all we cherish about Lake Winnisquam is protected for future generations to enjoy.

On behalf of the WWN Board of Directors,  
Lisa Eggleston, President