

# Chocorua Lake Conservancy

Fall Newsletter 2014

Conserving the Basin since 1968

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The Chocorua Lake Conservancy is an all-volunteer, non-profit land conservation organization dedicated to the protection of the scenic and natural resources of the Chocorua Lake Basin and surrounding area for the benefit of all present and future visitors. Find us online at:

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Photo: Alex Moot

## Loons on Chocorua Lake

By John Cooley, Biologist, Loon Preservation Committee

Chocorua Lake's two nesting loons were again successful in 2014, hatching two chicks that survived. This past year continues a long string of successful years of loon reproductive success on the lake. With the exception of 2011, loons have bred successfully on Chocorua Lake in all of the last 15 years, hatching 23 chicks in that time, with 20 surviving.

Loons in Chocorua Lake have enjoyed twice the statewide average for reproductive success over the past 15 years, establishing Chocorua Lake as one of a small set of lakes in the state that are core habitat for the loon in New Hampshire, which play a disproportionately large role in the long-term viability of the loon population in the state.

Chocorua Lake is prime loon nesting habitat, but sat vacant – as far as nesting goes—for a quarter century. Although adult loons had been noted on Chocorua Lake since monitoring began in the mid-1970s, almost a decade passed in the 1990s with only intermittent loon presence. Successful nesting on Chocorua Lake wasn't documented until the year 2000.

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The long wait for loons to become an established, successful presence at Chocorua Lake reflects the trajectory of the population as a whole in New Hampshire. From a low point in 1975 with about 100 pairs, this threatened species has slowly reoccupied its historical distribution in the state. New Hampshire now has about 280 pairs of loons across 133 lakes. Loons disperse and colonize a few miles at a time, so the pace of recovery is gradual. But once established, a fit pair of individual loons can live and breed on the same lake for decades, turning it into a powerhouse.

Loons, which are threatened in New Hampshire and protected federally, were hard hit by contaminants and human interaction in the 1970s. The black-and-white birds with the haunting call are still not as plentiful as they once were in New Hampshire.

One of the biggest culprits is lead fishing tackle, which accounts for almost half of adult loon deaths every year. A new state law that takes effect in 2016 bans lead sinkers smaller than 1 ounce; the birds are able to ingest the smaller jigs, which can kill them in two to four weeks.



Ryan Buchanan stands by his sign promoting the *Save the Loons Fishing Derby*, which he organized with family and friends. For more, see page 8 (back cover). Photo by Harriet Hofheinz.

## Thanks

The Loon Protection Committee wishes to acknowledge the generous help of Chocorua community member Rachel Page in finding a home with us for the truly valuable resource of some of the extensive scientific journal collection of the late Malcolm Coulter. As a local but renowned ornithologist, LPC staff knew Malcolm and admired his work, and are grateful to benefit from the journal titles that Rachel has provided to LPC.

LPC is also extremely grateful for the help of Chocorua Lake resident Alice Waylett and other loon watchers who have kept a close eye on loon activity on the lake over the years and are often our first notice of the spring return, the beginning of nesting, and other important events in the loon season.

The loons on Chocorua Lake had excellent help this summer from the first annual *Save the Loons Fishing Tournament*, organized by 13-year old Ryan Buchanan and his family and friends. The contest attracted an enthusiastic crew of anglers to the Grove. The Narrows Bridge is a popular fishing spot, and this was a perfect place to promote safe angling. Providing loon-friendly non-lead tackle and information on loons, the event was a wonderful success. Proceeds benefitted the Loon Preservation Committee.

The fishing tournament is a great counterpoint to 2006, when LPC staff collected a dead adult male loon at the Narrows Bridge that had been poisoned by a lead fishing sinker. Such efforts are exactly what is needed to turn the tide and prevent lead poisoning in loons and other wildlife, which is currently the biggest impediment to the continued recovery of loons throughout the state.

➡ Read this story online at: <http://wp.me/pxC4v-oT>

# Climate Change Impacts NH Way of Life

Over the past century, winters in the Chocorua Lake Basin have been getting warmer and snow-covered days have been decreasing. A century of observations show that spring ice-out dates on New Hampshire lakes are now occurring seven to ten days earlier today than in the past.

Snow cover is projected to decrease substantially across New Hampshire in response to warmer temperatures, reducing the average number of days with snow cover by 50 to 75 percent by 2100. Since 1970, the rate of winter warming per decade in New Hampshire has been triple the rate of the previous seventy-five years. If greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise — they grew 41 percent between 1990 and 2008 — then snowfall and winter will no longer exist as we know them by the end of this century.

The effect on winter activities such as skiing, snowmobiling, and dogsledding will be significant. Within twenty-five years, the average ski season in New Hampshire will be 4-5 weeks shorter, with the snow season starting 2 weeks later and ending 2 to 3 weeks earlier. More than half of the ski resorts in New Hampshire may no longer be viable within 30 years because of warmer winters. Reliable snowmobile and cross-country skiing seasons could be completely eliminated.

Wildlife will also be affected. New Hampshire moose are already coping with more tick borne diseases (as are humans). Frogs and other amphibians are affected with egg mass and tadpole die-offs. Various native plant species are disappearing with the invasion of non-native species (purple loosestrife, knotweed, glossy buckweed, phragmites), and with the warmer weather southern species will establish themselves further and further north, stressing native New Hampshire plants such as wild orchids, asters, and lilies.

➡ Read the full story online at: <http://wp.me/pxC4v-pn>

## You Can Help

- ✓ Drive a fuel-efficient vehicle with properly inflated tires. If you have two cars, drive the one that gets better mileage across town for your errands. Going further on each gallon of gas puts less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
- ✓ Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent (CFL) or LED bulbs. Both CFL and LED bulbs use 75 percent less electricity and last 10-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.
- ✓ Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows and turn down the thermostat when not at home and when sleeping.
- ✓ Install “low-flow” showerheads and faucets, and turn your hot water heater down to 120 degrees.
- ✓ Buy energy-efficient electronics and appliances with the Energy Star label, and ask your utility company for a free audit to save on your energy bill.
- ✓ Of course, recycle!





# The Chocorua Lake Conservancy is Formed

The next time you drive north along Route 16 and see the stunning view of Chocorua Lake and Mount Chocorua before you, take a moment to appreciate that all that natural beauty is no accident.

For the past 46 years, as the pressure to develop land and build houses has boomed, the Chocorua Lake Conservation Foundation (CLCF) and Chocorua Lake Association (CLA) have worked hard to preserve the unspoiled beauty of the Chocorua Lake Basin and provide public access to the lake.

Now, these two sister organizations have come together to form the Chocorua Lake Conservancy with the mission of protecting the Chocorua Lake Basin in perpetuity.

The CLCF and CLA, looking ahead to the challenges of sustaining two all-volunteer organizations and of keeping the promises of perpetual conservation, have been working on this merger for two years. Given their overlapping missions, it was an inevitable decision to join forces.

The CLCF and CLA were created simultaneously in 1968 to fulfill the vision of early visitors who came to Chocorua in the latter part of the 19th century – the idea that they should not encroach upon the natural beauty and splendor of the Chocorua Lake Basin. For a hundred years, local residents followed that tradition.



Photo by Zoe Karp

In the 1960s, however, it was becoming clear that there were new and serious pressures for additional houses and commercial development. It was then that a foresighted group of Chocorua landowners decided to formalize many long-standing but unstated practices into binding safeguards for the Chocorua Lake Basin. So the CLA and CLCF were conceived.

Since their creation, the CLCF and CLA have relied on a corps of volunteers to accomplish their work. Their volunteers worked with landowners to conserve their land through gifts or purchases of land parcels or conservation easements, and attended to necessary stewardship responsibilities and maintaining areas for public use.

The membership, operations and programs of the CLCF and CLA have now merged. The result will be a more efficient and sustainable conservation organization in the Chocorua Lake Basin.

➡ Read the full story online at: <http://wp.me/pxC4v-p6>

## Want to know more?

To see the work of the Chocorua Lake Conservancy in action, and support our efforts to preserve the natural beauty of the Chocorua Lake Basin, please visit our web site and Facebook page:

<http://chocorualakeconservancy.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/chocorua.lake.conservancy>



# Who We Are, What We Do

The Chocorua Lake Conservancy (CLC) is an all-volunteer, non-profit conservation organization founded in 1968 to protect of the scenic and natural resources of the Chocorua Lake Basin and surrounding area for the benefit of all present and future visitors.

Our main areas of focus include:

- Public Access
- Land Conservation
- Lake Protection
- Education & Outreach

**Public Access:** The Chocorua Lake Conservancy provides public access to Chocorua Lake at two properties: a three-acre area known as “The Grove” by the Narrows Bridge at the south end of the lake; and a seventeen-acre area known as “The Island” adjacent to Old Route 16 on the east side of the lake. The CLC also maintains a Tamworth resident-only swimming area known as “Sandy Beach” on the east side of the lake. The CLC built and maintains the historic wooden railings on the Narrows Bridge, and owns and maintains the dam below the Little Lake.

**Land Conservation:** The Chocorua Lake Conservancy achieves the long-term protection of the Chocorua Lake Basin by seeking, holding, and monitoring conservation easements and by accepting land ownership. In 2005, the CLC successfully registered the Chocorua Lake Basin Historic District on the Register of National Historic Places, the largest such district in New England. The district covers more than 6,000 acres surrounding Chocorua Lake.

**Lake Protection:** In the early 1970s, the CLC persuaded the NH State Legislature to ban all motorboats from Chocorua Lake and successfully defended that ban in 1998. Since 1978, the CLC has been tracking the water quality in Chocorua Lake in a partnership with the UNH Center for Freshwater Biology. About 95% of the Chocorua Lake watershed is now protected through conservation covenants and easements.

**Education & Outreach:** The CLC organizes educational field workshops for members, residents and the public, and publishes two educational newsletters a year. The CLC also organizes volunteer opportunities and community-building activities for its members and local residents.

➡ Read the full story online at: <http://wp.me/pxC4v-pj>

## CLC Board of Directors

### Terms Expiring in August 2015

- Dwight Baldwin
- Harriet Hofheinz, Vice President
- Jean McKinney
- John Watkins

### Terms Expiring in August 2016

- Don Johnson
- Peg Wheeler, Vice President
- Steve Weld
- Tisha McIlwraith

### Terms Expiring in August 2017

- Alex Moot, President
- Bob Seston, Treasurer
- Penny Wheeler-Abbott, Secretary
- Steve Lanou

## Goings-on Around the Basin...

### Dam Repair on Little Chocorua Lake

Did you notice the lake level was lower than normal this summer? The concrete dam at the end of the little lake was deteriorating, so we removed a couple of boards to lower the water level and enable repairs to be made. Work was completed in October by John Roberts and his crew, and the lake level has returned to normal. The dam, owned and maintained by the CLC, was built in 1962 and last repaired in 1992.

➡ <http://wp.me/pxC4v-pj>





# Storytelling in Chocorua

By Theo Page

In 1993, when our kids were both off to college, my husband Toby and I asked ourselves “what next?” On the excellent advice of Toby’s cousin, we enrolled in a weekend storytelling course in Connecticut led by master storyteller Jay O’Callahan, not knowing we were embarking on a magical journey of creativity and friendship that has lasted for 21 years.

Twice a year, our group has continued to meet - at a farmhouse in Vermont, a summer house near Cape Cod, here in Chocorua, and once on a trip to Southern France. This August, ten of the original fourteen of that group gathered in our Chocorua home for a long weekend of writing, telling and listening to each other.

Jay starts off each morning with what he calls a “spark”, one word given to us to evoke some association that we then share with the group. Later we work on a longer piece - a personal story, a folk tale, some inspired event- writing it first, then crafting it with another group member, and finally telling it to the entire group.

Joe told about his boyhood in Hawaii, Lyn about her aging mother, Steffan about a mythical journey to Mt. Athos. I told about the web of ropes woven by our grandchildren in the barn and how they weave themselves into our hearts. Toby with his friend Julie told about a surprisingly social walk down Chocorua Lake Road. Small events become important and huge events become understandable.

Always there’s much merriment - singing, dancing before breakfast, fine meals and great camaraderie. Chocorua obliged by giving us perfect weather and good lake swimming. Myles Grinstead prepared a fabulous feast for us all on Saturday night.

➡ Read this story online at: <http://wp.me/pxC4v-pw>

## Wildlife Notes

This summer, a young moose was seen along Chocorua Lake Road, and one in the back of the Watkins’ opening. The accompanying photo was taken at the Chocorua River inlet at the head of the lake. One small bear was also seen early in the summer, but none later on.

Keep the wildlife sightings going:  
[hofheinz38@gmail.com](mailto:hofheinz38@gmail.com)



Photo by Paxton Sedler

## CLC Board Finds Insight, Fellowship at Land Trust Alliance Rally

Five members of the Chocorua Lake Conservancy's newly formed board attended the Land Trust Alliance's annual conference, held this year on September 18-20th in Providence, Rhode Island. They were: Alex Moot, Harriet Hofheinz, Jean McKinney, John Watkins and Peg Wheeler. Melissa Baldwin, a member of the CLC's Governance & Nominating Committee, traveled from Ohio and also attended the conference.

Seminars and workshops attended by CLC participants included:

- Engaging the Next Generation
- All-Volunteer Conservation Organizations
- Staying Relevant: Reaching a Changing Demography
- Your Board and Engaging New Constituencies
- Positioning Beyond Strategic Planning
- Using Story to Build People, Plans and Resources
- A Board for all Seasons: Effective Boards
- Marketing: Increase and Diversify Membership

Melissa Baldwin remarked:

"In reflecting on the weekend, I find that I am proud of the work the CLC has accomplished. I am also energized for the work that needs to be continued, and I am comforted that there is such a large support network of others from which to seek assistance and advice.

"I learned that an all-volunteer land trust is not unusual, and while our experiences are unique to our group, there are other groups that can offer valuable insight and guidance. I discovered that the discussions the Merger Task Force had about the new organizational structure of the CLC are exactly the types of discussions we should be having, and that the structure we chose is considered a 'best practice'.

"Overall, I came away from the conference with a stronger commitment to the Chocorua Lake Basin and the enrichment it provides to me, to my family and the Chocorua community. I gained ideas and knowledge that will benefit the CLC's conservation efforts."

➔ Read the full story online at: <http://wp.me/pxC4v-p1>



### Wildlife Notes

A number of interesting birds were reported in late summer, including migrating red crossbills and cooper hawks. Two crossbill species come to our woods, and both have a bill that overhangs itself especially tailored to reach and pluck out the pine nuts that are tucked up under the cone - not easy to dislodge without this specialized beak. Other species noted were wood ducks, mergansers, pileated and hairy woodpeckers, ospreys, and this fall one bald eagle coming through as well as a huge flock of grackles going south Columbus Day weekend.

The happiest sighting was the loon family on the lake. This year there were two youngsters fledged. Many folks reported watching the adult loons training their little ones to snorkel, to fish, to come when called and to generally behave themselves. Quite delightful to watch! It is a tribute to Lake Chocorua, its water quality and environs, where the loons have come back to nest since 2000.

Keep the wildlife sightings going:  
[hhofheinz38@gmail.com](mailto:hhofheinz38@gmail.com)

*Goings-on Around the Basin...***Chocorua Lake Fishing Derby – A New Tradition? Let's Hope So!**

In July, Ryan Buchanan masterminded the first ever "Save the Loons: Chocorua Lake Fishing Derby." Accompanied by an adult, participants in 3 age categories (3-8, 9-14, and 15+) competed to catch the biggest fish, to receive a donated prize. All event proceeds were donated to the Loon Preservation Committee.

John Cooley was there from the Loon Preservation Committee, to fish with his two sons. The recipient of the biggest prize, a fishing box donated by Walgreens,

went to Kit and Bob Griffin's grandson, Vincent. His fish was a 13.5 inch bass! Congratulations to Vincent, and to Ryan for putting on such a successful Fishing Derby. Let's continue this event next summer!



<http://wp.me/pxC4v-pd>

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