



Spring is returning to the lake at last, as it does in this image from last summer's Chocorua Lake Crankie. In this issue you'll find the true stories behind two images from the crankie—and stay tuned for Chocorua Lake Crankie: The Movie! | *Chocorua Lake Crankie artists*

2018 Annual Report

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear CLC members and friends,

While walking my dog Fudge across the Narrows Bridge, I am struck with gratitude for the many hundreds of volunteers and donors who have supported the Chocorua Lake Conservancy with their time and money over the past fifty years.

Our vision, that the Chocorua Lake Basin be preserved in its current state for the enjoyment of current and future generations of visitors, can only be achieved through collaboration between many individuals and partners.

First, I want to extend my deep appreciation to the 372 households and four foundations who so generously supported our recently completed *Timeless Chocorua* campaign and helped us raise over \$1.8 million to successfully protect the iconic Basin View Lot, ensure public access, and create two funds to ensure the CLC can continue protecting almost 4,000 acres across 130 properties and providing attractive public access in perpetuity.

Second, I want to recognize the contributions of 167 volunteers who helped the CLC in so many ways last year and made our 50th anniversary year a wonderful success. I also want to thank the 25 individuals who currently serve on one or more of the CLC's eight committees, which do much of the day-to-day work of the Chocorua Lake Conservancy, and the hard-working and knowledgeable members of the Board of Directors for their many contributions.

Thanks to the *Timeless Chocorua* campaign, the Board was able in December to renew the contract for **Lynne Flaccus** as our Stewardship Director. Lynne joined the CLC three years ago as our first full-time employee, and has been instrumental in helping to transform the CLC into a modern land trust capable of effectively managing or protecting almost 4,000 acres of protected land in the Chocorua Lake Basin.

We very much look forward to having **Troy Emerson** back in May for his seventh year as the CLC's Lake Patrol Officer. From Memorial Day weekend through mid-October, seven days a week and twice a day, Troy patrols the public access areas at the Grove and Narrows Bridge, the Island, and Sandy Beach, and will soon also be patrolling the Basin View Lot. Troy is responsible for keeping these areas attractive and clear of trash, answering questions from visitors, and ensuring that rules for these sites are followed by all.

I am also excited to announce that **Juno Lamb** has joined the CLC as a part-time Director of Programming and Outreach. Juno worked with us last year as a part-time Events Coordinator and did an amazing job helping the CLC organize dozens of 50th Anniversary and campaign events. In her new role, she is working with Lynne Flaccus and others to organize a variety of educational, volunteer, and social events throughout 2019 for CLC members, members of the local community, and the general public. Juno is also working on an updated CLC website.

Juno is taking over as Newsletter Editor from **Laura Cannon**, who did a wonderful job redesigning this newsletter in 2014. Special thanks to Laura for volunteering so much of her time over the past five years as Newsletter Editor and doing such

a great job. Juno is also taking over responsibility for our social media postings and media communications from **Ruth Weld**, who has served in this role for the past few years. Thanks to Ruth for her many talents and her wonderful work throughout 2018 creating daily social media posts to help the CLC celebrate its 50th anniversary year.

Have you been looking for a way to give back to the Chocorua Lake Basin? Offer your time, talents, and interests, and it's likely we have a volunteer opportunity to match it. Land trusts like the CLC give people a way to protect the land and lakes they love, close to home. We can do great things because of the people who get involved. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Lynne Flaccus at lflaccus@chocorualakeconservancy.org.

We are grateful for the generosity, trust, and most importantly, commitment of our members to our mission. The Conservancy only succeeds in our mission to protect the scenic and natural resources of the Chocorua Lake Basin because of our members. I hope each of you will renew your membership and support for the CLC in the near future.

ALEX MOOT

President (2018-19)
amoot@chocorualakeconservancy.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Stewardship Director

Juno Lamb
Programming
& Outreach Director

Troy Emerson
Lake Patrol
(May to October)

Now for some numbers!

During 2018, the CLC spent a total of **\$126,797** on regular operating expenses, four percent more than we spent the prior year. We received **\$100,148** from gifts to our Annual Fund and other sources of operating income. Donations to our Annual Fund decreased **22%** during 2018 from the prior year to **\$58,576**, perhaps an unavoidable consequence of our focus last year

asking our members to support the *Timeless Chocorua* campaign.

However, we added a record **190** first-time donors, including **64** new local households. Over the past five years, CLC's total donor base has almost quadrupled from **138** households to **522** households.

Households across **65** New

Hampshire towns and **32** states made gifts to the CLC last year, demonstrating broad geographic support for our continued efforts to protect the natural beauty of the Chocorua Lake Basin and to provide convenient, attractive public access for visitors to Chocorua Lake and trails on nearby conservation lands we own or maintain.



Work to restore historic view commences

The members of our Property Management committee have been working hard this winter on forestry plans for the Basin View Lot to reestablish the historic view so that the Little Lake and Narrows Bridge are both once again visible to visitors to the public access area on Route 16 at the top of the hill. Don Johnson of Forest Land Improvement has marked trees for removal in the meadow and wooded viewshed areas near the lake. Following required NH Department of Environmental Services rules and regulations, a well-vegetated buffer will be left to protect the shore and lake while taller trees blocking the view will be selectively removed.

CLC expects that forestry work at the Basin View Lot will start this spring before snow melt. Plans for the layout and ongoing management of the public access area at the Basin View Lot will be finalized with input from members of the Bowditch family.

Annual Report continues on p.8

Dick Packer painting at the Basin View Lot in the 1950s.

Help protect the Chocorua Lake Basin by renewing your membership:

- \$20 (Student)
- \$25 (Friend)
- \$50 (Individual Membership)
- \$100 (Family Membership)
- \$250 (Narrows Bridge Society)
- \$500 (Little Lake Society)
- \$1,000 (Chocorua Lake Society)
- \$2,500 (Mt Chocorua Society)
- Other Amount (please specify): _____

Please make check payable to "Chocorua Lake Conservancy" and mail it to:
Chocorua Lake Conservancy, PO Box 105
Chocorua, NH 03817

Or donate online today by visiting www.chocorualakeconservancy.org.

Make a difference today:

Make a Gift of Securities! Please email us at donations@chocorualakeconservancy.org for instructions.

Join the CLC's Legacy Society! Create a lasting legacy with a planned estate gift. Email us.

Become a Sustaining Member! Go to our website, click "Support Us," and make a recurring donation.

True Stories from the Crankie: No Skinny Dippin’

Ed.: When we were painting the Chocorua Lake Crankie last year, David Little turned up and said the crankie had to have a “No Skinny Dippin’” sign, just as it’s painted, bulls-eye and all. When people asked why, he explained to us that the extensive conservation of land around the lake owes everything to a fateful August day in 1876...

BY DAVID LITTLE

On Sunday, August 6th, 1876, Tamworth woke up hot. The sun rose at 4:30 AM, just as the full moon was setting. A group of young men traveled by wagon from Albany to Tamworth, where they had work haying. Included in the party were Charles, Chester, and Paul Williams, along with Sam and John Head. They finished up around 9:00 AM, and headed back to Albany. As they approached the lake, the boys proposed going bathing. Paul Williams stopped the wagon at the east end of the Narrows Bridge. While the others took off their clothes to go in the lake, Paul was left tending the horse. The water must have felt like heaven, but they were not to enjoy it for long. Sylvester Cone had spotted them.

In 1865 Cone had purchased a cottage on the shore of Chocorua Lake and 100 acres of land, including the Narrows and the Grove. He called the place Lakeside Farm, and set out to be an innkeeper for summer tourists. In 1875 he married Anna White Cone, his first cousin, who was twenty-four years his junior. Their son Ralph was born the following year. Sylvester Cone was a difficult character. He was intelligent, and could impress with the manners and conversation of a gentleman. But he had a disagreeable temper and was unpopular and distrusted by his neighbors.

When Sylvester Cone saw the young men skinny dipping, he came out of his house to confront them. Words



ABOVE: “The ones who dare might step into the water, the water where, some swear, Poseidon reigns, and where yet others swear there better be no skinny dippin’. But all agree there are gods and spirits there.” —Peggy Johnson / *Chocorua Lake Crankie* artists.

BELOW: Mount Chocorua, by William James Stillman, 1856. This painting shows the open shores of the lake, much as they would have appeared in Cone’s time. / *Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Dr. Richard D. Bullock and museum purchase made possible by Walter Beck and Reverend F. Ward Denys*

were exchanged, not for the first time on the subject of skinny dipping. Paul Williams said he had the right to be on the road, and they would leave when the others were done swimming. When the young men refused to leave right away, Cone went back to the house to get his shotgun. Anna put her hand on the gun, and cautioned him: “Don’t fire.” Cone returned to within fifty feet of the bridge, more words were exchanged, and Cone shot Paul Williams, killing him instantly.

Cone ran back to the house, barricaded the doors, and hid himself in the garret. John Head was the first to reach Paul Williams’ body, tried to lift up his head, and found him lifeless. He took the horse, and rode to the Iron Works, seeking help. He arrived as the church bell was ringing, calling the Baptists to hear Rev. John Runnells preach. John Head came into the church, and said, “Cone has killed Paul Williams.” All the able-bodied men started at once for the Narrows. Anna



Cone at first refused to open the door, saying Cone was not there. Eventually Selectman Jonathan Nickerson talked Sylvester Cone into surrendering. The mob called for lynching him. Newspapers reported the Baptists proposed drowning. Fortunately, the better minded men prevailed. Cone was held until Sheriff John Demeritt arrived with a writ for his arrest.

Sylvester Cone was tried for murder. The jury found him guilty of the reduced charge of manslaughter. He was sentenced to thirty years of hard labor at the State Prison. After serving

17 years, Cone was pardoned by the Governor and Council. He remained unrepentant, still claiming he was wronged, that he never should have been imprisoned.

During the trial, Cone mortgaged his property twice. Once imprisoned, he defaulted. Before it was auctioned, Anna, his divorced wife, petitioned for a homestead right for herself and their son Ralph. She was awarded the house and one-quarter acre of curtilage.

On April 23, 1879, Charles Pickering Bowditch and Henshaw Bates Walley purchased the Cone property. They went on to acquire almost 85% of the lakeshore, and by the late 19th century were pioneers in the conservation movement.

In New Hampshire there actually is no law against skinny dipping. But “swimmer discretion is advised.”

Central to the Cone case is the unresolved conflict between two competing legal principles. The State of New Hampshire holds all navigable waters, for the public’s benefit, for any “lawful and useful purpose.” At the same time exists the exclusive use of one’s property, and protection against those who would seek to use it without the owner’s permission. Where shorefront is private property, you still have a right to go swimming, but “you can’t get there from here.”

Fortunately, CLC has finessed this problem, through its guiding principle of providing public access. The peaceful nature of the lake is preserved by avoiding conflict with others who may wish to enjoy it.

Finally, in New Hampshire there actually is no law against skinny dipping. The closest we have is NH RSA 546:I, which includes a prohibition on “any other act of gross lewdness under circumstances which he or she should know will likely cause affront or alarm.” Meaning: “Swimmer Discretion Is Advised.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

We look forward to seeing you indoors and out throughout the summer season. Visit www.chocorualake.org for the latest event information.

Wednesday, May 29, 7PM
Why Did the Turtle Cross the Road? with Lynne Flaccus. Learn about NH’s turtles and get ready for nesting season in June. Cook Memorial Library, Tamworth.

Friday, May 31, 9AM-12PM
Wild Walk with Lynne Flaccus. Explore a CLC property without trails, learn to use “maps and apps,” and learn how to monitor a conservation property. CLC Burt Lot, Albany.

Wednesday, June 5, 9AM-12PM
Stewardship Day. Get a green workout! Field clearing at CC Browne Memorial Woods, Chocorua.

Saturday, June 8, 9-11 AM
Nature Journaling with Lynne Flaccus. Practice close observation of nature with pencil and paper. No experience necessary. All ages. Kids, please bring a helpful adult with you. Bowditch Reserve, Chocorua.

Saturday, June 15, 9AM-12PM
Something Fishy! Guided walk with Lynne Flaccus to learn about trout habitat work on Allen Brook. Scott Reserve, Chocorua.

Friday June 21, 9AM-12PM
Stewardship Day. Invasive plant control. Location TBA.

Wednesday, June 26, 7PM
Timeless is Relative: The Glaciated Landscape of the Chocorua Basin with geologist Rick Allmendinger. Nearly a mile of ice once covered our whole neighborhood. What happened next? Cook Memorial Library, Tamworth.

Thursday, July 4, 11AM
Tamworth Parade and Family Day. Bring your kids and come find us!

Friday, July 5, 8AM
Lake Paddle with Lynne Flaccus. Meet at the Grove for a paddle around Little Lake.

Saturday, July 6, 9-11AM
Wild Walk with Lynne Flaccus. Explore a CLC property without trails, learn use of “maps and apps,” and learn how to monitor a conservation property. Location TBA.

Saturday, July 6, 12-2PM
CLC Members Cookout. Location TBA.

Sunday, July 7, 8:45-10:30AM
Chocorua Lake Conservancy Highway Trash Pickup. Meet in the Grove at 8:45.

Wednesday, July 17, 9-11AM
Stewardship Day. Location TBA.

Tuesday, July 16, 7PM
Algonquian Lifeways in the Lakes Region with Mary Ellen Lepionka. How did Algonquian people use the land and resources around Chocorua, Ossipee, and Winnepesaukee to make their living? What was their life like day to day and season to season? Cook Memorial Library, Tamworth.

Saturday, July 27
Chocorua Day. Come visit with us.

Saturday, Aug. 3, 9AM-1PM
Tamworth Street Fair. Come visit with us.

Saturday, Aug. 10, 12-2PM
CLC Members Cookout. Wheeler field.

Saturday, Aug. 10, 7:30-10PM
Tamworth Outing Club Second Saturday Contra Dance, sponsored by CLC. Tamworth Town House, Tamworth.

Wednesday, Aug. 14, 9AM-12PM
Stewardship Day. Location TBA.

Saturday, Aug. 17, 8-11AM
Lake Paddle with Lynne Flaccus. Investigate the north end of the lake, home to many aquatic plant species.

Saturday, Aug. 17, 3-5:30PM
Annual Meeting & Cocktail Hour. Runnells Hall, Chocorua.

Saturday, Aug. 31, 10AM-3PM
Lantern-making workshop with artist Gowri Savor, in partnership with the Yeoman’s Fund for the Arts. Make a beautiful paper lantern for your kayak or canoe in anticipation of the Parade of Lights. Ages 16-adult. Advance sign-up requested. Runnells Hall, Chocorua.

Saturday, Aug. 31, 1-3PM
Lantern-making for Kids & Teens, in partnership with the Yeoman’s Fund for the Arts. Ages 10 and under, please bring a helpful adult with you. Advance sign-up requested. Runnells Hall, Chocorua.

Saturday, Aug. 31, 5PM
Member & Volunteer Appreciation Party. Location TBA.

Sunday, Sept. 1, 6PM to dark
Annual Potluck & Parade of Lights. The Grove, Chocorua Lake.

Sunday, Oct. 13, 8:45-10:30AM
Chocorua Lake Conservancy Highway Trash Pickup. Meet in the Grove at 8:45.

Landowner Resources

BY LYNNE FLACCUS

Stewardship Director

One of the things I enjoy about my work is the opportunity to meet with landowners and walk their properties, learning about their connections to their land, and being able to share what I know about the natural world when landowners have questions. When I don't have the answers, it's nice to be able to offer suggestions for landowners who are looking for help with managing their land.

The CLC uses a variety of resources to help us as we work at being stewards of the public lands we hold. These resources are not just for land trusts, but are available for private landowners as well, and are a wonderful place to search for information from forestry and wildlife habitat to invasive plants and farming.

In previous newsletters you may have seen reports on the various Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) grants that the CLC has used to help manage our lands. NRCS works with landowners of all kinds and can offer advice whether you own 10 acres or 200 acres. Looking for a forest management plan but aren't sure where to start or if it's worth the effort? Would you rather manage your land specifically for birds or pollinators? Landowners can apply for a grant to offset the cost of a written management plan, and offset costs associated with implementing some of the practices for growing trees or growing wildlife!

Clearing fields, timber stand improvement, creating wildlife openings in the forest, improving trout habitat, and plantings for wildlife, are just a few examples of cost share available. Like most grant programs there may be some cost for landowners to implement the work, but with



Lynne Flaccus

the help of the NRCS it is minimal compared to the true costs of doing it on your own. The benefits? An amazing NRCS staff to help with the planning, and the reward of connecting to your land in a way that can benefit you and the larger community.

Forests, streams, lakes, and wildlife don't really stop at boundaries, and we all play a role in stewardship, whatever happens on our own land.

The NH Fish and Game has a Small Grants Program that provides funding for similar projects. They also provide funding for a management plan, geared more towards wildlife habitat management. Field clearing, mowing, forest openings for wildlife, "release" of fruiting shrubs and old apple trees are just a few examples of practices they support. The application process is fairly simple and funding can include up to \$10,000 over 10 years. Speaking with one of the regional biologists will help you determine what is right for you and what may be available from these grants.

One of the resources I use a great deal is the UNH Cooperative Extension. They have huge amounts of information on natural resources and tips for landowners, in addition to farming and canning. Have some old apple trees to prune for wildlife or to get more apples for your sauces and jellies? Would you like your gardens to provide more food for pollinating insects? Invasive barberry shrubs growing in your field and you don't know how to get rid of them? You'll find all kinds of valuable information, workshops and fact sheets on the UNHCE site, and also links to

other organizations with even more answers!

For those who own shorefront property, the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) is the go-to place to learn about ways to protect your shoreline buffer and water quality, as well as current rules and regulations related to allowed activities within the waterfront buffer. The vegetated buffer is critical to preventing erosion, maintaining water quality, and providing a wildlife corridor among other functions. We all know water flows downhill, and someone else is always downstream or down lake from you.

This is just a short list of resources for landowners, and each has links to others. If you're not sure what, if any, active stewardship or management might work on your land, give a call and you may find practices and funding that connect you to your land in new and exciting ways. Forests, streams, lakes, and wildlife don't really stop at boundaries, and we all play a role in stewardship, whatever happens on our own land.

You're welcome to join the CLC on some of our stewardship days to see how the CLC has been using some of these great resources!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Natural Resource Conservation Service (the local service office is in Conway)

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/nh/contact>

NH Department of Environmental Services
<https://www.des.nh.gov>

NH Cooperative extension
<https://extension.unh.edu>



"It's not always straightforward fishing. One angler pulled out more than he imagined, pulled out a statue of Ganesha himself, pulled him out of this lake, cleaned him up, and took him home—because there are gods and spirits enough, he thought, without statues." —Peggy Johnson / *Chocorua Lake Crankie* artists

True Stories from the Crankie: Ganesha

BY THAD BERRIER

“What the...Hindu?” I thought, as I pulled a colorful, many-armed elephant to the surface of the water near the eastern shore of Chocorua Lake one early summer evening. I had been fly fishing, waist deep in my waders, and returning to shore my eye caught this colorful something on the sandy bottom. I reached down, the depth the full limit of my arm’s reach without me having to go under. As the piece surfaced, I realized that it wasn’t just another lost item of trash, but something with a story behind it. The elephant was hollow, with some sand in it, and quite tender. My first thought was a possible vessel for an illegal substance, then I

wondered if it was a religious offering of sorts. I figured that the ceremony that could have taken place there had already had its intended effect on the participants, and that leaving the elephant—Ganesha, I later found out—in the lake until he dissolved wouldn’t make or break the wish for wisdom, success, or good luck.

I brought the intensely colorful little four-armed pachyderm home, dried it out, and squirted foam in it to stabilize its remaining extended life. So for now, Vighneshvara, lord of obstacles or difficulties, is hanging with me. His adventures are probably not over yet. Possibly he’ll return to the lake on the bow of my kayak for a fishing expedition or the Parade of Lights, or



The real Ganesha statue, at home at Thad’s. *Thad Berrier*

adorn a Fourth of July float.

Ed.: The Hindu festival of Ganesh Chaturthi takes place in August or September each year. The ten-day festival ends with the immersion of a clay idol of Ganesh in a body of water. Might this be how Ganesha found his way to our lake?

2018 Annual Report

For the period from Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2018

INCOME	2018	2017
Household Memberships & Cash Donations	\$58,576	\$74,999
Business Partner Donations	4,572	2,500
Forestry & Forestry Grants	22,199	26,103
Merchandise Sales	7,866	1,898
Event Donations	4,428	1,520
Donated Services	2,507	1,854
TOTAL INCOME	\$100,148	\$108,874

NON-OPERATING ACTIVITY		
Interest, Dividends & Gains	-\$91,253	\$114,053
Timeless Chocorua Campaign	\$636,541	\$288,917
Donations & Pledge Receipts	619,880	292,907
Grants Received	108,050	28,000
less: Campaign and 50th Anniversary Expenses	-91,389	-31,990
Land Interests Acquired	-\$256,438	-\$30,609

ASSETS (as of Dec. 31)		
Bank Balances & Due from Broker	\$125,737	\$150,709
Inventory	8,986	0
Investments (operating & project funds)	58,841	278,243
Investments (capital campaigns)	1,234,360	736,771
<i>including Unrealized Gain/(Loss)</i>	<i>-31,331</i>	<i>95,223</i>
Total Current Assets	\$1,427,924	\$1,165,723
Conservation Covenants & Easements	\$441,552	\$185,114
Fee-Owned Properties	510,461	510,461
Total Fixed Assets	\$952,013	\$695,575
TOTAL ASSETS	\$2,379,937	\$1,861,298

DONORS & VOLUNTEERS

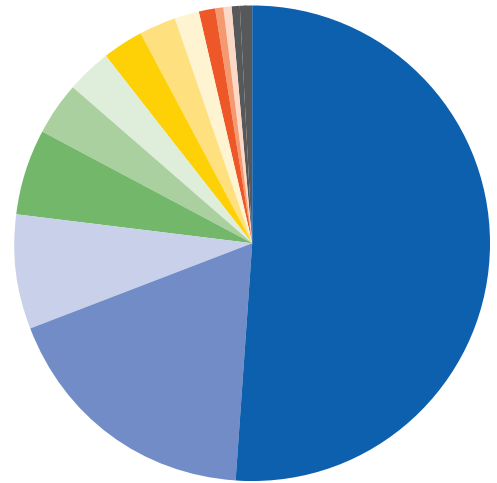
Household Donors (Annual Fund and/or Campaign)	2018	% increase (decrease)	2017
Family Memberships (\$100 and up)	310	+ 26%	247
Individual Memberships (\$50 to \$99)	113	+ 33%	85
Friends & Students (\$1 to \$49)	99	+ 77%	56
Business Partners (\$100 to \$1,000)	13	-7%	14
TOTAL	535	+ 33%	402
Other Information			
First-time donors	190	+ 124%	85
Local donors (Chocorua & nearby towns)	150	+ 55%	97
New Hampshire household donors	240	+ 64%	146
Massachusetts household donors	117	+ 27%	92
Household donors from 30 other states	165	+ 10%	150
Volunteers	167	+ 129%	73



Juno Lamb

OPERATING EXPENSES

Staff Compensation and Benefits (\$64,952)	Dues to Other Organizations (\$2,075)
Forestry (\$22,844)	Public Convenience (\$1,366)
Rent and Office (\$9,977)	Sponsorships (\$804)
Newsletters (\$7,229)	Payments in Lieu of Taxes (\$707)
Legal (\$4,875)	Other Expenses (\$657)
Membership Appeals (\$3,710)	Donation Processing (\$477)
Merchandise (\$3,648)	Water Testing (\$384)
Insurance (\$3,092)	



EXPENSES

	2018	% total expenses	2017	% total expenses
Land Conservation	\$70,124	55.3%	\$66,520	54.4%
Staff Compensation and Benefits	57,061		52,104	
Rent and Office Expenses	8,188		6,546	
Legal Expense	4,875		7,870	
Property Management	\$35,682	28.2%	\$29,082	23.8%
Forestry	22,844		12,994	
Staff Compensation & Benefits	7,891		8,238	
Liability Insurance	2,240		2,155	
Public Convenience	1,366		1,130	
Payments In Lieu of Taxes	707		696	
Water Tests	384		384	
Grove, Island, Bridge, & Dam	250		3,485	
Education and Outreach	\$12,970	10.2%	\$13,916	11.4%
Newsletters (Spring & Fall)	7,229		8,809	
Merchandise Costs	3,648		1,540	
Office Expenses	1,289		1,450	
Member Events	554		1,717	
Outreach Events & Sponsorships	250		400	
Administration (Governance and Finance)	\$3,834	3.0%	\$5,282	4.3%
Membership Dues to Other Organizations	2,075		1,100	
D&O Insurance	852		852	
Office Expenses	500		777	
Annual Meeting and Board Meetings	212		559	
Conferences	120		1,729	
Accounting, Tax Prep and Business Fees	75		265	
Development & Membership	\$4,187	3.3%	\$7,382	6.0%
Membership Appeals	3,710		5,596	
Donation Processing Fees	477		1,786	
Donated Services	\$0	0.0%	\$170	0.1%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$126,797		\$122,352	
OPERATING SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	-\$26,649		-\$13,478	

The Northern Water Snake

BY LYNNE FLACCUS

Stewardship Director

Who am I? I am a reptilian resident of Lake Chocorua and its watershed. I don't have any eyelids, I taste the air with my tongue rather than "smelling" to find my food, I have teeth but they aren't made for chewing, am an excellent swimmer, and I give birth to live young. Oh, and I'm not slimy! Not many humans seem to like me, but I mind my own business and am an important link in the food chain of the lake.

Northern water snakes, one of 11 snake species in NH, are common in and around Chocorua Lake.* They look black or dark in color, but in the right light they have a beautiful saddled pattern to their scales. Their bellies are checkered with whites, reds, and browns that are also quite beautiful. A large water snake may be intimidating, but they are most interested in hunting and minding their own business. Will they bite? Sure, as any animal will if cornered or threatened, but they are not poisonous and will more than likely swim away before you even spot them.

Look for young hatchling water snakes in August to October; the juvenile snakes are more brightly colored and are sometimes confused with milk snakes. After giving birth to her young, the female leaves them to fend for themselves. You may see the juveniles hunting in the shore vegetation, or swimming along the edges, or even basking on a log in the warm sun.

Water snakes eat a variety of prey: frogs, salamanders, turtles, insects and other invertebrates, fish, and even small mammals. What eats a water snake? Great blue herons, snapping turtles, otters, large bass, and raccoons will make a meal of a snake if the opportunity arises. In addition to natural predators, snakes have to deal with habitat loss, roads with cars, and



Juvenile northern water snake. *Lynne Flaccus*

human harassment.

As this newsletter goes to print, there is still ice on the lake and water snakes are tucked away for the winter waiting for the longer days and warming sun of spring. Keep an eye open for them this

spring and summer: watching from a quiet distance you might see them catch a meal and swallow it whole!

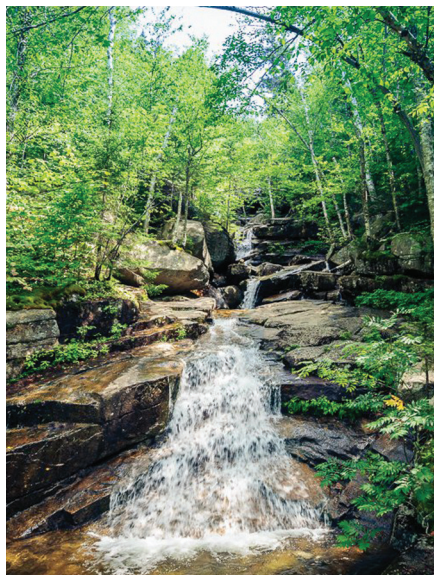
**They might even account for how Chocorua got its name—see Mary Ellen Lepionka's article on page 11!*

Chocorua, Home of the Water Serpent?

Ed.: Mary Ellen Lepionka's talk at the Cook Library last September, "Native Americans of the Saco & Merrimack," was one of our best-attended events all year. Toward the end of the talk, she took on the myth of Chief Chocorua, widely attributed as the person for whom mountain and lake are named. She gave evidence for why the myth and attribution are both unlikely—among other things, no historical record exists of a Chief Chocorua, Algonquian culture had no tradition of suicide, and Algonquian place names do not name people or events. We asked her to write up these findings for us, and she generously agreed to do so. The below is an excerpt from her piece, "Chocorua Redux: Revisionist History of a Name," which we will make available to the public digitally soon, with a full bibliography for those wanting to learn more. Mary Ellen will join us again this summer for another slideshow and talk, "Algonquian Lifeways in the Lakes Region," on Tuesday, July 16 at 7PM at the Cook Memorial Library.

BY MARY ELLEN LEPIONKA

The mountain would already have had its name from pre-Contact times, well before there was any individual warrior to be recorded in 18th century history or folklore. The first mention was *Coruway*, referring to the mountain, pond, and river, but that was nearly 50 years after European contact, and it was another 30 years after that before the word *Chocorua* appears in records along with reference



Cascade, Champney Falls, 2014. / Jos Dielis

to a person by that name.

The name originally given and recorded for the mountain was *Corua*, which Jeremy Belknap recorded in his 1791 history of New Hampshire. *Coruway* is a corruption, an example of a common form of corruption of Algonquian place names in which the English added the diphthong /ey/ to Native words ending in the vowel /a/.

Corua is a pre-Columbian word, loaned into Spanish, for a kind of "snake"—in particular a serpent that guards a mountain spring. Serpents are prominent in Native American spiritual beliefs, not only in New England but throughout the Americas. Serpents are messengers from the underworld, or water world—very dangerous, but very useful. Crevices in rocks in high places,

especially mountains above 1000 feet, were where spirits like the water serpent lived.

Choc comes from an Eastern Algonquian word for heavily eroded rocks, such as occur in the aptly named Chic-Choc Mountains in the Gaspé in Quebec. There is a *choc* in the name for Mt. Washington as the home of the Great Spirit (*Agiocochook*, *Agiochocook*). Such rocks had the crevices in which spirits preferred to dwell. Thus, Chocorua most likely originally referred to the rock home of the water guardian serpent assumed to be living on the mountain. Interestingly, the Northern Water Snake (*Nerodia sipedon*) is commonly found on Mt. Chocorua today.

Chocorua probably means "Home of the Water Serpent." The Wonalancet River, Bearcamp, and other waterways that run through Tamworth drain from Mt. Chocorua, and those streams have widely fluctuating seasonal flows. Places like Pitcher Falls dry up in times of drought, for example. Algonquians believed that offending a water serpent or killing one, even accidentally, could cause a water source to dry up. It would have been extremely important to Native people living in the Tamworth valley to have a water serpent on the mountain to propitiate. Ancestors of the people living on the Saco River, or those who were here before them, most likely named the mountain for the spiritual guardian of its headwaters. Ultimately, of course, we can never really know for sure.

HELP US FIND GREAT BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS!

Do you know someone who would make a good candidate to serve on the CLC's Board of Directors, or on a Board Committee?

Think about your personal and professional acquaintances in the community, and about the members of your extended family, and share your ideas by Tuesday, June 18, with Melissa Baldwin, Chair of the Governance and Nominating Committee, at mbaldwin@chocorualakeconservancy.org. Self-nominations are permitted, but not encouraged.

We'd like to know why you believe the person is a good candidate for the Board of the CLC. The Nominating Committee will evaluate all suggestions and present a recommended slate to the Board. The Board will present its recommended slate for action by the CLC membership at the Annual Meeting on Saturday, August 17, from 3-5PM at Runnells Hall, in Chocorua Village. We look forward to your suggestions!

—Melissa Baldwin



The Chocorua Lake Conservancy is a volunteer-led land trust dedicated to its mission of protecting the natural beauty of the Chocorua Lake Basin and providing public access for present and future visitors.



Spring! / Chocorua Lake Crankie artists

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Find us online and become a member at chocorualake.org or visit us on Facebook or Instagram.

Get ready for summer! Purchase a CLC hat, water bottle, and market bag at squareup.com/store/Chocorua.

The Chocorua Lake Conservancy publishes and distributes an educational newsletter twice a year, in the Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter. Current and past issues are posted online at chocorualake.org.

Have an idea for a newsletter article? Let us know!

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