

THE FRIENDS OF LAKE WARNER AND THE MILL RIVER



NEWSLETTER

1907 View of Lake Warner and the Village

WINTER 2016-2017

Notes from the Chairman:

As autumn turned to winter we watched Lake Warner and the Mill River refresh themselves. It was good to see clearer water and higher flow over the dam. 2016 was a long dry summer- tough on everyone. The Friends of Lake Warner and the Mill River is also refreshing itself with some very good news for the organization.

Last month the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts awarded FoLW a \$24,500.00 grant. This funding will be used for environmental programs aimed at restoring and conserving the lake, and for strengthening the Friends organization. It will also help leverage funding from other sources.

We do have a challenge from the Foundation. Receiving \$11,500.00 of the \$24,500.00 depends on the Friends raising an additional \$11,500.00 on its own. Please help us meet the challenge of raising \$11,500.00 so we receive the entire \$24,500.00 grant. The money will be spent on environmental programs aimed at conserving the lake and surrounding watershed, and on capacity building for the Friends organization. You can contribute using Paypal on our web site.

We had a great year. State funding for dam restoration was increased and confirmed. Volunteer activity to remove invasive water chestnut was very successful. No plants could be found by summer's end. Our membership has grown. The North Hadley Church continues to offer us office space at a very low cost. Our summer raffle was a success. Hadley voters approved funding from the Community Preservation Act. New collaborations were formed with UMass and several government and private environmental organizations. Our work was recognized at a regional watershed conference.

Please join us. We meet the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm in the North Hadley Church. Happy New Year One and All.

With Appreciation: David Moskin, Chairman

From the Director- We did it!

Season's Greetings to all of our supporters! 2016 has been a very busy and successful year for the Friends of Lake Warner and the Mill River, due in large part to the local support of our members. After three years of planning, negotiations, estimations and delays the dam repair is fully funded and scheduled to begin in July of 2017. This effort would not have been possible without the commitment of Kestrel Land Trust to see that the wishes of the people of Hadley were supported through the preservation of the dam and lake. Many thanks to the citizens of Hadley who supported funding of the project through the use of CPA funds. The unwavering support and diligence of Rep. John Scibak and Sen. Stan Rosenberg were crucial to making the preservation of this historic site and landscape possible. Improving the condition of the lake is going to take a similar commitment of time and money. We have been preparing for that commitment through grant proposals and baseline monitoring, while working toward dam repair. Following the repairs we are prepared to take on that challenge.

*Thanks again for your support,
Jason Johnson, Executive Director*

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Please attend a FoLW meeting. The first Tuesday of each month at the North Hadley Congregational Church: 6:30pm.
You'll be glad you did!



Please make donations to:

**The Friends of Lake Warner
P.O. Box 11 Hadley, MA 01035**

Or go to our website:

<http://friendsoflakewarner.org/donate/>

2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed purchase and sale agreement with Kestrel Trust to acquire ownership of the dam and water rights after the restoration of the dam is complete.
- Received a grant from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts for \$24,500. \$11,500 of which is dependent on raising a matching amount from other sources during 2017.
- Applied for and received a Community Preservation Grant from the Town of Hadley for \$9,600 to support lake and stream monitoring over the next 3 years.
- Conducted bi-weekly water quality sampling of the lake and tributaries for E. coli bacteria, and nutrients between April and November. A total of 120 bacteria and nutrient samples were taken this season. Results were posted at the boat ramp and made available to the public online.
- Conducted soil samples at 4 locations in the lake for toxins, heavy metals and nutrients.
- Sponsored a lake cleanup day, and removed trash and tires from the lake.
- Sponsored a water chestnut pull that removed nearly 400 pounds of invasive plants from the lake, half of the total amount removed this year. Scouting and pulling were done regularly throughout the season, removing a total of 800 pounds this season, the smallest quantity found since 2003.
- Held public meeting to present the results from our 2015 State of the Lake Report.
- Organized and encouraged the study of invertebrates in the Mill River and tributaries by students at Amherst College.
- Continued to support and educate the local community about grant and loan opportunities available to assist with water and land conservation projects.
- Gave a talk and tour of the lake to students from STCC.
- Hosted two scientists from Uruguay through the International Development Training Program for 6 weeks. Involved them directly in our field work and introduced them to many water quality and watershed management activities in our area.

Pond Tree Lighting

More than 250 people attended the annual Pond Tree lighting on November 27th in North Hadley, courtesy of the North Hadley Market. The Friends of Lake Warner were there giving away turkey soup and good cheer. This popular event brings many of our supporters in North Hadley together to celebrate both the holidays and the pond ecosystem we are working to preserve. Special thanks to the Boisvert family for working out all the technical details that get the tree shining brightly. If you weren't there you can still go see the floating Christmas tree any evening. It's a beautiful sight.



FoLW Board of Directors with International Development Training professionals from Uruguay and Peru



Gathering Water Chestnut

Cynthia Boettner, Coordinator of the Invasive Plant Control Initiative at the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service presented a Gathering of Water Chestnut Practitioners in the Connecticut River Watershed on Wednesday 7 Dec 16.

The conference was hosted by The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in Windsor, CT. Over 30 participants from some 20 different agencies attended including FoLW. Among the subjects discussed were definitions, standardization, protocols, successes and failures and the reasons, coordination, site characterization, technologies, techniques, measurement, reporting, predicting, scheduling, problems, safety, cross contamination, outreach, mechanical harvesting, chemical and biological control and the FUTURE. There wasn't enough time but we got a lot done and laid the ground work for 2017.

Ecosystem Update

The drought this year presented the most challenging conditions in recent memory for farmers and the environment. The lake however, remained resilient enough to prevent a fish kill. Conditions were very stressful with elevated temperatures, abundant algal growth and low dissolved oxygen levels. Look for details in the forthcoming 2016 State of the Lake Report, which will be available soon.

As late as October, the flow in the Mill River remained at a bare bones minimum of 7-10 cubic feet per second, the summer low flow. (1 cubic foot per second for 1 day = 1.98 acre feet of water.) At it's lowest the lake was down 1-1.5 feet, which is 68-100 acre feet of water. With inflows of 8 cubic feet per second, and outflow from the leaking slide gate at 5 cubic feet per second, there has only been about 6 acre feet of water being replenished each day, minus evaporation and evapotranspiration (what the plants are sucking up). It took 20-30 days for the lake to refill this fall. 1 ac-ft.=325,851 gallons x 70 acre feet=22,809,570 gallons. 100 acre feet=32,585,100 gallons to refill the lake. That is quite a lot of water, and not much coming from the sky until recently.

North Hadley Open Community Space

In 1908 Frank Scott gave the land next to North Hadley town hall and schoolhouse for the use and pleasure of the citizens of North Hadley, to enjoy in perpetuity. The Scott family then owned a large part of North Hadley, and this gift was a gesture of good will and generosity to the community in which the family was so deeply embedded. This public "common" connecting the pond to the heart of North Hadley village provided views, access to the pond and a place for community activities. It has long played a role in the sense and identity of the Village similar to that of the West Street common in the center of Hadley. Although currently in disrepair and not well used, this common land and the surrounding buildings remain central to the character of the National Historic District of North Hadley.

The adjacent North Hadley Village Hall, historically significant and an ornament to North Hadley, requires substantial maintenance. The costs of deferred maintenance and modification for compliance with requirements for public use have led the Town to a decision to sell the building, with a preservation restriction to insure the exterior of the building would be retained as historically appropriate. At least one local property management owner has expressed interest in purchasing and maintaining the Village Hall while preserving most of the open space (now known as the "ballfield") for public use.

This open space could easily be restored to provide public access to the pond, and to play a role as a park for children's play and community events. The historic character of the center of North Hadley village would be preserved, as would a beautiful view of Mount Warner and of North Hadley Pond, with its fishermen, kayakers, other boaters in spring, summer and fall, and ice fishermen, skaters and hockey players in the winter.

This land is now the only open, public space left in North Hadley village. Frank Scott's gift to the town is a unique resource, very difficult to replace. As more families move into the area, it will be ever more valuable and difficult to replace.

As town owned land, there is interest in developing this parcel for other municipal use. Development in this place will eliminate the possibility of a public recreational use better suited to the unique character of the site and more consistent with the intent of the donor's gift. A modern structure will alter the appearance and character of the neighborhood forever.



North Hadley Village Hall and Schoolhouse

NORTH HADLEY HISTORICAL PHOTOS



North Hadley Church

The photo above shows the North Hadley Church and Frank Scott's property with the arch indicating a boat launch to access the lake. This property was donated to the town in 1908 to be used as a ball field for the school. - *Hadley Historical Commission, Date Unknown*



North Hadley Minstrel Troupe

Concerts and plays were held at the North Hadley Village Hall. Front Row, Emma Dickenson with tambourine, Kate D. Hunt, George Howe, standing on right. - *Hadley Historical Commission, 1886*



North Hadley Village Hall and Schoolhouse

The building was dedicated in 1865 and the bell was added in 1871. - *Hadley Historical Commission, Circa 1885-1900*



School Children at the North Hadley Schoolhouse

- *Hadley Historical Commission, 1885*