



FoCL

Friends of Clam Lake

Spring 2014

www.friendsofclamlake.com

Message from the President:

Dear Members,

May 1, 2014

The weather seems to be grinding it's way toward spring even though some lakes in the area have not yet entirely shed their cover of ice. As in past years, the water of Clam Lake was ice free relatively early and migratory birds have returned in large numbers including several loons. The nesting platform maintained by FoCL has been put in it's usual position at the East end adjacent to Grass River Natural Area property. No loons have been observed on the platform so far but unfortunately, a large group of cormorants attempted to make it their home. The cormorants have now been "encouraged" to leave so our nesting loon par should be back soon.

WPPIT

Although you may not yet have had a chance to open the cottage for the summer, your FoCL board members have already been busy with the activities of a new season. In March, we participated in what has become an annual event to engage members of local government on environmental issues. The meeting was held at camp Hayo-Went-Ha and was organized by the Watershed Protection Plan Implementation Team. The WPPIT group is a collaboration of several non-profit organizations including FoCL and other area lake associations. The group meets on a regular basis throughout the year and has been responsible for initiatives such as the on-going fish shelters project.

New Boat House Construction

Also in March, FoCL members sounded off on an application for a permit to construct a new four slip boat house on Clam Lake off of Crystal Springs Road in Helena Township. Thanks to everyone who took the time to articulate their personal views about this application to the MDEQ and the many who showed up at the public meeting. The permit application has been denied. It is possible the applicant may contest the MDEQ decision and if so, the process from that point forward does not allow for additional public input. Those who still have strong views about new boat house construction and are concerned about shoreline development on Clam Lake may want to engage your local township zoning board. It is believed that new boat house construction and excavation of soils at or near the ordinary high water mark would violate township zoning ordinances. Permits issued by the MDEQ do not require proof of local zoning approval, so your township must stand alone against an applicant who's project opposes community consensus as expressed by local zoning. Although most townships have begun to include language that establishes and protects a shoreline buffer zone, it is unclear how this will stand up under litigation and most townships do not specifically address dockage, boat houses or water views.

Clam Lake DNR Access Site

In April, several FoCL board members met with the Antrim County road commission, Forest Home Township and the MDNR, at the site of the public launch ramp on Clam Lake to discuss storm water runoff. FoCL initiated this dialog last year when it was observed and documented

that sand and sediment was entering the lake during large storm events. As a result of this meeting the road commission has agreed to make changes this season to the grade along the East shoulder of Clam Lake Road as it approaches the site and install a culvert under an unpaved private drive. It was determined that water from the county road flowing over this driveway was a source of sediment. The MDNR has agreed to stabilize the hillside next to the message board and install split rail fencing to encourage visitors to use the existing stairs to access the parking area and toilet. They will also remove a portion of a five to six foot tall berm that had been undercut by tires of vehicles backing boats into the water. On a longer time horizon, the MDNR will investigate moving the ramp East to the road end property and have vehicles with trailers approach from the West. This redesign will take advantage of existing site topography to direct storm water to cultivated areas and away from the hard surface ramp.

Boater Safety Classes

FoCL has joined other area lake associations by providing funding to help with the cost of having the Antrim County Marine Patrol provide free Boater Safety Classes at area high schools in April and May this year. Legislation which went into effect last year mandates that all boaters born after July 1, 1996 must have and carry a Boating Safety Certificate to operate any boat with a motor larger than six horsepower. A person born after December 31, 1978, must have a certificate to operate a personal watercraft. As these regulations were phased in, the Marine Patrol tended to give verbal warnings and to educate violators about the new law. This season, it is anticipated that non-compliance will likely result in the issuance of a ticket. Everyone who expects that friends or family using the water are subject to the new requirements, should make sure those individuals have a boating safety certificate. You can find out more about boating safety and how to obtain a certificate at <http://Michigan.gov/boating>

Joint Education Events

The FoCL board also committed to again fund and participate in two Joint Education Events with the Grass River Natural Area, other area lake associations, and the Antrim County Conservation District, among others. The first event will be held at Thurston Park in Central Lake on Tuesday, June 17 and will feature a presentation by Antrim County Commissioner of Dams, Mark Stone, titled "**The Dam Facts: Water Levels in Antrim Chain of Lakes**". Members that heard Mark speak at our annual meeting last year know how interesting his knowledge about the dynamics of water levels on the chain is. Mark will also have an update on the pilot project to address sediment build up by installing large woody debris structures in Grass River last September, an effort supported by FoCL and our member volunteers. The second event will be held on Tuesday, August 12 at Alden Depot in Alden and will feature presentations by The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. This event, "**Outdoors in Antrim**", will focus on outdoor recreational activities in Antrim County. Both events start at 5 p.m. and snacks and refreshments will be offered after the presentations.

Annual Meeting – Hold that Date

After two years away, we have decided to return the FoCL Annual Meeting to the Alden United Methodist Church. The meeting will be held on Saturday morning, August 9 in Alden with registration starting at 9:30 a.m. More information will be distributed after the full agenda is developed. Please mark the date and time on your calendar. Attending the annual meeting is the most important support, after membership, that you can give to FoCL. It is the time to find out what members care about and tell others what is important to you. Please plan on attending and if you have more time, contact any board member about being a FoCL volunteer or serving on the board of directors. Your organization needs you!

We look forward to hearing from you. Have a enjoyable and safe summer!

Fred Sittel
(clamlake@frontier.com)

Membership Committee Update:

Spring has sprung; summer is just around the corner. Really? Well, according to the calendar, no matter the weather, it is that time of year when we ask all our current "Friends" to renew their memberships. At the same time, we invite all those who have held back for whatever reason, to join us! The goal of Friends of Clam Lake is a lofty one indeed. We strive to keep our lake beautiful, healthy and safe so that we, our children, and the generations to come will forever enjoy our Up North treasure. As membership chairman, I plead for your timely response. And remember, every "Friend" is welcome to serve on the membership committee. Only requirement? Ask your neighbor to become a "Friend". With your help, we could easily increase our numbers in 2014. Total membership for 2013 was 155. Can we reach 175 or 200? As always, additional applications are available on the web-site; or, just contact me with names and addresses. Thank you, one and all, for your help and co-operation.

Cottie Volle, Membership Chair
(tkvolle1@yahoo.com)

Important Dates:

Joint Education Event: Tuesday, June 17 commissioner of dams, Mark Stone, will present "The Dam Facts: Water Levels in the Antrim Chain of Lakes", starting at 5 p.m.

FoCL Annual Meeting: Saturday, August 9 at the Alden United Methodist Church. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. and the meeting will be called to order promptly at 10:00 a.m.

Joint Education Event: Tuesday, August 12 at Thurston Park in Central Lake. Learn about outdoor recreation opportunities in Antrim County starting at 5 p.m.

Friends of Clam Lake
P.O. Box 173, Alden MI 49612

<p><u>Board of Directors</u> President: Fred Sittel Vice-President: Bob Hockenburger Secretary: Mary Frost Treasurer: Art Hoadley</p> <p><u>Directors at Large</u> Cottie Volle Larry Schwab Jack Gartner Dave Latanick</p>	<p>FoCL is a member driven organization dedicated to the protection of Clam Lake and it's environment for all to enjoy.</p> <p>www.friendsofclamlake.com</p>
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