



## Summer Greetings from the Friends of Bolton Lakes

[www.friendsofboltonlakes.org](http://www.friendsofboltonlakes.org)

The summer has begun with beautiful weather for lake enjoyment. So far this year the lake waters generally look clear and inviting. But, in order to prevent the spread of an invasive plant and reduce the possibility of algae blooms, chemical spot treatments of Lower Lake were carried out on June 21st.

Lake life goes on----at the same time, more visitors are coming to the lakes and the sound of “Marco-Polo” is starting to fill the air during camp days.

We want to thank you for your participation in our “channel catfish dialogue” with the CT DEEP. We’d also like to invite you to send us some photos depicting the scenic Bolton Lakes Watershed for posting on our website.

### **This newsletter addresses the following topics:**

- Invasive Weeds in Lower and Middle Lakes
- Boater Alerts Regarding Invasive Aquatic Plants
- Adverse Effects of Feeding Waterfowl
- Request for Photos for the FBL Website
- Channel Catfish Stocking in Lower Bolton Lake Avoided for 2016
- FBL Request for Your Fishing Reports
- State Funds Allocated to Repair Culverts under Hatch Hill Road
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bolton Lakes Watershed Community Forum Planned for October
- Competitive Sailing and Swimming Events on the Lakes

### **Invasive Weeds Spreading in Lower and Middle Lakes**

It’s a “fact of life” that maintaining and enjoying the quality of our lakes requires everyone’s involvement and active participation. The need for continuing vigilance and active management in the watershed currently is being illustrated by the growth of two invasive aquatic plants in the Lower and Middle Lakes.

While we will describe these two immediate (and manageable) issues there are also other invasive plants found in lakes and rivers nearby. Their introduction into our lakes is always possible. It’s important to recognize their presence early. If you see a weed you are not familiar with, please take a look at the Invasive [Aquatic Plant Identification Protocol](#) on our website. This document tells how to submit a suspicious plant for identification. In the protocol you will find a link to [Connecticut's Aquatic and Wetland Invasive Plant Identification Guide](#), which is also on our website.

***The Lower Lake*** is currently being challenged by the emergence and spread of Curly Leaf Pondweed, an aggressive plant that can spread quickly. Despite herbicide spot treatments last year, this invasive has emerged in new and expanded areas of the lake and necessitated chemical treatment on June 21. Unfortunately, Curly Leaf Pondweed produces a specific type of fragment that has the ability to persist in the sediment over the winter. Curly Leaf Pondweed has not been found elsewhere in in the Bolton Lakes so far.

Recognizable by its “curly” appearance we are asking anyone who finds it anywhere in our three lakes to let us know by sending a message to [FriendsofBoltonLakes@comcast.net](mailto:FriendsofBoltonLakes@comcast.net) and/or to the

Bolton Lake Commissioner, Kim Welch at [kim.welch@boltonct.org](mailto:kim.welch@boltonct.org) . You can use the steps outlined in the “Invasive Weed Identification Protocol” referenced above.



Curly Leaf Pondweed Ref. Bolton Lake Commissioner Kim Welch

***The Middle Lake*** is also challenged by its long-time resident invasive Variable Leaf Milfoil. The herbicide spot treatment in 2014 was successful in removing large populations of this pesky invasive, but it was anticipated that it would return—and it has. It has re-established dense “beds” in several locations in the northern half of the lake but is present only in a few spots in the remainder of the lake.



Variable leaf milfoil invasive aquatic weed

It's also important to keep in mind that not all aquatic plants are harmful. In fact, native aquatic plants play an essential role in maintaining the health of the lakes by occupying ecological niches that would otherwise be filled by invasive plants. Thus, native plants are not treated unless they proliferate explosively.

#### **Boater Alerts regarding Invasives**

**Do Not Cross Over the Dam Between Lakes:** To avoid spreading these invasive weeds throughout our lakes we are asking that all kayakers and canoeists not cross over the dam separating Lower and Middle Lakes. It just so happens that the area most used by “cross dam travelers” is also the Lower Lake area most densely populated with curly leaf pondweed. Middle Bolton Lake has Variable Milfoil that has also been found at the northern end of the Lower Lake. Unlike most native species, small fragments of these plants are enough to establish a new colony.

**Middle Lake Motor Boaters Avoid Areas of Dense Milfoil:** Variable Leaf Milfoil propagates via plant fragments that can attach to the lake bottom or be carried long distances in the water. Boat propellers can serve to “chop” off such fragments when they pass through milfoil beds. So, please try to minimize motorized travel through the beds which can be readily seen from the surface. Currently they are centrally located in the most northern section of Middle Lake and along portions of the Northwest shoreline.

#### **Do not Feed the Waterfowl**

Please do not feed the ducks and geese that visit our lakes. Feeding them is harmful to both the birds and to the ecology of our lakes. As stated by the CT DEEP in their brochure titled [You Can Help Waterfowl by Not Feeding Them](#) *“Feeding creates numerous problems, not only for people, but also for the birds. Well-intentioned people erroneously believe that feeding is beneficial to waterfowl, but it often has negative ecological, environmental, and social consequences. Feeding often results in dietary deficiencies in wild birds. Waterfowl rely on specific nutrients in natural foods to carry on important biological processes.”*

### **Photos Requested for the FBL Website**

While remaining aware of the issues we face, let's not lose sight of the beauty and enjoyment that the lakes provide. We would like to share this natural beauty and recreational enjoyment via our web site. Please send photos that depict natural or recreational scenes in the Bolton Lakes Watershed to us in an email. If you want to show off a great fish you caught in the lakes, an eagle sighting, or a beautiful scene that you've painted—please send us a photo at [FriendsofBoltonLakes@comcast.net](mailto:FriendsofBoltonLakes@comcast.net).

Include a short note telling us about your photo and indicate that you authorize our use of the photo (and perhaps your description) on our website and if we may attribute the photo with your name, or if you would prefer to remain anonymous. Note that we are going to avoid posting photos in which people are recognizable as we don't want to get into any privacy issues.

### **Stocking of Channel Catfish in Lower Bolton Lake Avoided for 2016**

In our spring email we asked for your help in persuading the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to not stock channel catfish in the Lower Bolton Lake. The Inland Fisheries Department of DEEP wanted to resume stocking, but it was our view that this should be avoided. Our concern stemmed from the observations that the Lower Lake had not fully recovered, continued to be very murky and we remembered that the prior stocking of 17,000 channel catfish in the Lower Lake (beginning in 2007) was accompanied by the explosive growth of invasive weeds and ultimately the lake's closing due to a huge blue green algae bloom. We understand fully that "cause and effect" are by no means certain. But, even the possibility that channel catfish contributed to lake problems persuaded us that prudence was the better path until the Lower Lake is fully recovered. The June 21st chemical treatments highlight the unfortunate need for an ongoing remediation process.

**Thank You:** We are pleased to report that, thanks to those of you who participated in the letter writing campaign, the DEEP refrained from stocking for this year. Your letters gained the active participation of Vernon Mayor Champagne, Bolton First Selectman Morra as well as State Senators Guglielmo and Cassano and Representatives Mulligan, Ackert, and Janowski. All of these officials contacted the DEEP directly with their concerns. We are thankful for their interest and help.

DEEP has already indicated that they will consider resuming stocking catfish in 2017 and we will participate to ensure full consideration of lake conditions.

In the meantime, there are still many channel catfish available for catching. As demonstrated by reports from local fishermen and the following photo, the catfish population is still robust.





These four channel catfish were caught in shallow water off a dock on Lower Bolton Lake June 3, 2016. A fifth fish of similar size was landed a few minutes after the picture was taken. The anglers were girls aged 4 and 10 assisted by their mother. When the fish were cleaned one was found to be female with 2 large egg sacs.

#### **Send FBL your Fishing Reports**

To help us provide fisheries data to the CT DEEP and as part of the information that will be useful for long range watershed management, we request that residents send us their information regarding the fishing and fish populations of the Bolton Lakes. Please send us your observations and information about what you are catching to [FriendsofBoltonLakes@comcast.net](mailto:FriendsofBoltonLakes@comcast.net).

#### **Connecticut Allocates Funds to Repair Culverts under Hatch Hill Road**

The State of Connecticut has appropriated funds to upgrade the culverts under Hatch Hill Road that connect the Upper and Middle Lakes. These culverts provide the connection to the largest drainage area and primary source of water in the Bolton Lakes Watershed. During winter drawdowns they are used to control the level of the Upper Lake. After many years of silting and weed growth one of the culverts is completely blocked and the second is partially blocked to such an extent that in emergency flooding situations (or when beavers blocked the water flow) the Upper Lake water levels can threaten Hatch Hill Road thus limiting Vernon emergency vehicle access to the east side of the Lakes. After submission of a document with photos and data by the Friends of Bolton Lakes, the State listed this among the top 10 dams in Connecticut to be repaired and has appropriated funds to make the necessary modifications. Timing of the work is still to be determined.



Culverts under Hatch Hill Road connecting Upper Lake drainage basin with the Middle Lake. (photo is looking north from Middle Lake—culvert on left is completely blocked on Upper Lake side)

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bolton Lakes Watershed Community Forum Planned for October**

We are in the planning stage for our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Citizens' Forum. Right now the planned date is October 19<sup>th</sup>. We will send you more information as the time draws closer. In the past two Forum's we have introduced the various organizations involved in our watershed and provided a historical perspective on how our lakes were formed, changed and maintained. In this next Forum we will discuss how we go forward to take care of our lakes and watershed.

### **Competitive Events on the Lakes**

#### **Sailing Regatta on Lower Bolton Lake**

The Bolton Lake Sailing Club held its 48th Annual Sunfish Regatta on May 22, 2016. Twenty-three Sunfish sailboats entered the competition which consisted of seven races. Full results can be seen at [www.blscsail.org](http://www.blscsail.org). The sailors, including both men and women, came from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York including 7 from the UConn Sailing Club and one from Roger Williams University.



*Sailing competition on Lower Bolton Lake*

### **Rubber Ducks Return to Middle Bolton Lake**

Sponsored long distance open water swim races will be held again starting at Camp Newhoca and covering distances ranging from one to three miles in length. The races are planned for the morning of July 24th.



*Middle Lake's 2015 "Pig Iron Swim Challenge" racecourse was marked with inflated rubber ducks for 1, 2 and 3 mile races*

### **Have a Great Summer**

***Please remember to send us your photos. As always you can contact us with any questions, concerns, suggestions and observations via the contact page on our website or directly at [friendsofboltonlakes@comcast.net](mailto:friendsofboltonlakes@comcast.net)***

We wish you and your families and friends a wonderful summer enjoying the Bolton Lakes and Watershed.

Sincerely,  
Friends of Bolton Lakes Board of Directors

Lower Bolton Lake Residents: Leona Crosskey, Shelly Jewell, Holly MacDonald, Peter Van Dine  
Middle Bolton Lake Residents: David Forrest, Jeff Phelon, Karl Prewo, Paul Weisser