

Ice-Out On Highland Lake

By Donna Baker-Hartwell
For the Beacon

Someone said the ice was out early this year, so I spent an evening with my mother's journals. Mom has been gone for two years, so the exact dates for 2004 and 2005 are not available from anyone in this household.

I keep journals, but not living right on the lake my entries regarding the ice-out for the past two years note how "dark the ice is getting" and "some open water around the island." I've had to give these dates my best guess. Perhaps someone else on the lake will know for sure.

For many years, my parents held a contest for anyone who happened to come by and wanted to guess the date for ice-out. A sheet of paper taped to the refrigerator door was the extent of it. Oh, and they would buy a pizza for the person who guessed the date correctly. It didn't cost anything to enter.

Because of the contest, we had to establish a criterion for what could be called ice-out. We agreed it could be called when the middle of the lake was open from Five Oaks or the Agoos past the point where Paul Abbott summers. Mom was pretty careful to make this clear and some years the contest was close, hence the time of day would be recorded in her journal.

Ice-Out On Highland Lake

Taken (through 2003) from Madelyn Thompson Baker's family journals

- 1993 - April 21
- 1994 - April 22
- 1995 - April 1-2
- 1996 - April 15 ice half out (pair of loons arrives back)
- 1997 - April 24 (one loon on the 23rd)
- 1998 - April 10 (one loon on the 12th)
- 1999 - April 9 (one loon on the 15th)
- 2000 - April 5 in the evening (loons heard on the 7th)
- 2001 - April 27 (loons back on the 26th)
- 2002 - March 31 (two loons arrive the same day)
- 2003 - April 21 after 6 PM (pair of loons arrive on the 22nd)
- 2004 - April 14 (approximately)
- 2005 - April 14 (approximately)
- 2006 - April 1-2

Mom writes in her journal that she would go to bed with her window open so that she could hear when the loons arrived!

Does anyone want to organize an Ice-Out Contest for any body of water in Andover for next year? The Beacon will provide the publicity and help manage the results if you'll make up the rules. We might even find sponsors to donate prizes. Let us know your thoughts at IceOut@AndoverBeacon.com or 735-6099.

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail

By Myra Mayman
FNRT-MC

On March 20 the state Transportation Enhancement Advisory Committee (TEAC) completed its scoring of all applications submitted for Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds in 2006. It ranked our Friends of the Northern Rail Trail in Merrimack County (FNRT-MC) application as the number four application in the state, from a field of 57. The first 22 applications were recommended for funding, although the funds will not be available for several years.

TE funds are a portion of the federal highway funds received by the State that are required to be used for non-highway projects such as sidewalks and bike paths. The purpose is to diversify modes of transportation in the state.

Our application requested \$206,172 in TE funds to extend the rail trail 8.3 miles from Potter Place in Andover to Danbury, where it will join with the existing rail trail to Lebanon. These two joined segments will constitute 34 miles of continuous rail trail usable by bikers, joggers, walkers, equestrians, and people in wheelchairs.

TEAC voted to recommend its project proposal ranking to the Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT), Carol Murray. By April 15 she will send DOT's recommendations to the Governor's Advisory Committee on In-

termodal Transportation (GACIT). The GACIT will meet on May 3 to take final action to approve the projects that are to receive TE funds.

Historically, the recommendations of the TEAC have gone through the rest of the TE approval process without change.

Finish Last Fall's Work

In the meantime, FNRT-MC's first focus this spring is to finish construction of the 1.7 miles of rail trail that was started last fall between Blackwater Park and Potter Place. The heavy rains in October and November prevented completion of the section from Bridge Street to Depot Street.

During the winter the three-inch ballast stone that was compacted in the fall but not covered with ledge pack has re-emerged in that section. The rest of the trail, which was covered with four inches of ledge pack and compacted with a vibratory roller, has fared well through the winter and is in good shape.

It is hoped that ATVs and dirt bikes, illegal on the trail without snow cover, will not be used on the trail because they will dig up the surface.

FNRT-MC meets on the third Wednesday of every month in the Science Room of the Andover Elementary/Middle School at 7 PM. The meetings are public and all are welcome. Planning is under way for an "Artists on the Trail" exhibition and auction event to take place next October 1.

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