

Maine's VLMP 40th Anniversary



THE GREAT OUTDOORS TURNER, MAINE

30 July, 2011

Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program



Celebrating 40 Years

America's first citizen lake monitoring program

A Historical Retrospect of the Maine VLMP

By

Matthew Scott

30 July 2011



HISTORY

In 1959 Matt Scott began his career as a Fishery Biologist in Maine.

The lakes and ponds were clean except for a few.

The major river systems were badly polluted.



Maine was divided into 6 Fishery Regions

Sebago Lakes Region

Belgrade Lakes Region

Rangely Lakes Region

Moosehead Lakes Region

Grand Lakes Region

Fish River Lakes Region



Fisheries Science

Management was based on the watershed concept for salmonid species.

Warm-water species were important but not the focus of the 1950's work.

Lake water quality was very important for maintaining existing stocks



Maine Lake Surveys Initiated

- 1938 Gerald Cooper et al
- 1950 W. Harry Everhart et al
- 1970 VLMP
- 1974 CWD
- 1978 Ronald Davis et al
- 1980 Cowing and Scott



Two Important Dates

- 1971 Maine Environmental Improvement Commission became the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- 1974 Federal Water Pollution Control Administration became the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



Significant Maine Lake entities

- 1969 Phil and Bob Chute Environmental Lakes Association (ELA)
1970 Pat Stimetz and Sterling Dow formed the Congress Of Lake Associations (COLA) under the Natural Resources Council of Maine
1971 Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD) was being formed. John Lund
1970-71 Committee for the Advancement of Lake Studies (UofM) and VLMP

A HISTORY OF LEGISLATION AFFECTING MAINE LAKES

Matthew Scott, DEP and IF&W, Emeritus



The Volunteer Concept

1970 Ron Davis and Dr. Earl Pulsifer talked to me about the idea of utilizing volunteers similar to the U.S. Weather Service utilization of volunteers for gathering weather data.

GREAT IDEA!



Maine Environmental Improvement Commission

- 1970 - I was hired by Bill Adams and Ray McDonald as the first biologist for the Commission
- My mission was to create a biological division to focus on lakes and river and stream benthos
- 1971 - The VLMP was created under the DEP



Voluntary Water Quality Monitors
Title 38, Chapter 3, Section 572 and 608
were signed by Governor Curtis in 1971

We had been collecting data and
operating unofficially in 1970.

Henry Mann, Bill Adams, Ray
McDonald and Matt Scott all
worked together to create the
language for the Maine
Legislature to enact.



Thus the VLMP was born in 1971

The law was very general but protective. The Commissioner may appoint, monitors are authorized to collect samples, the Commissioner to provide equipment as needed, The Commissioner's representative shall conduct schools of instruction and monitors are not employees of the State

Cobbossee Watershed District

- 1971 Chapter 95 Private and Special Laws
Effective May 13, 1971
- 1972 Ratified by the member towns
- 1973 First Director and staff were hired
- Tom Gordon became the first Executive

Director



Committee for the Advancement of Lake Studies (CALS) The Think Tank

Bates College – Bob Chute and Bob Morrison

Colby College – Ron Davis

Nasson College – Bob Chullo

U of M Steve Norton, Wayne Hall, Frank Woodard, John Dimond, Dean Bennett, Cassie Gibbs, Tom Hannula, Chuck Ritzi, and others too numerous to mention



Lake Leaders

1970's

- CALS at U of Maine under Steve Norton
- COLA at NRCM under Sterling Dow and Patricia Stimetz
- DEP lakes program under Matt Scott
- CWD under Tom Gordon
- EPA, CWA §314 Ken Mackenthun & Bob Johnson
- LEA became organized with Peter Lowell



1988 to 1990

- These were the years where significant change occurred to Maine's lake program in the DEP
- 1995 The VLMP was outsourced to a nonprofit organization under Scott Williams
- The remaining core of the lakes program is now under Roy Bouchard and Dave Courtemanch direction

Lake Leaders (now)

- ELA - Peter Lowell
- VLMP - Scott Williams and IPP- Roberta Hill
- COLA - (MCLI merger) - Maggie Shannon
- Mitchell Center & PEARL and Maine Peter Vaux
- Watersheds Stewards – Laura Wilson
- CWD – Bill Monagle
- MACD – Tom Gordon
- BRCA – Peter Kallin



LAKE LEADERS (Cont')

- FCW – Ken Smith
- ISTF-IAS - John McPhedren
- Current DEP Lakes Program - Roy Bouchard
- Lake Funding under EPA currently Section 319
- DEP Watershed Division - Don Witherill with NRPA and Jeff Dennis
- NRPA the future for protecting Maine Lakes with Shoreland Zoning



Other Groups concerned with Maine Lakers

- ASC
- Maine Rivers
- LMFB
- ASF/MC
- Trout Unlimited/MC



Lake of Historic Note

- 1965 Sebasticook Lake was considered to be one of the most culturally eutrofied lakes by the US FWPCA (EPA)
- Results of a 2-year study published in 1967 by Ken Mackenthun & Bill Ingram
- 1969 Ken Mackenthun's final publication on the status of Sebasticook Lake & its serious pollution problems
- Tom Hannula became the local hero and coordinator for restoration along with many others

Economic Value of Maine Lakes

- Kevin Boyle's, Roy Bouchard and Steve Kahl Reports U of M
- The total combined economic value of Maine Lakes property plus the freshwater fisheries is 4.6 Billion dollars supporting 82,000 jobs annually!!!



Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC)

Training

Linda Bacon and Judy Potvin of the DEP is now the coordinator for this activity to assure reliable, quantifiable and verification of training and data control



VLMP the Future

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We are at Global Crossroads

1. Climate Change and Global Warming
2. Global population of 7 Billion of us
3. Environmental stakeholder groups for better decisions with critical thinking applied



Maine Lakes are the Crown Jewels

1. Invasive's are a risk to native species.
2. We must make greater utilization of the VLMP data for better decisions.
3. IF&W has stated that 80 new illegal transfers of fish species into Maine lakes where they never existed has taken place over the last 20 years. Bucket Biology



Conclusion

- Maine lakes are the crown jewels of the State of Maine
- During all these years, LURC was also involved in protecting lakes with their zoning regulations and Fred Todd
- Combined efforts of all agencies including DEP, IF&W and all the NGOs; we now have a stronger network of protecting Maine lakes for future generations



Dedication

This presentation is dedicated to all of you volunteer monitors and plant patrollers past and present for your loyalty, dedication, support and durability to the VLMP that has gained national recognition and celebration of 40 years of very good science based data collection



Audience Participation Time

