



TODDY POND ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2014

Issue 33

OUR MISSION

We believe that we have a responsibility to protect Toddy Pond and its watershed so that we and future generations may enjoy its beauty and the recreational opportunities it provides. Our objective is to protect the air, water, soil, plant and animal life of the watershed and to preserve its economic, ecological and aesthetic value by encouraging responsible land and water use.

President's Message

Donna Foster

As many of you will already have heard, Verso Paper announced on October 1 that they will be ending operations at the Bucksport mill as of December 1. This is devastating news for so many mill employees (of a total of about 545, 145 live Bucksport) and for the town.

As of this writing, there is no public news as to the future of the mill and power generation plant, or of a potential buyer. The town of Bucksport is working to locate a buyer for the mill and power generation plant as a package, rather than separate entities. Verso Paper may not have that as a priority.

On October 11, the Toddy Pond Association's executive board held its first joint meeting with members of the Alamoosook Lake Association. Our purpose was to determine the current situation as far as we can, and to gather pertinent information from reliable sources pertaining to the two dams in Orland. At this point, we cannot predict what the impact will be on property owners, recreation, fishing, spawning, boating, or local businesses.

Representatives of our associations have met with Jim Brooks the environmental manager at the mill (see next article). The Toddy Pond Association will be watching closely, and will keep you updated, posting developments to the Toddy Pond website, www.toddypond.org, as well to our email list.

In other news, we welcome **Barbara Leaf**, who resides on South Toddy, to the TPA's hardworking board. Barbara will fill a need in the position of New Member Liaison and will also assist **Phil Tardif** in applying for renewal of our grant for Courtesy Boat Inspections. We also have a new project manager, **Steve Antell**, from South Toddy, who will be heading up the annual Audubon loon count for Toddy Pond.

This was a very productive summer for TPA's ongoing projects: Invasive Plant Patrol, Courtesy Boat Inspections, Watershed Restoration, water quality testing, and the loon count. For details, see the project reports on the next pages.

Thanks to all of our current members and volunteers. If you would like to help maintain Toddy Pond and its watershed, get in touch with one of our project managers, or with me, at contact@toddypond.org, or by calling 207-667-1319.

June 28 — TPA Hail to Summer BBQ

Balsam Cove Campground pavilion, 4:00–7:00 (food served around 5:00)

July 18 — Toddy Pond Loon Count, 7:00–7:30am

August 11 — TPA Annual Potluck and Meeting

Blue Hill Consolidated School, dinner at 6:00, followed by meeting

Verso to Maintain Dams and Water Levels – For Now

Chris Dadian

On October 21, **Katie Greenman**, president of the Alamoosook Lake Association, and I met with **James Brooks**, environmental manager at Verso's Bucksport mill. The purpose of the meeting was to establish lines of communication to serve during and after the shutdown in December and to gather some basic information.

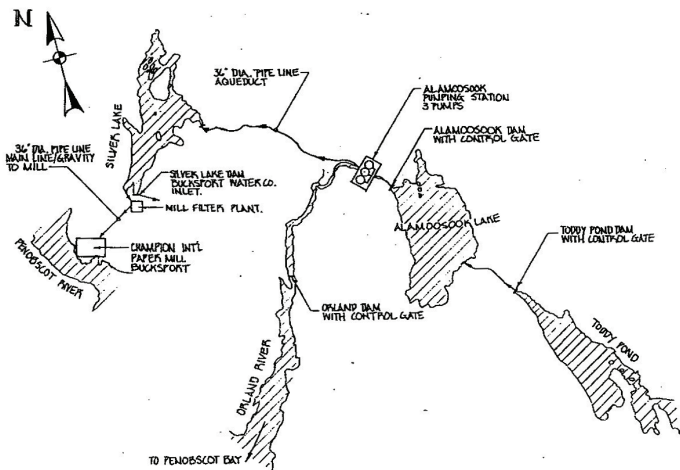
Mr Brooks has primary responsibility for what he refers to as the “umbilical cords” that tie the mill and new power generation facility to the natural (and human) environment. In addition to the supplementary freshwater supply system – that includes the dams on Toddy Pond and Alamoosook, the pumping station on the Narramissic just below the Alamoosook dam, and the pipeline that carries water from the pumping station to Silver Lake – a wastewater treatment plant, landfill, and a cooling system that draws water from the Penobscot are other “umbilical cords.” Because of Brooks's crucial role he will remain on board after December 1, for an indefinite period.

Mr Brooks answered our most urgent question directly, affirming that Verso will continue to maintain the dams and manage water levels as usual, as long as it owns them. He also gave us his opinion that a new owner would most likely adopt the Lake Levels Management plan that has passed largely unchanged from Champion Paper to International Paper to Verso. (An article on the LLM plan appeared in the Fall 2011 issue of this newsletter, and has been posted on toddypond.org.)

This was certainly good news. But something else we learned was troubling.

Papermaking uses a lot of water, especially when, as at Verso's Bucksport facilities, the mill generates its own electric power. Verso currently draws about 12 million gallons of water from Silver Lake *each day*, enough water to fill a swimming pool the size of a football field to a depth of nearly 28 feet.

Verso monitors the water level in Silver Lake, which is the municipal water supply for the town of Bucksport. To prevent that level falling too low due to the daily withdrawals, water is pumped as needed from a station on the Narramissic River, just below the Alamoosook dam, through a pipeline to Silver Lake, which thus functions like a water bank: water is deposited in Silver Lake as needed and withdrawn daily.



Lake Water System (from the 1997 Champion Lake Level Management plan)

What we learned at our meeting with Jim Brooks is that for several months of the year the Silver Lake watershed supplies enough water to meet the daily needs of the mill and power generation plant *without* deposits from the auxiliary water system. Jim told us that this year no water was pumped from the Narramissic from February through April, that pumping was suspended more than once during the summer, and that it has sometimes been suspended for periods in the fall.

He also told us that 9–10 of the 12-million-gallon daily withdrawal is consumed by the papermaking operation, with two million gallons or less going to the power generation plant.

The math is pretty straightforward: even if the power generation facility is sold – as seems likely – if a buyer cannot be found who wants to make paper in Bucksport or has some other use for 10 million gallons of water a day, the supplementary water system – including our dam and the Alamoosook dam – will cease to be economically viable. What will Verso do in that event? Retain ownership in expectation of a future demand for fresh water? Shed the cost of maintaining the dams by conveying ownership to a willing individual or entity, as it did the Orland village dam more than two years ago (turning over ownership and its associated costs to the reluctant town while retaining water rights)?

Another, much more frightening alternative exists: if no willing owner can be found, under Maine law Verso could petition DEP for a Release from Dam Ownership or Water Level Maintenance. If such a petition was approved, Verso would be relieved of ownership responsibilities (and rights), and DEP

would be required by law to order that all water impounded by the dams be released, permanently lowering the level of Toddy Pond by more than six feet (the drop at Alamoosook would be considerably more)!

(In a subsequent phone conversation, Kathy Howatt, whose office at DEP would receive the petition, confirmed this legal process. She told me that such petitions are extremely rare, though one is currently pending, filed by the owner of the Clary Lake Dam in Lincoln County.)

When we asked Mr Brooks about this possibility he replied that he hoped it would not happen and felt that it was more likely given the stakes that some entity willing to assume ownership would come forward, but that he could not rule out the possibility (he also stressed that he is not involved in making these decisions and had no knowledge of current planning for them).

We may not know anything definite about Verso's plans for some time – at least until the search for a buyer has run its course. But we who would be most affected, property owners on Toddy Pond and Alamoosook Lake, must start thinking about how our communities should respond.

If you have questions or opinions regarding this important issue, please send them to toddymail@toddypond.org. We will pass them on to the boards of the TPA and ALA and will share one or more summaries of what you've had to say (please indicate when you write whether we can use your name).

Toddy Pond Watershed Restoration Project Continues Megan Facciolo

The Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District is currently administering a grant from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to help fix erosion issues and keep Toddy Pond clean. So far, we have fixed 9 road sites and 1 residential site, with numerous other projects scheduled to be completed next year.



A completed residential watershed restoration project

Grant funds are still available for:

- Private Roads – for practices including installing new culverts, new ditches, tilting the road, etc.
- Homeowners – for stabilizing shorelines, planting vegetation along the shoreline, and fixing driveway issues.

For more information on this grant, please visit the Hancock County Soil & Water Conservation District website at: www.hancockcountyswcd.org or call the District office at 667-8663.

Funding for this project, in part, was provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. The funding is administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection in partnership with EPA. EPA does not endorse any commercial products or services mentioned.

Got Erosion?

Grant funds are available to help.

Contact the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District at **667-8663** for more information.

Toddy Pond Loon Count

Steve Antell

My name is Steve Antell and my wife, Barbara Leaf, and I have a cabin on South (Third) Toddy. As an avid bird watcher and longtime lover of loons calling in the night, I have always wished I could participate in the July loon count but have never been here on the count day. Now that I am fully retired and planning to be on the pond all summer, I have volunteered to take over coordinating the loon count from Ginger Doyle, who has decided to relinquish the mantle after many years. I am looking forward to next summer and hoping that everyone who has helped in the past will continue to do so. Whether a long time loon counter or someone new to the process, please let me know if you are interested in helping with the 2015 count, which will be held on Saturday, July 18.

Apparently not all the data is in yet, but my understanding from Maine Audubon is that 14 adult loons were spotted on the count day but no chicks. Several observers presumably have done the work but not sent in their information, so I am hoping there are some chicks yet to be reported. If you haven't sent in your information yet, please do so as soon as possible. See you next summer.

Invasive Plant Patrol

Bob LeVine

Toddy Pond's Plant Patrol had a good year: We had 14 individuals or teams out examining plants along the shoreline of the lake to make sure no invasive species have slipped in unnoticed, posing a threat to our boating, swimming, or fishing. No invaders were found. An unprecedented number of plant patrollers did double duty by either tutoring novice patrol volunteers or doing several parts of the lake themselves. To all, thanks for a successful collective effort!

We covered every part of the shore and reported our findings in the middle of September to the Hancock Soil and

Water Conservation District, for forwarding to the Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants in Auburn.

The rumor in August that an invasive plant had been spotted resulted in unprecedented activation of our network of observers; we're happy to report that those "clumps" turned out to be Common Bladderwort, one of Toddy Pond's native plants, in a late-summer expansion. We can say with confidence that no invasive plants were found in Toddy Pond in 2014!

Courtesy Boat Inspections

Phil Tardif

Did you know that neither the state of Maine nor bordering towns are responsible for the health of Toddy Pond? Who is responsible? Property owners are. As TPA works to intercept invasive plants at the boat launch, we are facing stark reality. Lakes infected with milfoil are only a short drive away. Our Courtesy Boat Inspection has capable inspectors, but our CBI coverage has lots of glaring gaps. Consider the results of our summer's work.

This summer, TPA increased the number of inspection days, hired two boat inspectors, and scheduled 25 volunteers. Inspections occurred over Memorial Day weekend, and weekends in June. During July and August, CBI workers were at the boat landing daily between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM. Our paid inspectors worked 288.5 hours at \$10 an hour. Funding came from a combination of state grant and TPA memberships. Our grant from the state was \$1,600, a reduction of \$400 from two years ago. TPA spent \$1,285 from its budget to cover the remaining balance. Additionally, TPA incurred other expenditures by constructing a kiosk at the launch site, attending conferences, and buying umbrellas for paid inspectors.

Throughout the summer, 996 boats were inspected and 38 boats carried plant fragments. Most boaters had clean boats and equipment, but a few individuals were careless. One "traveling" fragment of milfoil could begin the degradation of Toddy. Finding plant fragments signals the need to be vigilant.

Even though we increased inspection hours, our CBI program has glaring limitations. Consider the following. No inspectors were available during April, most of May, weekdays in June; September and October have no inspections. We have five months when anyone could launch a boat into Toddy without an inspection. Even during the summer months, inspectors work only six hours a day, leaving most mornings and evenings vulnerable to a careless boater. This leaves our pond in a precarious position.

TPA would increase inspection hours, but we are hampered by financial reality. Faced with declining grant dollars, only two options remain. TPA needs more volunteers and memberships. Toddy Pond has approximately 350 property owners, yet fewer than 100 join TPA. Also, only 25–30 volunteers have offered to work as inspectors. Our volunteers are dedicated, but cannot be expected to work more hours. Next year, our goal is to increase weekend coverage from 6 hours to 12 hour coverage during the busy weekends of July and August. A few more volunteers are needed to meet this goal.

As far as we know, our pond is currently free of invasive plants. Are you confident that it will remain this way in the future? Are you doing everything in your power to preserve the beauty of Toddy? Can you be confident that all boaters will

launch “fragment-free” boats? Are you willing to volunteer? Are you willing join TPA?

Please reflect on these questions. Being concerned about the lake’s welfare is not enough. Volunteering and joining the association will strengthen our defenses so that Toddy Pond will remain beautiful, pure, and free from invasive plants. Let’s not remain passive. Please consider volunteering and joining the association.

Wilbur Addison Saunders: Toddy Pond Chieftain

Sarah LeVine*

The ancestors of Wilbur Saunders, chair of Surry’s planning board (1971-80) and of its board of selectmen (1981-2005), were among the earliest settlers of West Surry. At the kitchen table in his house on Cunningham Ridge Road, Wilbur talks about how his great grandfather, Darius Saunders, came over from Penobscot in the 1830s and his great great grandfather, Addison Dodge Cunningham, arrived from Sedgwick a few years later.

Darius Saunders was only eight years old when his father died, leaving behind a large impoverished family. So the smart thing to do was to set out on his own. As soon as he could he went to work in a saw mill in East Orland and, after marrying Nancy Grindle, the widow of his older brother, Frederick, who’d been lost at sea, he settled in West Surry. Traces of the house in which he and Nancy lived may still be seen in the meadow to the east of “Darius” Lane.

“Darius and Nancy had ten children,” says Wilbur, “the fourth being my grandfather, Hollis Ellis Saunders.”

Meanwhile, Vinal Cunningham had made his way up from Sedgwick to settle on Puzzle Brook, which flowed from Blue Hill into “Eastern River,” the name by which the whole watershed from West Surry to the Narramissic River and the Penobscot used to be known. In those days there was only a “Chain of Ponds” created by saw mill dams at East Orland and in what today are the narrows between North and Middle Toddy and Middle and South Toddy. After the dams in the narrows were done away with around 1860, the Chain of Ponds were joined and became Toddy.

Wilbur continues, “Vinal was followed up from Sedgwick by his brother, Addison Cunningham, and then by his father, Johnson Cunningham; and by and by they all settled on this ridge. Eventually Darius and Nancy Saunders moved over from the Surry Road onto “Cunningham” Ridge Road, which in those days actually ran along the ridge.” (Later on the original road was moved to lower ground where cars, which by then were becoming common, could better negotiate winter ice and snow.)

“The first Saunders-Cunningham marriage was in 1862 when Darius and Nancy Saunders’ oldest son Albion married Elizabeth Cunningham. Altogether, three of their sons, including my grandfather, Hollis, married Cunningham girls. The soil around here isn’t much – too rocky. It’s okay for haying and vegetable gardens, nothing more. So, to support their large family, Hollis Saunders and his wife, Mary, logged three woodlots they bought from Eben Garland around the southern end of Toddy Pond. They also owned and operated a sawmill.

Of their 11 surviving children (6 sons and 5 daughters), my father, Ellis, born in 1895, was the youngest son.

“In the early part of the 20th century, the Seaboard Paper Company dammed the northern end of Toddy and as a result 50 acres of my father’s shoreland meadows were inundated.” With a wry smile, Wilbur adds, “But somehow my father’s tax bill was never adjusted. When I inherited, I went on paying taxes for those drowned meadows. It wasn’t till the 1970s that I figured things out and got a reduction.”

Ellis worked with his father until the US entered World War One in 1917. After seeing military service in France he made a formal agreement with his parents: in return for caring for them in their old age, he would inherit their property.

“Soon after he began courting Ethel Davis, the daughter of George Davis, my father’s business partner. They got married and when my Saunders grandparents passed away, as per their agreement, my father received his inheritance.

“On May 17, 1933 Ethel Davis Saunders gave birth to me, her only child, Wilbur Addison Saunders.”

After graduating from the Surry School and Ellsworth High, Wilbur studied automotive and diesel mechanics at Maine Vocational Technical Institute and then, after military service, followed his father into the Maine Department of Transportation. For 42 years he worked with MDOT on road construction and maintenance all over Hancock, Penobscot, and Washington Counties. He met Marjorie Somers at a dance in Bucksport in January 1957, married her the following October and soon after bought a house that had once been owned by his ancestor, Vinal Cunningham. It was there that he and Marjorie raised their son and four daughters.



Wilbur and Marjorie Saunders

Ellis Saunders had had a saw mill and his son Wilbur dreamed of having one as well, a dream he realized when, in 1971, he and his cousin and close friend, Fred Torrey, went into business together; but Fred soon died and, after soldiering on alone for several years, Wilbur closed up shop. (The mill equipment is still to be seen at the far end of the end of the field behind his house.)

Wilbur and Marjorie’s property at the southern end of Toddy (200 acres in Surry and 350 acres in Blue Hill) is all in tree growth which means it only gets logged every 40 years or thereabouts. “The Blue Hill property we inherited from my

parents included shorefront on Toddy. And then many years ago we bought the two large islands in the cove, Ledge and Pine Islands. At that time there were already several camps on really small lots on the Blue Hill and Surry shore – 28 in all. Most of those lots were given – not sold – to the original owners by my father and grandfather. When our kids were young we built two camps of our own, first, Almighty Struggle in Surry (building it was truly a struggle), and then second, Maggie House (which we named after our dog) over the town line in Blue Hill.

“After we built Maggie House, we said, ‘That’s it, there’ll be no more camps on our end of Toddy!’ And so,” Wilbur explains, “in 2005 we set up a trust for our kids, the Eastern River Realty Trust. If they don’t want the bother of dealing with it after we’re gone, then the whole property will go into conservation. You see,” he finishes, “our main goal has always been to prevent any further development at our end of Toddy.”

**I would like to thank Wilbur Ellis “Bub” Saunders for giving me access to his study of the Saunders and Cunningham families.*

Hours ... Not Days!

Barbara Leaf

So many of us are reluctant to volunteer for fear of getting “hooked.” Our summer season seems so short and the idea of giving up our coveted time off is not something to jump into. But here is the difference. The Toddy Pond Association is only asking for 3 to 6 hours of your time. That is all. You can choose to participate in either the boat inspection or our ongoing plant patrol. Both efforts are extremely important in our commitment to keep our lake protected from invasive plants. Every year we receive reports of other New England lakes that have succumbed to this ever-spreading problem. We are working hard to make sure that Toddy isn’t one of them. I volunteered one afternoon last summer at the boat launch and found that most boat owners were willing and appreciative to have their boats inspected. It is simple and quick, and I was surprised to find the whole experience both fun and rewarding. So whether it is plant patrol, boat inspection, or the mid-July loon count, please consider giving a few hours of your time next summer to keep Toddy the healthy lake that we all treasure. Please call or email me with any questions or concerns. If you have but a few hours to give, I will direct your contact information to the right person. We will then contact you in the spring.

Whether you are a member of TPA or not, Toddy Pond will benefit greatly from your time. Remember, it is only a few hours, not days!

Membership

In 2013 the Toddy Pond Association had 112 member families (people sharing a family membership count as a single member), down slightly from the previous year, when we had 118.

Annual memberships usually don’t come in in numbers until our Hail to Summer BBQ, but in 2014 we already have a number of renewals and several new members. We welcome new family members **Richard & Linda Smith, MaryAnn and Kathryn Gundersen**. We also salute new Friend of Toddy Pond **Shirley Smith**.

If you haven’t renewed your membership for 2014 it’s not too late. You can tell if you’re up to date by checking the address block on this newsletter: if (2014) follows your name, you’re good. If you need to catch up you can use the insert to renew, or to make a donation, get a jump on your 2015 dues, or sign someone up as a Friend of Toddy Pond.

Think Christmas!

Nancy Lord

We have some new items this year – collared polo shirts in all colors, and also key rings and bottle openers with the Toddy Pond logo. These make great stocking stuffers.



Once again we are offering t-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, hats, and aprons.



Call me anytime at 469-2188 and place an order for quick delivery.



Toddy Pond Association

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Chris Dadian ☎ 469-0234

Secretary:
Sarah LeVine ☎ 667-1293

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