



Let's meet at **LakeMANSFIELD**

The newsletter of Lake Mansfield Alliance (LMA)

Spring 2013

Caring for Lake Mansfield is Joyful Work

Christine Ward



Have you seen the new Lake Mansfield Conservation Forest Trails Brochure and the new LMA website? Since 2003 Lake Mansfield Alliance members have been contributing to the care of the Lake Mansfield Recreation Area. Our efforts have helped to create one of our community's most treasured spaces. LMA volunteers serve on town committees, develop Lake Mansfield resources, organize volunteer work efforts, maintain trails and fight invasive species. This year there will be a special focus on creating youth internships that will engage and develop the skills for our future community stewards.

Help us - consider becoming a member of the LMA Steering Committee. We need new leaders to insure that this good and joyful work continues in the future.

photo: Lee Rogers

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2013 Lake Mansfield Events

Sunday April 28th 10:30am-3pm

Lake Mansfield Celebration and Clean Up Day

Saturday June 1st

Annual Fishing Derby

Berkshire South Regional Community Center

call: 528-2810

Summer Lifeguards 11:30AM-5:30PM

Beginning on Memorial Day Weekend

Provided every day during school vacation

Children's Swim Lessons

Session 1: July 10-26 & Session 2: July 31-August 16

(Tuesday & Thursday)

Free to Great Barrington residents

Provided by GB Parks and Recreation

To register call Berkshire South: 528-2810.

Friday August 3rd 6-8PM

Community Potluck Picnic

Join Great Barrington Land Conservancy

To Celebrates Teen Trail Workers

info@lakemansfield.org

Spring 2013: Join the Fight!

LMA volunteers and forest interns will be

battling invasive species

To help contact us at: info@lakemansfield.org

Lake Mansfield Alliance Our Future: We need your help!

Ron Dlugosz



Over the years many individuals and organizations have contributed to the stewardship of Lake Mansfield. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Betty Vigneron led the efforts of "Lake Mansfield Association" to address the problems of weed control in Lake Mansfield. Their efforts led to the introduction of weevils that even today have kept Eurasian Milfoil in check. Shortly after Lake Mansfield Association dissolved, a small group of dedicated community members established "Lake Mansfield Alliance (LMA)" and for the past 10 years has led efforts to improve Lake Mansfield and the town forest adjacent to the parking area. In order to develop and implement a comprehensive Lake Mansfield Improvement Plan the "Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force" was established at the request of LMA in March 2006. This task force is comprised of individuals representing town boards, committees and employees along with LMA and citizens at large.

While many individuals have contributed time and money to support the efforts of LMA, the steering group has been quite small. Christine Ward has done an amazing job as the group's leader and has assumed far more responsibilities and duties than can be expected of one person. We are now at a critical juncture as to whether LMA will continue as an organization. To have an organization that doesn't burn out its leaders we need to share in the various responsibilities. For LMA to

continue we need around 10 individuals, each of whom is willing to take on at least one of the key roles in the organization. If we can't find sufficient people able and willing to perform these duties, LMA will likely disband.

Christine and I met to lay out the framework needed to continue LMA and the commitment that we would need in order to fill the various positions and guide the efforts of the many volunteers who are willing to help on various projects. We would hold meetings at various locations quarterly and expect the steering committee members to attend. We would need someone to fill each of the following positions: Director; Treasurer; Secretary; Fundraising Coordinator; Communications (newsletter/web); Liaison (with town committees and boards); Grant Coordinator; Lake Day Coordinator; Cabin Fever Coordinator; Planning and Goals Coordinator; and Town Forest Steward.

If you feel that the continuance of Lake Mansfield Alliance is important and you are willing to commit to taking on at least one responsibility, please let Christine Ward (ch.wards@verizon.net, 528-1593) or Ron Dlugosz (ronforfb@yahoo.com, 528-0956) know of your interest. Together, we can do our part to be stewards for Lake Mansfield and continue the important work of Lake Mansfield Alliance.

Cleaner Waters for Lake Mansfield

Chris Rembold, Great Barrington Town Planner

Many of LMA's readers know about the dramatic stormwater improvements in store for the Lake Mansfield watershed. This spring, after years of advocacy and planning, the Town will finally begin construction of an improved stormwater system on Castle Hill Avenue. This is a significant project, made possible by a \$266,500 section 319 Clean Water Act grant and supported at a rate of 40 percent with Town funds and in-kind services, including LMA and Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force (LMITF) volunteer hours. The new system will keep sediment and harmful nutrients out of the lake. Congratulations and thank you everyone for a job well done and getting us to this stage; your hard work pays off!

The project is anticipated to begin in late April or early May and will last several months. The job will be completed in stages. First the pavement and old storm drain system will be removed from Castle Hill Avenue, beginning near Prospect Street and moving uphill towards Fern Hill. Then new systems will be installed and the road regraded and repaved. Please note that at times a segment of the road will be blocked to traffic, and you might need to detour around Lake Avenue, Pothul Drive, or take an alternative route such as Alford Road. The Town will use the automatic phone system, CTY, to keep you informed. If you're not signed up for this service, please take advantage of it; go to the Town website www.townofgb.org for more information about CTY.

The Town was unsuccessful in a first grant application for funds to establish a long term water quality monitoring program, which would have included an educational component in partnership with Bard College at Simon's Rock. While that grant was not successful, both the Town and Simon's Rock continue to discuss ways to conduct a long term water quality monitoring partnership.

Please feel free to contact me for more information about any lake projects. My email is crembold@townofgb.org. Each year we make more progress correcting long standing problems, and we get closer to our goal of ensuring Lake Mansfield remains a healthy ecosystem and resource for all of us for decades to come. Keep up the good work, and happy boating, fishing, and swimming!



Why Create A Forest Internship Program?

Christine Ward,
LMA Trails
Coordinator



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In the 1970's the Great Barrington Conservation Commission championed the purchase of the 28 acre property now known as the Lake Mansfield Conservation Forest. The Commissioners had a great appreciation for the value that this undeveloped forest would have for future generations. Included in their vision was a forest trail system connecting to the Lake. In the past 8 years, Lake Mansfield Alliance has helped accomplish some of the goals of those visionary commissioners through the development of a trail system in the forest, most of which is accessible to all. The work was achieved through grants and hundreds of volunteer work hours supported by additional Town and LMA funding. The current trail system is enjoyed by many in all seasons. The trail system not only provides for exercise, it allows for a powerful community connection to the natural world of a New England Forest. Engaging the community in the care and understanding of our woodland strengthens our shared ability to be stewards for our all of our rich natural heritage areas. In this way, the trail becomes the gateway to learning – providing for enjoyment, appreciation, education and engagement.

The present day work of caring and maintaining the trails and forest habitat creates a model for perpetual care, allowing for the education of future stewards. With this in mind, we have embarked upon the first steps of creating a Lake Mansfield Conservation Forest Intern-

ship Program that can help to insure the systematic and timely care of the trails and also provide for community outreach and education.

I have had the delightful opportunity of working with our premiere Intern, Jessica Dezieck. Jess is uniquely suited for the task she has taken on. She is a student of environment education and a member of the Conservation Commission. She and her family live within walking distance of the Lake Mansfield Conservation Forest. As part of her internship, Jessica visits the forest weekly to check on trail conditions and to observe and learn from the forest. She records her observations and subsequent research in a natural history log and shares interesting Forest Features on the reverse side of our trail kiosks so that all trail users can benefit from her insights. In addition Jessica is working to develop the model for future forest interns. She will shift from intern to supervisor as she completes her degree, helping other students to develop their skills as naturalists and stewards.

Visit our richly-developed website at www.lakemansfield.org to read Jessica's weekly observation logs — they are chock-full of great woodland information. You will also find trail maps, seasonal recreation information, our events schedule, and lots of other great Lake information. If you would like to support the internship program, serve as a volunteer, or apply for an internship opportunity, please contact us at info@lakemansfield.org.

Naturalist Notes: Pileated Woodpecker

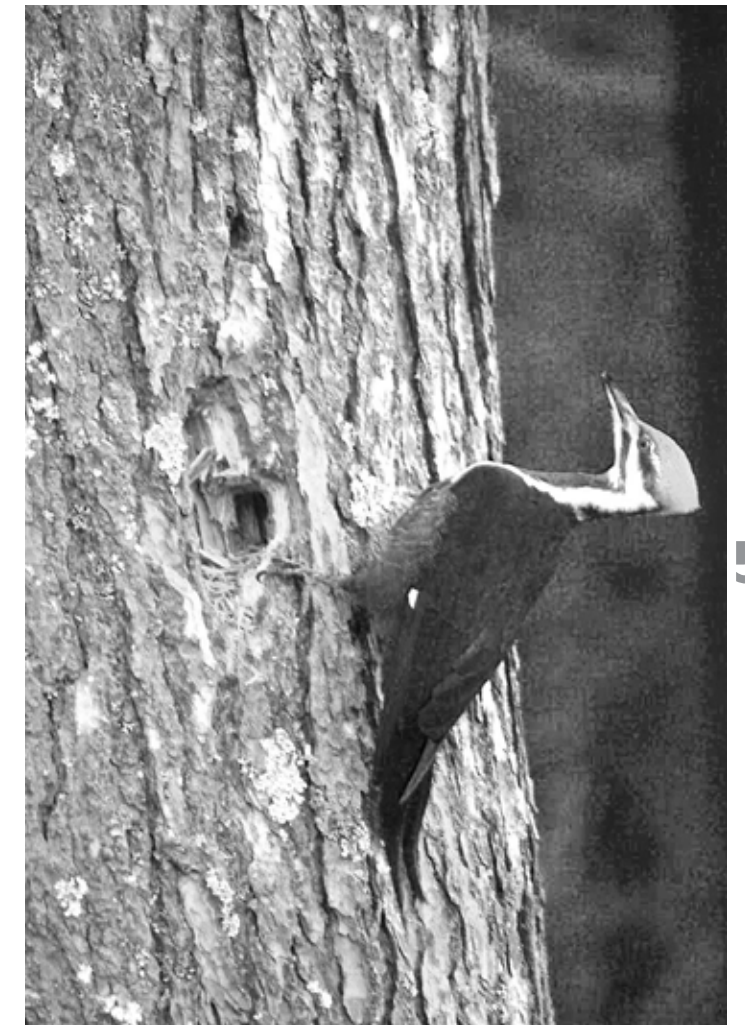
Jessica Dezieck

In February, the loud drumming of the Pileated Woodpecker led me through the Lake Mansfield Conservation Forest. But as I followed the sound, many other bird species appeared: Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Crow, White-throated Sparrow, and Hairy Woodpecker. Until finally – there it was!

The grand size of the Pileated woodpecker (16½"-19") distinguishes it from other New England bird species. It is the largest woodpecker found in our Massachusetts forests. Its defining characteristics include a bright red crest, a chisel-bill for wood boring, strong zygodactyls feet (two toes front and rear), a long tongue, and a stiff spiny tail. Despite their crow-like size, the Pileated is often hard to spot and is frequently identified by being heard. The irregular "kik-kik-kikkik-kik-kik" call is loud, high-pitched, and ringing – distinguishing it from the similar call of a Northern Flicker. Their most versatile vocalization, a "Cuk", seems to serve several functions, such as registering excitement, locating the mate, or indicating roosting locations. Their drumming can be distinguished as a strong starting drum that fades. Drumming can be heard anytime of the year, but is most frequent in the spring.

This species tends to favor mature second growth forests which provide large trees that are best for nesting and a superior variation in tree life stages, offering dead or dying trees from which the woodpecker excavates bugs and insects. A Pileated diet consists of carpenter ants and beetle larva that it retrieves from a tree. It will also eat fruits, nuts, and berries. The Pileated woodpecker has made a comeback since the 1900's when populations declined as a result of hunting and habitat loss. Its range reaches from Southern Canada down the east coast to the Gulf States and parts of the pacific coast. Common predators include: Eastern Rat Snake, Coopers Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Squirrels.

Male and female birds look almost identical, however female birds lack red on their mustache. Nesting generally occurs in March through April. Pairs often stay together for life, roosting in separate locations for the autumn and winter months; a strong relationship is typically maintained through-out the year. A pair com-



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monly will have one brood (mid-April to early June) but will attempt another if the first brood fails. A brood can average 2 to 4, or sometimes 5, eggs with an 18 day incubation period. The hatchlings are born entirely helpless and must be attended to for the first couple of weeks by both parents on hourly shifts. Within 4 to 5 weeks the nestlings start to get restless and with a little parental encouragement will fledge the nest. The family tends to remain close well into the fall, and then the new birds go off to find their own territory.

These beautiful birds excavate some of the most amazing woodchips and seeing a dead tree that has been stripped is pretty neat! Look for the large oval/oblong holes of the Pileated Woodpecker throughout the Lake Mansfield Conservation Forest.

photo: Bruce Gore

Lake Mansfield Clean-Up & Celebration Day

Christine Ward

A great deal was accomplished at the spring 2012 Lake Mansfield Clean-up. Industrious volunteers of all ages came out despite cool temperatures and a beastly wind. Swim ropes were put in place, weed-control fabric and rods were installed by scuba professionals, and new signage was put up to help inform lake-users about the importance of keeping this weed deterrent measure in place throughout the swim season. Large amounts of Garlic Mustard were pulled along the forest trails. The lovely native plants, revealed once garlic mustard is removed, help to sustain this long-term effort to control this pernicious invasive. Hard-working volunteers also scoured the roadside and lake edges—less debris was found this year, thanks to the many walkers who pick up litter as part of their daily regime. The kiosk was updated with this year’s LMA newsletter information. The dedicated and Industrious folks who participate in this annual volunteer day clearly demonstrate that Lake Mansfield is a greatly treasured and well cared for community open space. This volunteer workday supports the continual park maintenance provided through the town’s Parks Department. Lake Mansfield Alliance’s year-long lake stewardship has been essential to the care of the lake, beach area and conservation forest for the past 10 years!

DON’T MISS LAKE DAY 2013. Come join in on this great day of community stewardship, your efforts will be rewarding and you’re sure to have a great day connecting with the “lake-minded” folks and our amazing lake and forest. Additional efforts slated for the Lake Mansfield Recreation Area this season will include control of invasive phragmites along the lake edge, continued trail care and maintenance in the Conservation Forest and the development of a Forest Intern Program to engage local youth in environmental stewardship.

To access information about Lake Mansfield and learn more about LMA go to our newly developing website: www.lakemansfield.org. LMA is currently seeking community members to serve on its steering committee. Please consider giving your time; contact info@lakemansfield.org and be a part of effective community stewardship.



**Lake Mansfield
Sunday April 28, 2013
Join Us**

Lots of Kids Learning to Swim

Laura Martin, Director of Programs, Berkshire South Regional Community Center.

Lake Mansfield is a wonderful place for children and adults to play, swim, and spend the day. 2012 gave us great summer weather and people came out in large numbers to enjoy the lakeside beach. There were many activities going on all summer! From July 10 to August 26, 2012 Berkshire South Regional Community Center (BSRCC) coordinated swim lessons at Lake Mansfield that were funded by the Great Barrington Parks and Recreation Commission. Fifty class slots were used by Great Barrington and Housatonic children ages 5 through 12. BSRCC swim instructors enjoy getting to know kids of all ages and are honored to teach them about swimming and water safety.

Studies have shown that formal swimming lessons help to reduce drowning, one of the leading causes of death in young children. Swimming also provides a fun pastime for children and introduces them to a lifelong fitness skill. Children learning to swim at the same beach where they play with their families makes for great memories! BSRCC plans to offer free swim lessons again this summer thanks to funding from the Great Barrington Parks and Recreation Commission. The lessons will be offered in three levels on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, with tentative dates of July 9 through August 15. Families can register in person at Berkshire South, online at www.berkshiresouth.org or by calling 413.528.2810.



Become a Member of Lake Mansfield Alliance 2013

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Suggested annual dues I wish to remain an anonymous donor.

- \$20 Individual \$35 Family \$50 Supporter \$100 Conservationist
- \$250 Guardian \$500 Steward \$___ Trail Project Dedicated Donation \$___ other

Make tax deductible donations to: GBLC Lake Mansfield Fund, LMA, PO Box 944, Great Barrington, MA 01230



Lake Mansfield Alliance
PO Box 944
Great Barrington, MA 01230

A project of the Great Barrington Land Conservancy

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“Working to preserve, protect and enhance Lake Mansfield as a vital natural habitat and community resource.”
See page 1 for 2013 Lake Mansfield events & LMA Newsletter. ENJOY, and PASS IT ALONG . .

Lake Mansfield Spring Celebration & Clean-up Day Sunday April 28, 2013 10:30-3:00



Rain date: Sunday May 5

10:30-1:00 Lake & Forest Clean-up:

Meet at the beach, gloves recommended.
Bring tools: rakes, wheelbarrows, wagons . . .
and enthusiasm!

1:00-3:00 Potluck Lunch & Activities

Community Meeting
Guided Trail Walk: Lake Mansfield Conservation Forest Trails



Thank You Berkshire South Regional Community Center for supporting
Lake Mansfield Spring Celebration & Clean-Up Day

Join your friends and neighbors for a fun day of community action!