

Lake Host Program, 2018

This summer was our 14th summer of providing Lake Hosting at the Shore Drive boat ramp on Harvey Lake. We are one of 81 lakes, representing 101 ramps, in the state that have Lake Host programs.

This year, we received a \$1,150 grant to provide Lake Hosting, with \$30 carried over from last year, for a total of \$1,180 to staff the boat ramp during the summer months. We did not ask for additional money from the association, as we have in past years, to add extra hourly coverage.

Money for Lake Host grants is part of a fee paid by boaters at the time they register their boats. Lake Hosts are employees of the N.H. Lakes Association, which handles payroll and insurances. The point person coordinates scheduling and administrative functions.

Our program operated from July 1 to Sept. 3, 2018, a period of nine weeks, which breaks down as follows:

- The ramp was covered for 19 days, mostly Saturdays and Sundays, for a total of 107 hours, which at an hourly rate of \$11 totaled \$1,177. These hours were mainly between 7 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- The Lake Host inspected 60 boats for the season, which is on target with the number of boats inspected in past seasons (Last summer, the Lake Host inspected 61 boats.) Of these boats, 24 were motorized, and 36 were not (mostly kayaks and canoes).
- This year, the N.H. Lakes Association changed its reporting procedure, requiring us to record the “reach” of the program, meaning the number of people per party who came with a boat. Our reach was 133 people.
- We record the boaters who reported cleaning, draining and drying their boats (new law initiated last year). Of those asked, the breakdown is: cleaned their boat between uses: 52; drained: 28; dried: 39.
- Most of our boaters were recorded between the hours of 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. (37); followed by 8 to 10 a.m. (13); and tied for third place, 6 to 8 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m. (both at 5 each).
- We were able to provide our association’s match in the form of \$300 annual membership to the N.H. Lakes Association; volunteer hours of the point person (\$780), supplies/stamps (\$21.50), and mileage (\$75). The grant requires a 100 percent match.

Most importantly, the Lake Host recorded the last lake visited before launching in Harvey Lake, and boaters reported in 2018 having visited all of these lakes which have milfoil infestations or other invasive species: Northwood Lake (3 times), Pawtuckaway, Lake Winnepesaukee, Merrimack River, Squam Lake, Lake Ossipee, Crescent Lake, and the Connecticut River. The majority of visits to our lake were boaters who use their watercraft only on Harvey Lake.

Since 2002, hundreds of paid and volunteer Lake Hosts in New Hampshire have conducted more than a million courtesy boat inspections (the million mark was passed this summer) and have made more than 1,550 “saves” of aquatic invasive plant or animal specimens that were about to enter or had just left a waterbody.

There are 87 waterbodies in New Hampshire infested with aquatic invasive species, most of them infested with milfoil. Harvey Lake has so far been fortunate in that we have not discovered anything other than native milfoil and, last summer, an abundance of bladderwort, which is also native.

I am grateful that Emily Potoczak has Lake Hosted at Harvey Lake for the past three summers.

Each year, usually in March, our organization along with others in the state apply to the N.H. Lakes Association for a grant to provide Lake Hosting at our waterbody. These grants range from a minimum of \$1,000 to \$3,650, with additional money for additional ramps on the same lake, and are based on the number of boat inspections performed the previous year at the lake. To qualify for the highest amount, a Lake Host program must have done more than 5,000 inspections the year before.

Harvey Lake records considerably less, between 50 and 90 each summer. Therefore, we qualify for the lowest amount, \$1,150 (under 500 inspections per year), which we use to pay the Lake Host an hourly wage of \$11. This usually provides a minimum amount of coverage to get us through the summer season. In past years, our group has included additional money, up to \$272 for the season, to extend the coverage past Labor Day.

This year, I did not ask for the additional money, beyond our usual annual dues of \$300 we pay to the N.H. Lakes Association.

Harvey Lake does not see a lot of boat traffic. In 2013, the Lake Hosts checked in a total of 54 boats, and in 2014, they checked in 53. This figure includes launches and retrievals. In 2015, that number was 52. In 2016, it was 84, and for this reason, I sought and received an extra \$275 to run the Lake Host program for the 2017 season into September. It turned out it was unneeded since we checked in a total of 61 boats for all of the 2017 season. I also analyzed the boater survey sheets and determined that the minimum amount of boat traffic we see right before and after Labor Day does not justify the costs. Also, boaters indicated they were well aware of the law requiring them to clean and drain their boats.

We participate because we are in close proximity to other lakes that do have milfoil infestations (Northwood Lake and Pawtuckaway Lake), and this becomes critical as more boaters go from lake to lake. Most of our boat traffic includes boaters who stay only on Harvey Lake, but some indicated in past seasons they have used their boats previously in Winnepesaukee (which does have milfoil).

The hours that the volunteer Lake Host point person records are counted as a volunteer match, along with our \$300 N.H. Lakes dues. We must provide at least a 100 percent match, meaning at least \$850 in volunteer hours, or at the rate of \$23.56 an hour, about 35 hours for the point person per season. This has not been an issue. (This year, the volunteer rate is \$24.14 per hour.

This year, as returning point person, I attended a mandatory webinar on May 14, 2018, that provided details of changes to the program this year. Among the highlights of that session:

- We need to be vigilant not only about invasive plant species, but also invasive animals such as Chinese mystery snails and Asian clams. Seven bodies of water have been infested with Asian clams, the two latest being Beaver Lake in Derry and Canobie Lake in Salem.
- This year's Boater Survey completed by the Lake Host has been changed. We are no longer asking people about their knowledge of invasive species. We are now going to be asking what was the last waterbody they visited and where they plan to be visiting next. We also are recording the number of people we see per interaction.
- The sponsoring organization and point person agree that Lake Hosts and management personnel will meet only in public areas (no private homes) and that the materials/forms must be transferred in a public setting.

- The point person must now enter all data about boaters online using Google Drive.

I have been the point person for the past five summers, both jointly with Karen Smith until she moved, and individually the past three summers. This will be my last summer coordinating the Lake Host program for Harvey Lake. I will be happy to assist a new volunteer in taking over if someone would like to continue the program.

As our association founder and original Lake Host point person Doris Entwisle said, the value of the Lake Host program extends way beyond the boat inspections, with the young people trained as Lake Hosts spreading the word about caring for lakes, some even choosing a vocation because of their lake experience.

Last year (2017) was the first year of the state's new "Clean & Drain" law. Boat owners leaving the ramp area of any lake in the state must clean their boats and trailers of all plants, invasive or not, and they must also pull the drain plug, if their boat is so equipped.

As of this year (2018), the law has been updated to include "Clean, Drain & Dry." Before boating again, owners must dry the boat, trailer, and other equipment and recreational gear that has come in contact with water. At least five days of drying time is recommended. And, if possible, the boat and gear must be rinsed after every use – the hotter and higher the pressure of the water, the better. Boaters must ensure that rinse water does not enter surface waters. (Commercial hot water car washes work well.) The Lake Hosts will be reminding boaters of this update to the law.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Charest
Point Person