

NEWSLETTER - Jan 2005

BOXED ITEM: SNOW MACHINE COURTESY

Please be considerate of your neighbors when engaged in winter use of the area, especially when operating a recreation vehicle, or when drilling fishing holes in the ice. Sound carries on the lake, and loud machines roaring past homes late at night can disturb children's sleep. Please remember also that recreation vehicles use on the lake is prohibited between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Operating within 150 feet of a residence without the owner's permission is illegal. We urge all winter machine operators to show courtesy while enjoying a safe winter!

[BOXED ITEM] HICKORY HILLS MIXER

Saturday, April 16, 2005 at the Monoosnock Country Club in Leominster from 7 p.m. to midnight, and features DJ Ray Richards See flyer in this issue.

President's Message - Big Changes Ahead For WAVES

This winter issue of WAVES is the last one Landowners will distribute in this format, the last one that I will edit, and the last one that Kim and John Morse of Morse Printing and Graphics will publish as a donation. In April of 1997 the Morses assumed the huge task of publishing WAVES in its present format, and they have continued to donate several hundred dollars each year since then in costs associated with layout and printing for our four editions per year. Together, we have enjoyed eight years of bringing to our property owners information on activities, articles of interest to lake residents, and updates on all areas of lake management. We all owe mega thanks to Kim and John for their devotion and donation of time and talent to Landowners for so many years. MEGA THANKS, KIM AND JOHN!

So, what now? We are in the process of gathering a team of volunteers from our lake community to discuss changes in the format for WAVES. Shall we have more than four issues? Shall we reduce the size and content to just a couple of pages? How about a flyer every month? What shall we include? Should we dispense with "boilerplate" articles like winter rules, summer rules, and reports of annual meetings? Should we instead ask everyone to go to our Web site at www.hickoryhillslake.com to read about rules? Instead of a newsletter, should we just have a handbook? If we continue a regular publication, should we use just one color of paper? Should we still have advertising to defray part of the cost of publishing? Who will write articles? Who will edit? Who will publish? Will you help?

Those of you who have been in our community for many years know that our newsletter has survived many transformations – from the mimeographed LINK delivered by runners to your mailboxes, to the 5 ½ x 8 ½ booklet style produced in the 1990s, to our more recent larger editions. Material for each issue is still gathered into our office computer, edited, then sent to a publisher for artwork, layout and format of the final product. Issues are then printed, collated, stapled, and returned to our office for addresses and distribution. How can we update this process to reflect our changing needs?

We need your help as we enter another period of transition. We welcome your literary contributions to WAVES (or whatever its next incarnation might be called) – poems, articles, interesting facts about Hickory Hills, profiles of residents who do something special, even riddles or puzzles. Most of all, we need your ideas to develop a new product. Please contact Pat at our office if you are willing to help move this project forward. You can use the form at the end of the newsletter to indicate your interest. If you are not able to participate at this time, please be sure to at least send us your email address so we can contact you with important information.

Judy Male

From The Board of Directors

Lake and Property Report

WARNING! Hunters have been found in Hickory Woods. If you are in the woods and hear gunshots, yell loudly to let the hunters know you are nearby. We have volunteers putting up NO HUNTING signs along the perimeter of our new land, but people don't always read or follow signs. If you encounter hunters, be sure to tell them that they are on private property, and no hunting is allowed. Lunenburg does

not allow any hunting in the abutting Town Forest, so no one should be hunting in that area either. Enjoy using Hickory Woods, but wear bright colors, be loud, and BE CAREFUL!

Ice Fishing Security

With the cold comes the ice and ice fishermen. Quiet times for ice fishing are **dawn to dusk (6AM - 6PM)**. **NO ice drills are to be operated before 6 AM. Please be considerate of your neighbors.** Ice makes the lake easily accessible to anyone, including people who do not live here.

We have received complaints in the past about cars parking on the side of the road and fisherman walking out and setting up on the ice. In an effort to curtail uninvited ice fishermen, Board members will be out checking for Hickory Hills ID cards. If someone does approach and ask to see your ID card, don't be offended. We are a large group and we don't know everyone. So if you are going ice fishing, please take your card and enjoy your day. IDs may be purchased through the office or through the mail (978-582-6365) (P.O. Box 298). Cost is \$6.00 for non-shareholders and \$3.00 for shareholders. Have a safe winter!

Public Relations Report

[Box in] We are creating a list of emails for residents who would prefer to receive an email notifying them that the WAVES is available on the website at <http://www.hickoryhillslake.com>. We are hoping to increase the frequency of information to residents and notification through emails will greatly reduce our distribution costs. Please send an email to Pat at hickoryhills@net1plus.com stating you would like to be put on the resident email distribution list. Thank you for your help in this matter.

WAVES - is issued quarterly and sent to all Landowners as well as to renters. Owners of property need to keep us informed of any changes of rentals so that we can keep our mailing lists current and can make sure the renters receive WAVES. Remember owners, you are responsible for informing your tenants of regulations in Hickory Hills, and the issues of WAVES are full of information.

Save The Date!! April 16, 2005 for Hickory Hills Mixer

The Annual Hickory Hills Mixer will be held on April 16, 2005 at the Monoosnock Country Club in Leominster from 7 p.m. to midnight, and features DJ Ray Richards!! Sue Oram is chairing this event and if you know of anyone who would like to make a donation to the raffle or help out please contact her. Be sure to make plans with your neighbors to attend and join in on the fun! Please post the flyer in this issue as a reminder or use it to invite friends!

Road Committee

The highway department is doing a great job keeping the roads in Hickory Hills open and sanded. Try to be a little patient as the main roads are opened first, followed by the secondary roads. It is the town's responsibility to keep these roads open and sanded. Therefore, **please call the highway department** if you are experiencing a problem or dangerous condition.

Goals for 2004-2005

In October the Board of Directors established the following five management goals for this year.

1. Continue improvements in Hickory Woods – signs, trails, bridges.
2. Increase number of volunteers.
3. Sell Wildwood Rd property.
4. Build new office/recreational/storage facility.
5. Control spread of aquatic plants and loosestrife.

We will report on all of these goals at our Annual Meeting in September 2005.

From The Office

Important - Please address all correspondence to Hickory Hills Landowners, Inc., P.O. Box 298, Lunenburg, MA 01462. We do not have a mail receptacle at the office on Island Rd., so mail addressed to that address is returned to the sender.

Winter Office Hours

Below are our winter office hours. If no one answers at the office please leave your name, telephone number and a short message and your call will be returned (978-582-6365).

January through March 2005; Monday and Thursday – 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Special Articles

Beavers and Water Flow Management

Many of you may have noticed in recent months that we in Hickory Hills have experienced a significant increase in beaver activity in the lake and in the Mulpus Brook both as it enters the lake and as it exits below our dam. We have been working with the local Conservation Commission to manage the beaver activity in many areas, but most especially below our dam.

When beaver activity in the swamp below our dam increases, and the beavers raise the height of their dam at the swamp's exit, the level of the water in the swamp also rises, backs up under the bridge on Townsend Harbor Road, and covers the bottom of our dam's spillway. When that happens, we cannot see the exit pipe below our dam to properly monitor the flow of water from our lake.

In late fall, the Conservation Commission engaged a local beaver trapper to remove 18 beavers from the swamp area, and arranged for removal of the beaver dam to lower the level of the water in the swamp and at the toe of our dam across the road. In cooperation with the state's Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Massachusetts Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Commission will soon install several water flow devices (see sample of one kind of device in sketch) at the swamp's exit. We all hope that this device will keep the water level in the swamp low enough so that water will no longer cover our dam's exit pipe and jeopardize the structural integrity of the spillway.

Beavers, like human beings, are adaptable and can readily tolerate living in close association with people. Likewise, people who learn to tolerate a certain amount of beaver influence on their land usually find that co-existing with beavers provides some benefits. However, when beaver activity results in property damage, concerns about public health, or other safety issues, humans must take steps to alleviate the problems.

Water flow devices are often an appropriate way to counter high water levels resulting from beaver activity. Sometimes referred to as "beaver pipes," these devices are placed in a beaver dam at an elevation that will regulate water at the desired level, and alleviate flooding. These devices must be designed to reduce the cues used by beavers to detect escaping water, and they must be difficult for beavers to plug.

We appreciate the efforts of our local Conservation Commission to reduce the high water level in the swamp and at the toe of our spillway, and hope that the installation of flow devices will be an effective and long-term solution for dealing with our beaver conflicts.

Judy Male

(Some of the above information taken from BEAVERS IN MASSACHUSETTS, a publication of the University of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension System and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife.)

Is The Ice Safe?

Well, it wasn't on December 21st! A guest of a resident in Hickory Hills jumped off his snowmobile just before it crashed through the ice to the bottom of the lake that afternoon. Luckily, the young man was only wet and cold, and suffered no injuries. Lunenburg's Fire Department responded to the site near Pete and Debbie Lincoln's home on Hemlock Drive to monitor the situation from shore. The snowmobile's driver and his friends tried unsuccessfully to recover the machine from below the ice the day of the incident, but returned the next day to cut the ice and drag the snowmobile to shore. Fortunately, the machine did not have enough gasoline in its tank to create a hazardous problem for our lake.

Snowmobile riders need to take every precaution before riding on the frozen lake. Most importantly, they need to drill test holes and measure the ice for thickness in several areas before they drive on the ice.

Lunenburg's Police and Fire Departments do NOT monitor whether ice is safe in Hickory Hills. Ice safety is your individual responsibility, and you use the ice at your own risk. When you go by Townsend Harbor Road or other areas of the lake, you may see kids skating or people ice fishing. Your cove areas or inlets may be safe, but other areas may not be. Make sure your kids use the buddy system and do not

roam the lake alone. Keep your pets safe by keeping them off the ice and on your own property. Remember, snowmobiles and ATVs are heavy; they can go through ice that might hold a skater.

Winter Rules - Winter Use of the Hickory Hills Lake Area

To ensure a safe and enjoyable use of the Hickory Hills Lake area, we remind you of the following rules established by the state, town, and/or Landowners:

1. Use of Hickory Hills Landowners' facilities, lake, beaches, and islands is limited to licensed residents with current IDs and their guests.
 - a. Keep your ID with you while you use Landowners' facilities.
 - b. Guests must be accompanied by their host who has an ID while using Landowners' facilities.
 - c. Property owners who rent their homes are responsible for obtaining IDs for their renters.
 - d. Renters are not eligible to use Landowners' facilities unless they have identification.
 - e. No resident who is delinquent paying annual charges can be the guest of a resident who has paid annual charges while using Landowners' facilities.
 - f. Property owners are personally responsible for the behavior of their family members and guests while the latter are using Landowners' facilities.
2. Ice fishing is limited to residents with current IDs and their guests.
 - a. A Massachusetts State Fishing License also is required.
 - b. Ice fishing is permitted from dawn to dusk only. **No ice drills are to be operated before 6AM.**
 - c. Ice fishing shall be done in compliance with all the laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, including those laws and regulations concerning the number of fishing holes to be drilled each day and the size and number of fish to be taken.
3. No open FIRES are permitted on the lake or on the land (the town also prohibits open fires). All fires must be contained (grill, hibachi, etc.). All materials brought on Landowners' facilities must be removed.
4. No VEHICLES are permitted to be parked on public roads during snowstorms to aid in snow plowing this is a town ordinance). For fire purposes, all roads shall be kept clear during any type of weather.
5. ISLANDS - Except those privately owned and posted, may be used daylight hours only (one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset).
6. No trespassing on the SPILLWAY.
7. If a dog falls through the ice, DO NOT ATTEMPT A RESCUE. The Lunenburg Rescue Squad has a flotation suit and can arrive within a few minutes to make a safe rescue.
8. No GLASS bottles or glass of any kind are permitted on Landowners' facilities.
9. Use of snowmobiles and recreation vehicles on Landowners facilities is limited to residents with current IDs and their guests. Snowmobiles and recreation vehicles also must be registered with the State of Massachusetts. Operating a snowmobile or recreation vehicle shall be done in compliance with all the laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Massachusetts Recreation vehicle Safety Laws

The following abstracts summarize some important Massachusetts recreation vehicle laws as of August 2001.

Age Restrictions

- * No person under 14 years of age shall operate a recreational vehicle, except as provided below:
- * A person 12 or 13 years of age may operate if directly supervised by a person 18 years of age or older.
- * A person 10 or 11 years of age may operate if directly supervised by a person 18 years of age or older and the vehicle is on land upon which the operator lives.
- * A person under 14 years of age may operate in a sanctioned race, rally, or organized event which has been approved by the appropriate local authority
- * Under no circumstances, may a person operate who is less than 10 years of age.
- * No person under the age of 16 ½ years of age shall operate a recreational vehicle across a public way.

Prohibited Operation

The following are examples of prohibited operation:

- * Operating under the influence of drugs and alcohol. **Snowmobiles and Alcohol Don't Mix!**
- * Operating on public ways or upon the right of way limits of controlled access highway.

- * Failure to come to a complete stop when crossing a public way (must yield to motor vehicle traffic). No person under 16 ½ years of age shall operate across a public way.
- * Operating so as to endanger any person or property.
- * Operating at an unreasonable, improper, and unsafe speed for existing conditions.
- * Operating on land of another without permission of the owner.
- * Operating **within 150 feet of a residence** without permission of the owner or tenant.
- * Operating on an ocean beach or sand dune in a manner so as to destroy, damage or break down any beach, dune or dune grass.
- * Operating in a manner so as to harass or chase wildlife or domestic animals.
- * Operating on a wetland such as a bog, marsh, or swamp so as to destroy or damage the wetland, if such area has been designated and posted as a protected wetland area.

Safety Equipment

Persons operating or riding on a recreational vehicle shall wear an approved helmet. Each recreation vehicle must also be equipped with an adequate braking system. An adequate muffler designed to reduce unusual or excessive noise and obnoxious fumes. Each recreation vehicle must be equipped with and displayed after sunset, one or more headlights, a red rear light and red rear reflector. Trailers attached to recreation vehicles must have a red reflector.

Trail Etiquette

Observing trail etiquette is important, particularly when trails are heavily used. Whenever possible all recreation vehicles shall keep to the right side of the trails. Please stay within the trail corridor and respect adjacent private and public land. When passing skiers, hikers, horseback riders, and other such trail users, operators shall reduce speed, yield right-of-way, and not pass until it can be accomplished with complete safety. Operators shall not accelerate until beyond 50 feet of such trail users.

Registration, Decals and Trail Permits

- * Recreation vehicles operated on public or private property must be registered through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, except if used solely on land owned by the operator. Out-of-state recreation vehicle registrations are not valid in Massachusetts.
- * The registration certificate shall be in possession for examination by a law enforcement officer or landowner.
- * The registration plate shall be displayed on the back of each recreation vehicle.
- * For further registration information call (617)-626-1610.

Violations

To report violations of off-road recreation vehicle, environmental, or wildlife laws please contact the Environmental Police Radio Communications Center at 1-800-632-8075.

Riding Area Information

The State Division of Forest & Parks has designated areas and trails for the use of recreation vehicles. For additional information contact the regional DFP offices or their main Boston office at (617) 626-1453.

Accidents

The operator or owner of a recreation vehicle involved in a collision, accident or other such causality resulting in death or injury to a person or damage to property in excess of \$50.00 shall notify a law enforcement officer immediately and file a written report of the incident with the Massachusetts Environmental Police within 48 hours. To obtain accident report forms or further safety/legal information contact the Boat & RV Safety Bureau at (617) 727-8760.