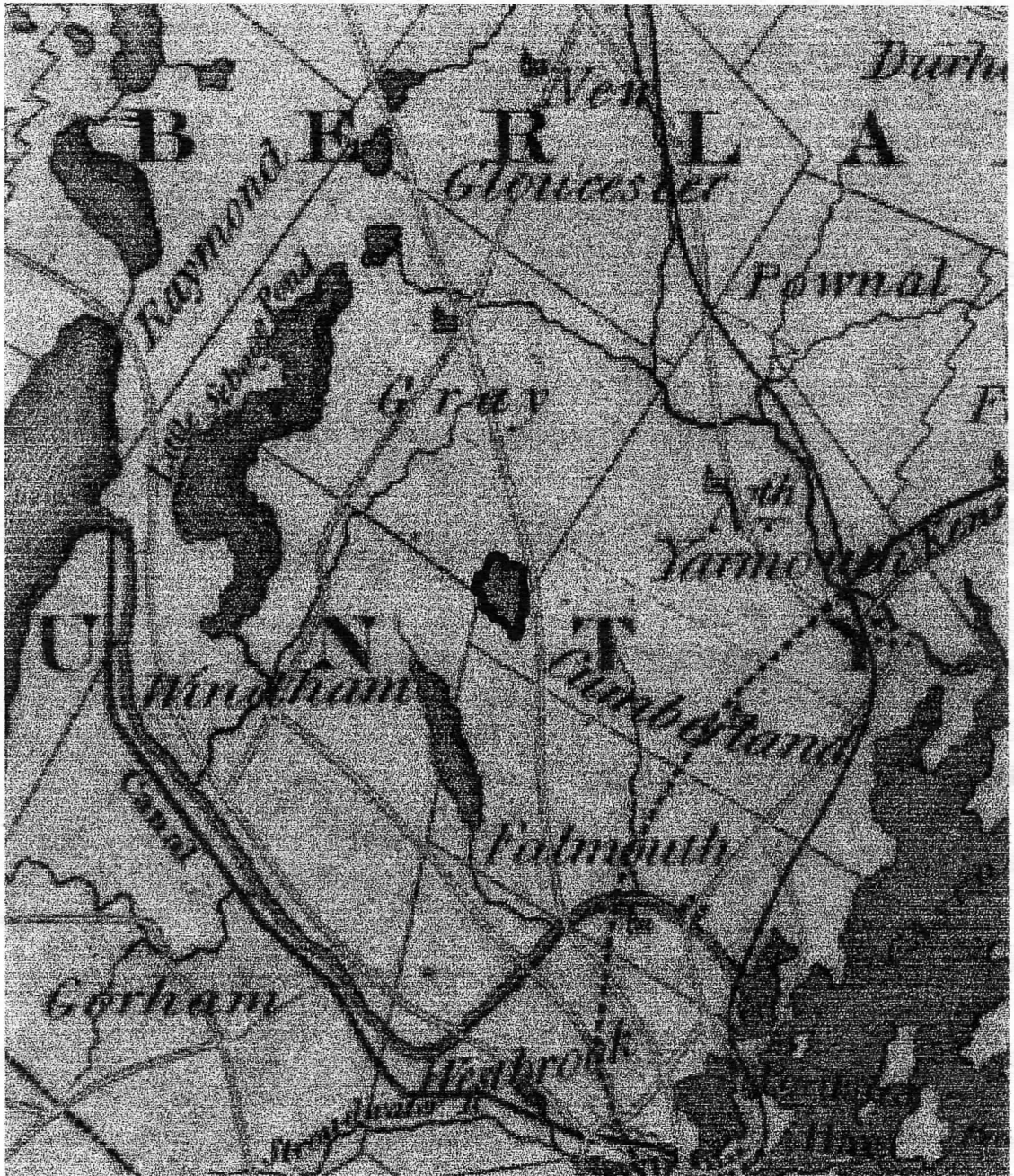


A History of Forest Lake



While every effort has been made to provide a reasonably accurate accounting, this history comes from personal recollections and lake association documents. We apologize if we have missed any noteworthy events or personalities.

Kirsten Boettcher
Brad Rounds

Phil Broad
Greg Schulz

Dave Randall
Bob Tellefsen

A map of the New England states, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island & Connecticut with the adjacent parts of New York & Lower Canada" Compiled and published by Nathan Hale, Boston 1826

Library of Congress Railroad Maps, 103, CALL#G3720 1849 .H3 RR103

- 1778 "A Plan of the late Province of Main as far as Kennebec River" map is published with Goose Pond clearly shown straddling the townships of Windham, New Boston and North Yarmouth.
- 1830 More mapping of the Goose Pond area in completed.
- 1871 Forest Lake shows on Cumberland County Atlas as Goose Pond, a natural body somewhat less than half its present size. It straddles Gray and West Falmouth (that part of West Falmouth appears to have been annexed from Windham and then back to Windham at a later date). Several names appear in the watershed; Allen, Babbidge, Fry, Latham, Ingersol, and Sullivan among others.

1920s A saw mill at the present site of the Cumberland Horse and Riding Club uses a short-lived small wooden dam at Forest Lake to control water power.

1930s Swan Development establishes many more homes on the east shore.

1933 A fish screen is constructed at the dam location.

1938 A replacement wooden dam is constructed.

1940s A group of summer residents form a loosely organized group to address issues concerning Forest Lake.

1950s Saturday Night Rock in the north end of the lake is so dubbed due to it's weekly use as a spot for bathing...a practice that is not encouraged today.

Public Beach at south end of the lake known as Welch Beach and is in full operation catering to many residents of surrounding towns. Small rides, food concessions, an Inn and rental cabins area part of the attractions.

Public beach at south end of the lake closes due to increased regulation. Goose Pond Road was Welch's Beach Road until then and the cabins at the south end of the lake were operated by the Welch family.

A very special person visits the lake on a repeated basis, star Arthur Godfrey.

Gray Road is in the watershed until re-routed for the turnpike.

1954 & 1955 Forest Lake Sands development builds the west shore of the lake.

1955 First water quality survey of the lake by the State of Maine discloses dissolved oxygen problems below 25 feet.

1960 Forest Lake's wooden dam, that feeds water into the Piscataquis (Abnaki for *At The River Forks*) for mills downstream, falls into disrepair.

1963 Organizing efforts on the lake start to forming the Forest Lake Association; as a result of the failure of the wooden dam on the lake in 1961. Leaders included Murry Gum, Irene and Pete Bush, Rocky Risberra, and the McNeils. Initial intentions were to build a second wooden dam for the maintenance of water levels.

1964 A new wooden dam is approved and installed. Gravel pit expansion is heavily fought.

The Forest Lake Association is formed to promote social and civic activities...and assist in neighborhood improvements. Hollis Allen is the first president.

With the first dues collected comes the first written complaint to the association about the noisy "Jet Skiffs" racing up and down the lake.

1966 Pete Bush is president of the association.

1968 The lake has around 45 year-round residents with 190 seasonal residents.

1970s Our contribution to Maine...gravel for the construction of 295 comes from our pits on either side of Goose Pond Road.

The watershed establishes a habit of serious flooding, defined as when you have more homes, seasonal use road construction, and a hill and ridgeline next to the lake: serious consequences to homes and the lake result. This pattern continues into the mid 80's with several 4" and 6" rainfalls.

August 22 - 26 is lake shut-down time for seasonals who frequently pull their docks to to the sound of a nationally known trumpeter. His music moves and inspires listeners in the twilight hours and finishes his private concert at the end of the day with Taps.

1971 First documented state testing of lake water quality, especially bacterial tests with an attempt to tie the problem into septic issues...of which there were many, around the lake.

1972-1974 Public Beach returns to operation by the Copp and Allen families. Visitors are charged 50 cents per person or \$3.00 per carload to enjoy lake activities. Concerns surrounding water quality close the operation in 1974.

1973 The Forest Lake Association joins the fledgling Congress of Lake Associations.

The association successfully opposes a Town of Cumberland move for a boat landing on the lake.

1974 Volunteer water quality monitoring starts and continues with several multi-year breaks until 1984. Early in 1975 Pete Bush and Stan McNeil were trained as volunteer monitors.

It is noted that the wooden dam is in trouble again, and pleas start to go out for the following two years to replace the dam. 144 pay towards the dam during that two year period.

1975 An small algae bloom is documented on the lake. A second bloom occurs the following year

1976 Years of intense work in Augusta by the Lake Association pay off ... White Brothers construct the present concrete dam which is owned and maintained by the lake association.

First documented canoe race sponsored by the Forest Lake Association.

1977 Forest Lake has the dubious honor of being ranked "among the worst" by DEP in terms of phosphorus pollution.

Charles Marston is president of the lake association.

1979 There are a total of 68 year round residents along the lake.

There is a wash out around the ends of the dam. For the most part volunteers remedy it.

1979 & 1980 A \$25,000 grant is put together by the lake association, Windham, Gray, and Cumberland to work for septic corrections starting with dye testing through PROP. Participation is very limited

1980 The lake is stocked with 500 Brook Trout

1979-1984 Forest Lake Days. Picnic lunch and barbecues on the south end beach. Canoe Races are popular (around part of the lake). One result shows that Andy Brown & Steve Googins took first place.

March 1980 At 4:00am in the morning, a loud bang, and a suspected meteorite creates a slashing hole through the ice 30 feet away from the south shore.

1981 Bill Spitzinger is testing the water quality in the lake.

1985-1990 The quiet years - the lake association becomes inactive, lake testing stops.

With more than 100 year-round and 225+ seasonal residents, only Cumberland has upgraded road quality from seasonal gravel to paved roadway around the lake.

1991 Three lake residents, Bob Tellefsen, Greg Schulz, and Brad Rounds become certified for lake testing and contact Dave Randall, holder of the keys in the association for many years, and the association becomes an active force again under the presidency of Greg Schulz. Lake testing becomes continuous through 2002.

Hurricane Bob, not much for wind but good for more than 11 inches of rainfall in 24 hours, causes massive septic damage, dislodged docks, homes in the water and immense transport of road gravel into the lake. Both west shore bridges become impassable.

Cumberland County Soil and Water District spearheads replacement of the Gray bridge.

1992 \$3,000+ lake survey grant is funded by Maine Department of Environmental Protection with notable personalities on the Steering Committee: Donnell Carroll & Pam Wilkinson.

1993 Volunteer surveyors receive initial training in February. Septic surveys are mailed in March. Ultimately 136 residents will respond! Sites are visited, technical follow-ups are done and a final report is generated with a working group put together to make recommendations.

The Forest Lake Association has 47 families as members.

1994 Casco Bay Estuary Project, in support of the survey process, responds with a grant that funds three workshops: camp-roads, vegetated buffers, and septic management.

1995 Town of Cumberland responds to the survey by paving another road accessing the watershed, Goose Pond Road.

1996 The survey gains another hit with FEMA and other funding rebuilding major damage to the road and bridge on the west shore in Windham.

Brad Rounds assumes presidency of the Forest Lake Association.

The Forest Lake Association conducts and funds bacterial testing on an annual basis and continues through 2002.

2000 Bob Heyner assumes the reigns for the Forest Lake Association and primary responsibility for water quality testing.

2001 A redesigned bridge with increased capacity is funded by road association and FEMA on the west shore in Windham.

2002 The lake association, working with Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Cumberland County Soil and Water District, starts a Watershed Management grant process.

Site visits are done, technical follow-up is started, a shoreline survey is done, and a septic survey receives strong response.

2003 The grant work continues with a public forum. The lake association has 87 members.