

Flying Pond Improvement Association

Winter 2020



photo by Alice Olson, 12/15/2019



Photo by Karen Kurkjian, 1/9/2020

In This Issue

The Dam

Watershed Info

Island Ownership

What's in a Name?

Related Organizations

Keep in Touch

A Brief History of the Dam

Today we think of the dam in terms of its use in maintaining the lake's water level for recreation and esthetics. But the dam has been the object of industrialization, property issues, and litigation over water rights.

Flying Pond's first dam was built before 1792 by Captain William Whittier, the founder of Mt. Vernon, to assist in powering his sawmill and grist mill in the village. He built a second dam in the village as well.

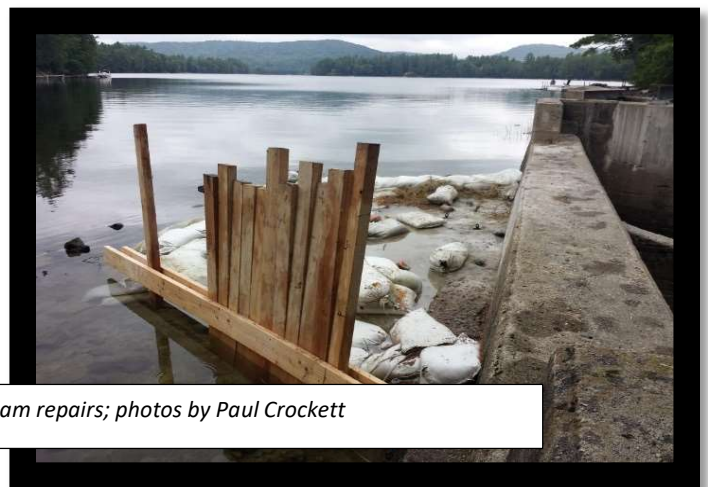
According to the National Inventory of Dams, construction of the modern dam was completed in 1952. Made of concrete, it stores 2,262 acre-feet of water and raises the water level by 5 to 6 feet. The dam gets inspected twice a year.

Although the dam is built across land owned by adjoining families, the dam belongs to the FPIA.

The dam structure is in excellent shape, but because it wasn't built on bedrock or a truly impervious soil layer, it develops leaks periodically, as water finds a way beneath it. Repairs were made in 1974, 2009 and 2012. In 2015, a group of volunteers built a coffer dam and repaired a leak. The 2015 project cost about \$15,000; this was covered by FPIA funds on hand.

No outside funds are available to pay for dam reconstruction or repair.

Please consider donating to the FPIA to boost the dam maintenance fund, so that money will be on hand the next time our dam needs work. *Look for more about the dam's surprising history in future editions.*



2015 dam repairs; photos by Paul Crockett

Sources: Smith, Beverly Wight, Turning Back: Stories of the Mt. Vernon – Vienna Area; Franklin Printing, 1985

Mt. Vernon Historical Review, Bicentennial Literary Committee, Summer 1972

National Inventory of Dams

Dean Sciaraffa, FPIA Board member and lake resident. Dean is a contractor with significant underground and underwater experience, and professional contacts who would be willing to lend their engineering expertise if needed.

Watershed Information

In 2014, a group of about two dozen volunteers and professionals, led by the 30 Mile River Watershed Association (30MRWA) conducted a survey of the Flying Pond watershed. 30MRWA published its report in 2015. The project was made possible by support from the FPIA, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the Town of Mt. Vernon, and the Town of Vienna, along with concerned residents.

You can find the full report at the FPIA's website:

<http://fpia.weebly.com/>

See the watershed map on the last page of this newsletter.

Some surprising facts:

- ☑ **Surface area: 403 acres**
- ☑ **Size of watershed: 11.6 square miles**
- ☑ **Average depth: 27 feet**
- ☑ **Flushing rate: 1.60 times/year.**

The large size of the watershed relative to the moderate size of the lake is what makes our lake especially vulnerable to pollution.

Island Ownership

Flying Pond has ten islands. Six of them are owned by the State of Maine, and four are privately owned. What is the history behind this?

Lake Ownership

All of the water in the lake belongs to Vienna, but the property surrounding the water is in the jurisdiction of both Vienna and Mt. Vernon.

What's in a Name?

Flying Pond: local author and historian Beverly Wight Smith writes that “two or three Indians canoed across this pond and, being attracted by its beauty, carefully marked the place and went back to bring others. In coming back, they lost the trail, and supposing they knew exactly where it was located, they said, “it has flown away.”

Smith, Beverly Wight, Turning Back, Franklin Press, 1985, p. 140

Thirty Mile River: In the 1700s, timber scouts paddled north from Androscoggin Lake, through Pocasset Lake, Pikerall Pond, Lovejoy Pond and Echo Pond, until they reached the Dead River, where the chimney now stands in West Mt. Vernon. They reckoned they had travelled about 30 miles, and the area became known as that. *Lidie Robbins, Exec. Director, 30Mile River Watershed Association.*

In the mid 1800s, the term was applied to a scheme to build a steamboat waterway and railroad between Lewiston and Farmington, cutting right through both downtown Mt. Vernon and Vienna.

Smith, Beverly Wight, Turning Back, Franklin Press, 1985, p.84-86

Related Organizations

30 Mile River Watershed Association

<http://30mileriver.org/>

7 Lakes Alliance

<https://www.7lakesalliance.org/>

Maine Lakes Society

<https://mainelakessociety.org/>

First Ice Fishing Shack of the Season

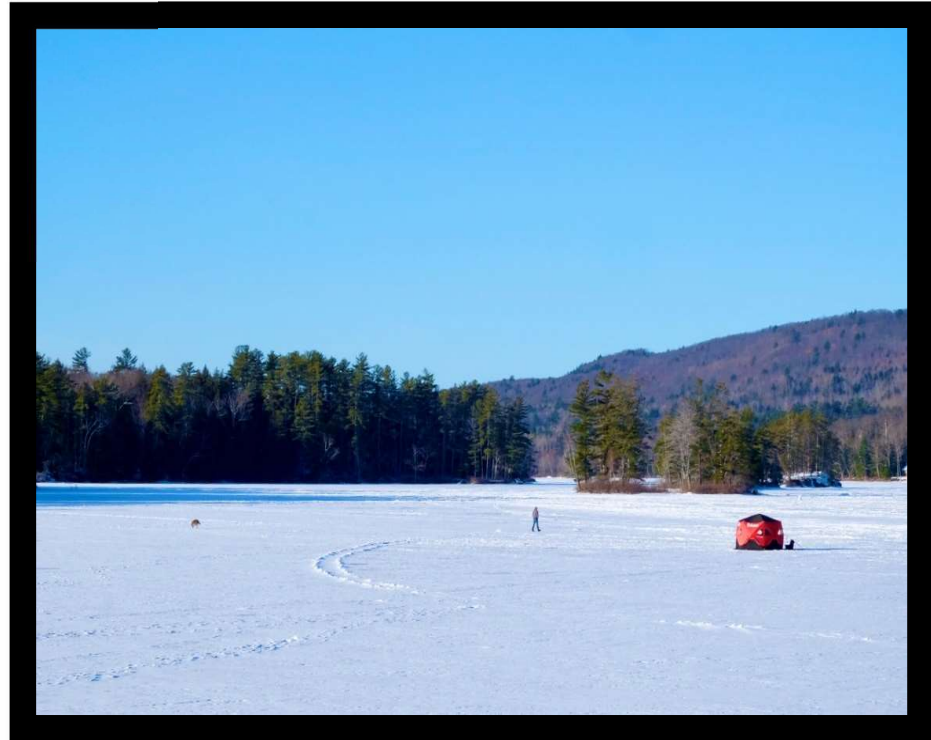


Photo by Karen Kurkjian, 1/10/2020

Call to Action

The FPIA is only as strong as its membership and volunteers. Please send your photos, ideas, and willingness to get involved to nancy.h.hemphill@gmail.com.

To join FPIA, contact Cindy Ripley, at: ckripley@gmail.com. Dues are \$40 per year.

Help expand our membership by passing this along to your neighbors and friends. If you belong to a road association, ask them to spread this around.

Another way to stay informed is to read the Town of Mt. Vernon Community Newsletter. It's free and is published monthly. Go to <http://mtvernonme.org/Newsletter.html> or call (207) 293-2379 to get on the email list. A printed and mailed copy is available to Mt. Vernon taxpayers.

Mark your calendar for the FPIA Annual Meeting: Saturday, July 11, 2020 at the Vienna Grange Hall.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Update your email and mailing addresses by notifying

- Cindy Ripley@ ckripley@gmail.com
- Find us at: flyingpond@gmail.com
- <http://fpia.weebly.com>
- on Facebook @ Flying Pond Improvement Association

What interests you? Send us an email.

Possible future ideas include:

Invasive plant patrol activities

Water quality

Loon watch and fishing report

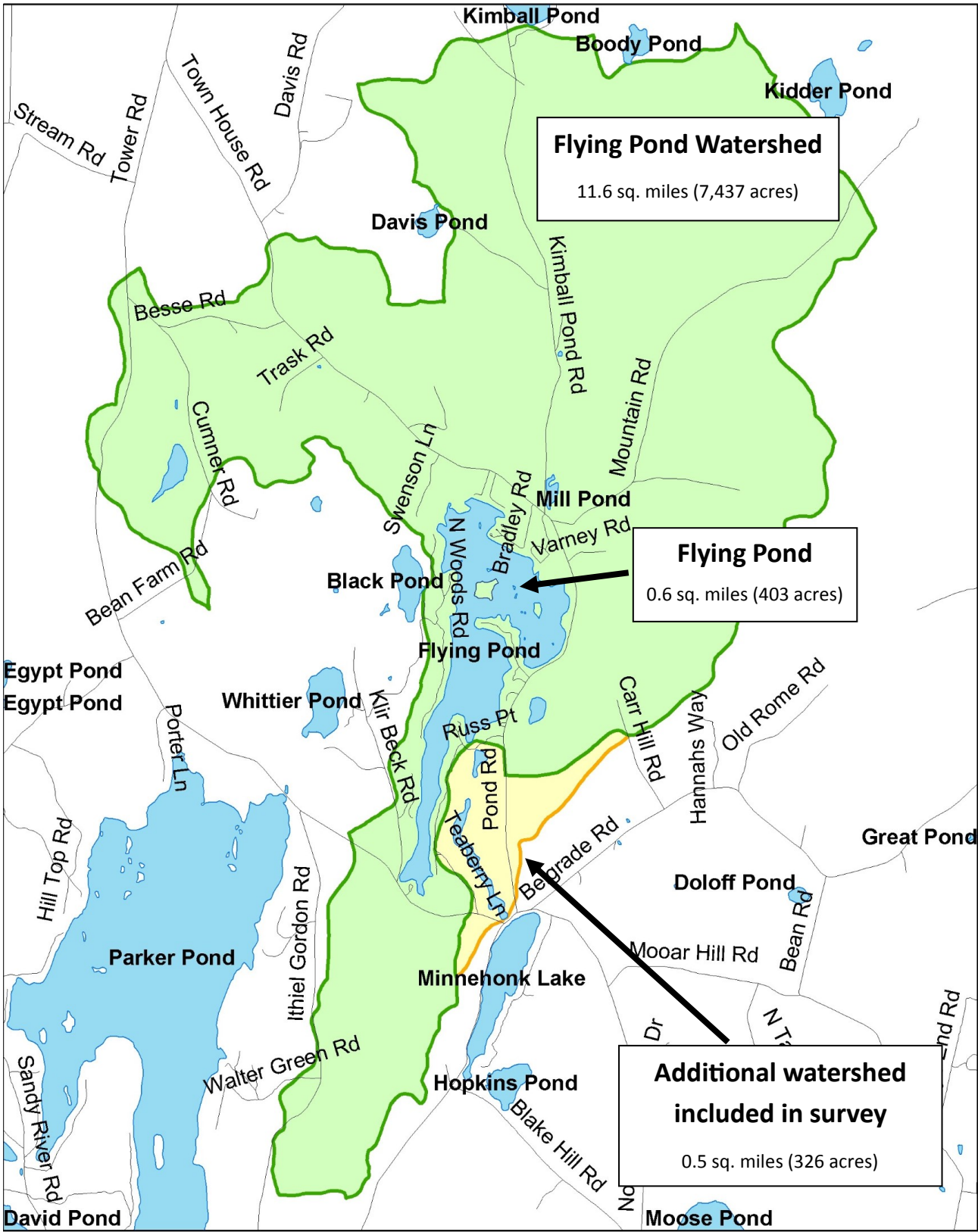
Social activities

Hiking trails

Performing arts and cultural events

Local history

FLYING POND WATERSHED



- Roads
- Flying Pond Watershed
- Additional Watershed to be Surveyed

