

Sense of Place in the Belgrade Lakes Region of Central Maine as it Informs Geological Education

Erin Love '14, James Fleming, and Bruce Rueger, Colby College
Science, Technology, and Society Program; Department of Geology;
and Environmental Studies Program

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Scientific Knowledge



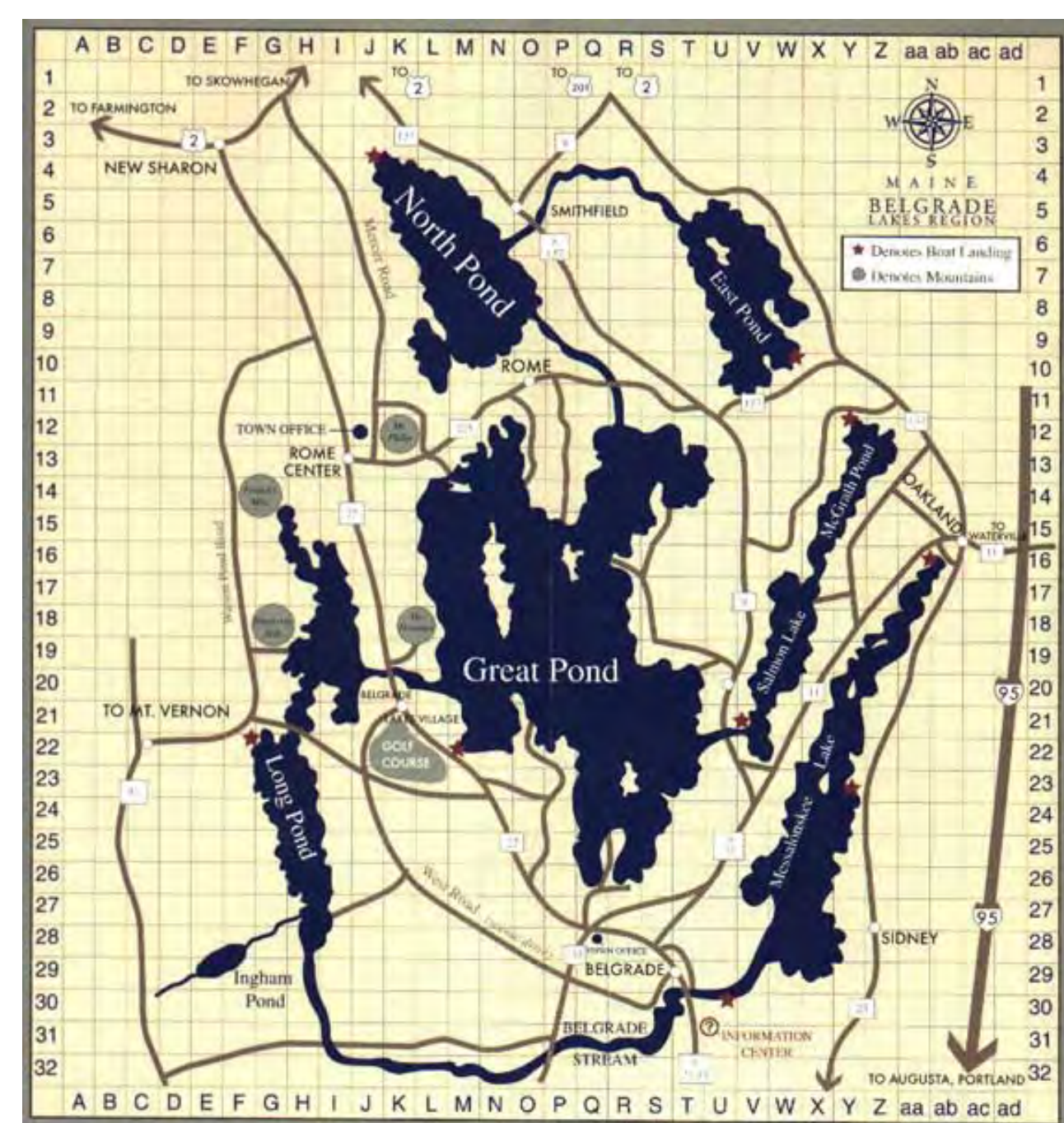
A View from Long Pond

"If you don't know where you are, you don't know who you are."
-Wendell Berry

Interview: Rick Watson, President of the North Pond Association

"[My childhood sense of place] would have to be in and around the lake. There, behind my cottage, were hundreds and hundreds of acres all the way into Norridgewock of woods, and at that time, you did not need permission from the landowners, so I grew up hiking and biking and camping and all that with friends that I made up and down the lake."

"People, I think, don't think their fifty-foot lot or hundred-foot lot impacts the lake, and you know, maybe it's septic, maybe it's runoff, maybe it's the driveway, maybe it's washing their cat or dog or kids in the lake with shampoo. You know, whatever, dumping gas, spilling gas when you fill something up. You know, all that matters."



<http://www.daysrealestate.com/lg-map.asp>

Sense of Place



A View of Day's Store

Current Connection to Place

Local artist Matt Russ on how painting in the Belgrades has contributed to his sense of place:

"My exploration of the Belgrade Lakes region, particularly the Kennebec Highlands, has grown in geographical area and personal significance over the years. The more I discover about the landscape, the more I seem to discover about myself. I search for treasures in the form of images but invariably come away with more. I have an undying respect for the place and its transforming power."



Matthew Russ, View from Blueberry Hill #1, 2010, Oil on Canvas, 20 x 40 in.

Community Engagement

"Some are born in their place, some find it, some realize after long searching that the place they left is the one they have been searching for. But whatever their relation to it, it is made a place only by slow accrual, like a coral reef."
-Wallace Stegner



Nan Mairs, President of the Belgrade Historical Society at her home in the McGrath Pond area

Interview: Nan Mairs, President of the Belgrade Historical Society

"It's a struggle for a town to maintain its identity, I think, and there are too many different views of what our identity should be and who's got it right. Well, everybody's got it right because it's whatever they want it to be...There are advantages [to having a single, agreed-upon identity] because everybody will work together better if they have a unified hope or dream for their town...But I don't know whether people are too independent to set aside...the trivial things they don't agree about to really focus on 'Where do we want to go from here?'"

Interview: Dianne Oliver, Owner of Day's Store

"The slogan that the whole region uses is "Where Memories Last a Lifetime," and I think that's true. I think we're part of a major memory people have when they come to the area here."

"You need to get back to the communities...what you're actually doing or what you learned or what you found out."

Questionnaire Excerpts

How can a sense of place serve as a resource for community building?

- Emotional connections to a place suggest an urge to preserve it, making it more feasible to harness the efforts of individuals to take action.
- [It] can provide a focal point for individuals to identify feelings & concerns they may share, which could lead to shared objectives & action (i.e.. conservation, protection, appreciation, planning).
- Places are inherently shared I think, especially those places which are freely accessible (parks, trails, shops, even libraries, sidewalks) and these serve as great settings for interacting with other members of the community.