

# BELGRADE LAKES ASSOCIATION

Winter 2025



*The Belgrade Lakes Association - protecting and preserving its lakes for more than 100 years.*



# President's Remarks

Dear Friends and Members of the Belgrade Lakes Association,

As we welcome a new year, I am honored to introduce myself as the new President of the Belgrade Lakes Association's Board of Directors. As one of the younger members of our Board, and a seventh-generation resident of Jamaica Point in Rome, I carry a deep and personal connection to this region. Service to this organization offers me a meaningful way to give back to the lakes and community that have given so much to me and my family. It is a privilege to work alongside so many dedicated individuals who share a common purpose: protecting and preserving Great Pond and Long Pond for generations to come.



For decades, the BLA has been a leader in environmental stewardship, safeguarding our lakes through education, science-based management, and community collaboration. Our mission remains as vital as ever. Our work helps to sustain the pristine waters and healthy ecosystems that define our region and enrich the lives of all who live, work, and recreate here.

I would like to extend great appreciation to Bert Languet who has so capably served as President over the past three years. Under Bert's steady leadership, the Association has strengthened partnerships, advanced critical programs, and continued its legacy of volunteerism and civic engagement. On behalf of the Board and our membership, thank you, Bert, for your unwavering commitment and exemplary service.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the work of our newly formed Strategic Planning Committee. This group has been charged with evaluating our priorities, listening to our members, and charting a thoughtful, sustainable course for the Association's future. Creating this seven-member, all-volunteer, committee will help ensure that the BLA is well-prepared for the years ahead. The committee's membership is diverse in professional background, age, tenure on the Board, and balance between both of our beautiful lakes. I am eager to see what path they recommend to chart forward.

Our core programs continue to be the backbone of the BLA's mission. When donors give, their contributions go directly to funding vital projects for Great Pond and Long Pond with programs such as milfoil remediation, invasive species monitoring, courtesy boat inspections, and support for the Youth Conservation Corps. This year, we also sponsored an intern to review decades of septic system permits in Belgrade and Rome to help us understand the aging infrastructure better and improve public education about this critical issue. We know that well-maintained septic systems play a vital role in protecting water quality, and this work helps us target our outreach and advocacy more effectively.

I am also pleased to welcome Sharon Jeffe as our new Vice President. Sharon brings a wealth of experience, energy, and a deep passion for our lakes. A year-round resident on Long Pond, she has been deeply engaged in advancing our goals. On the Board, she has taken an active role in membership programming, the annual raffle, and more. Most recently, she and Dick Greenan spearheaded our new website rollout, helping to ensure that our message is clear, accessible, and engaging for all. I look forward to working closely with her, our Board, and all of you as we continue the important work ahead.

Together, we will continue to build upon the legacy of those who came before us by working to protect Great Pond and Long Pond so that their clear waters and natural beauty endure for generations. Thank you for your continued support, volunteerism, and steadfast belief in the BLA mission.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard". The script is cursive and fluid.

Richard LaBelle, BLA President

# Breakfast at Old Macdonald's

A Lake Story by Michael Barrett

My Dad, Ed Barrett, worked on Wall Street for about forty years. He was used to eating in places like Delmonico's, Peter Luger's Steak House, and Jack Dempsey's. However, above all he loved Old Macdonald's. Dad loved it especially for its Saturday breakfast.

For years Old Macdonald's was run by Terry Macdonald. Terry was a lovely woman with a great sense of humor and magical ability in the kitchen. She was loved by everyone who knew her. At one time or another you could see most of Belgrade year rounders in the restaurant. Summer visitors also loved the place. It became a yearly tradition for most of them.

While Terry held court in the kitchen, Bert, her husband, kept his stool at the counter, in the dining room, warm. Terry could cook or bake anything, but she was best known for "comfort" foods. She could cook a Beef Wellington, but she was best known for beef stew, meat loaf, spaghetti and meat balls, or franks and home-made beans. Her breads, cakes and pies were "to die for."

Meals were good at all times of day, but as I said earlier, my father thought Saturday breakfast was the best. Dad liked Terry's place because of the very generous portions, because of Terry's fun attitude, and what he called, "the cozy country feeling of the place."

One Saturday morning, Dad and I went down to Old Macdonald's for breakfast. As usual, Bert was on his perch, Terry was in the kitchen and taking orders. It was an "open kitchen" in that there was a window behind the counter so that Terry could watch the

goings on in the dining room. When she noticed that Dad had come in, Terry came out to welcome one of her favorite customers. Terry's favorite sport was to tempt Dad into ordering about twice what he came in for. This day was no different. She came out, and Dad ordered scrambled eggs. Terry asked if he would like bacon with his eggs. Dad nodded that it was a good idea. She then suggested that "some ham would go well." Dad again agreed. Terry mentioned that she had just received some fresh sausage. "Might as well add that, too!" said Dad. "How about some pan cakes to round out the meal?" she asked. That also sounded good to Dad. Then she pulled out a chair and sat down with us. Dad chuckled and expected her to get up and get the order. But she didn't. Dad did not know what to do. Something like this had never happened at Delmonico's. Finally, Terry got up and told Dad that his order was for too much food. She would bring him what he should have. This turned out to be scrambled eggs, bacon, and home-made toast - just what he had originally ordered!

Terry and Dad are both gone now. So is Old Macdonald's. There is still a restaurant in its place. It is called the Sunset Grille. The food is still great. The atmosphere is still fun. However, I miss the old days and the wonderful people I knew back then.



*Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine) Saturday, June 30, 1979.*

# Drought Affects Our Dammed Lakes

By Dick Greenan, Belgrade Lakes Watershed Dams Committee

The Summer of 2025 was a beautiful one despite the drought. Our lake water levels held up until around mid-August, and then the honeymoon was over! With the lack of rain and resultant sediment run off, our lakes were the clearest they have been in a while. As I penned this article, we were still very much in a drought, and the meteorologists are predicting little relief until the spring rains. Although the Long-Term Forecast is reflecting a 23% increase in precipitation over the winter, that is still not enough to replenish our water table.

Like many of our neighbors, we had to pull our boats from the lifts much earlier this year due to the low water levels. Someone asked me why we just can't open some of the dams up north to help our levels? We wish it were that simple, but the entire State of Maine was and still is in a drought, and all of our lakes to the north were already down 12-14" below full pond as well.

Normally we begin our fall/winter drawdown about October 13th which calls for Great and Long Ponds to be drawn down from full pond by 1.5'- 2.0' and Salmon down by 1.0'-1.5' for November 1st. The drawdowns typically begin with a slow and regulated process. This allows some with their boats still in the water to get used to the idea before they become outright stranded! With our lakes as low as they have become this fall, the drawdown is still in place, but it is at a noticeably slower pace.

U.S. Monthly City Forecasts (Search by City & State -OR- Zip Code)

U.S. City & State

Maine3

AUGUSTA AP5

-OR-

Zip codes within

(Select)2

miles of

Search

Display metric measurements (Celsius & millimeters)?

Month	City	State	Temperatures				Precipitation		Snow	
			Normal High (F)	Forecast High (F)	Normal Low (F)	Forecast Low (F)	Normal (inches)	Forecast (inches)	Normal (inches)	Forecast (inches)
Nov. '25	AUGUSTA AP	ME	46	44	30.2	28.2	3.81	2.86-25%	3.8	2.8-26%
Dec. '25	AUGUSTA AP	ME	34.1	32.1	17.3	15.3	3.50	4.38+23%	14.7	18.4+18%
Jan. '26	AUGUSTA AP	ME	28.5	25.9	10.5	7.9	3.26	4.08+23%	20.9	26.1+21%
Feb. '26	AUGUSTA AP	ME	32.1	29.5	13.6	11.0	2.55	3.19+23%	13.5	16.9+20%
Mar. '26	AUGUSTA AP	ME	41.2	38.6	23.7	21.1	3.64	4.55+23%	14.1	17.6+20%
Apr. '26	AUGUSTA AP	ME	53.1	51.3	34.3	32.5	3.78	2.99	5	4.0
May '26	AUGUSTA AP	ME	66	64.2	44.7	42.9	3.90	3.08	0	0.0
Jun. '26	AUGUSTA AP	ME	74.8	73.0	53.9	52.1	3.58	2.83	0	0.0
Jul. '26	AUGUSTA AP	ME	80.5	76.6	59.7	55.8	3.43	2.40	0	0.0
Aug. '26	AUGUSTA AP	ME	79	75.1	58.3	54.4	3.25	2.28	0	0.0
Sep. '26	AUGUSTA AP	ME	70.1	66.2	49.6	45.7	3.60	2.52	0	0.0
Oct. '26	AUGUSTA AP	ME	58.4	56.4	39.2	37.2	4.04	3.03	0.2	0.2



October 2022, Long Pond dock almost flooded. 3 years later, September 2025, same dock, water level 3 feet lower.

Why do we drop the lakes down in the winter? The primary objective of fall and winter water management is to lower the lakes to accommodate the increased rainfall and runoff which occurs in the fall and again in late winter and early spring. Lake ice has tremendous power that many of us experienced last winter with the excessive fall and winter rain events. The phenomenon is called "ice heaving" or "ice jacking." There are some positives and some negatives to this phenomenon, depending on your perspective. It can be extremely damaging to personal property on the lakeshore, but it is also very beneficial to the lake's health and ecosystem.

This year's drought is also raising havoc with our local contractors who are tasked with removing the hundreds (thousands?) of boat docks and lifts. They just have not had adequate water depth to access the docks with their barges and, like us, are just waiting for the fall rains which are coming soon and will hopefully be enough for the task at hand.



# Winter Cheer Abundant in Village

By Richard LaBelle, BLA President



*Richard thanks BLA and 7 Lakes attendees.*

As December settled softly over the Belgrade Lakes region with ice already formed over the stream, the Belgrade Lakes Association welcomed the season of warmth, gratitude, and community spirit.

On a peaceful Friday evening, the Belgrade Lakes Association's all-volunteer Board of Directors gathered together with the dedicated staff and board of 7 Lakes Alliance. It was a moment to exhale after a year of tireless milfoil suppression, shoreline education, courtesy boat inspections, vol-

unteer hours, and the ongoing work of preserving the waters we love. Conversations filled the room like snowflakes falling... gentle, thoughtful, and intertwined with appreciation. Laughter rose, stories were shared, and heartfelt thanks were offered for the countless hands and minds that protect Great Pond, Long Pond, and the watershed beyond.

The following day, festive cheer carried us into the heart of the community at the Holiday Stroll. The Barn at Seven Lakes Inn, graciously hosted by Ted and Lori Gobilot, became a picture-book backdrop with twinkling lights, greenery, and the joyful presence of Santa and Mrs. Claus themselves. Our BLA table was filled with holiday treasures: books for children, small tokens meant to brighten the season, and helpful information to support healthy septic care and sustainable living along our lakes.

Throughout the afternoon and evening, neighbors stopped by to chat, to learn, and to share what these waters mean to them. Smiles were as abundant as snowfall, and the warmth in the room rivaled the glow of the wood beams overhead.

As winter arrives, we look back with gratitude and forward with purpose. The lakes will soon fully rest beneath their icy quilt, but our mission remains alive and active. We thank every volunteer, partner, donor, and lake-lover who walks beside us. May the season bring peace, reflection, and the promise of another healthy year on the water.



*Staying cozy in the Inn's lobby.*



*Lots of visiting and friendship.*



*Christmas strollers at 7 Lakes Inn.*



# Great and Long Pond Water Quality Update

Dr. Danielle Wain, Lake Science Director, 7 Lakes Alliance

Matt Farragher, Lake Scientist, 7 Lakes Alliance

The dry conditions of 2025 have helped us understand the Belgrade Lakes better. As the Watershed Management Plans for Great and Long Ponds indicated, most of the phosphorus that enters those lakes comes from the watershed. No rain, no runoff! So this year was one of the best years in recent history for water clarity on both lakes.

	2025 Secchi (ft)	2020-2024 Secchi (ft)	2025 Phosphorus (ppb)	2020-2024 Phosphorus (ppb)
Great	21.2	18.9	9.9	9.6
Upper Long	21.2	19.8	7.8	8.1
Lower Long	20.8	19.0	7.5	8.1

*Average Secchi disk transparency and phosphorus concentration for 2025 compared with the previous five-year average (as of 10/30/25).*

However, with clearer water *Gloeotrichia*'s (gloeo) blooms develop, a type of cyanobacteria found primarily in Great Pond and Long Pond. Gloeo starts its life cycle in the sediments, and it needs light to grow; the clearer the water, the more light is available for the gloeo. Gloeo extracts phosphorus to grow from the lake sediments, so it doesn't need phosphorus brought in by runoff to grow (as it is using phosphorus that came into the lake in previous years). This year saw significant accumulations of gloeo along shorelines in both lakes, although volunteer observations at the deep hole in Great Pond also saw high levels of gloeo. This might explain why the average phosphorus in Great Pond was higher this year. When the gloeo takes the phosphorus from lake sediments, it then rises up in the lake and brings the phosphorus with it.

7 Lakes continues to coordinate a citizen-science gloeo monitoring program that was started in 2005 in conjunction with the BLA and the DEP. This program is one-of-a-kind and provides data for understanding gloeo blooms that is not available through traditional monitoring methods. In addition to our longstanding volunteers, Linda Bacon from the Maine DEP conducted another training this summer for gloeo identification. Thanks to Kate Hollister, Lindsay Clarke, Lisa Wildman, Margaret McCann, Bob Manning, Paul Giguere, Richard Sharf, Russ Sabia, Sherrilyn Smith, Julie Mecham, and Sean O'Connor for contributing data over the past year! Given the high interest, 7 Lakes will coordinate another training for this in the upcoming summer. In the meantime, keep your eye on the 7 Lakes and BLA websites for a report on the measurements from 2025!



*Gloeotrichia at three different scales. Photo credit: Lynn Hannum*



# Mitigating the “Deadly Inch”

By Stuart Cole, 7 Lakes Erosion Control Project Manager

When it rains, water doesn't simply soak into the ground or flow harmlessly into storm drains. Instead, the first inch of rainfall plays a crucial role in determining the level of pollution that reaches local waterways. This initial portion of runoff is typically the most contaminated, carrying a concentrated mix of pollutants that have accumulated on surfaces during dry weather.

Over time, pollutants such as motor oil, fertilizers, pesticides, litter, and sediment build up on roads, parking areas, rooftops, and lawns. These materials remain relatively undisturbed until the next storm arrives. When rainfall begins, the first inch of water acts like a powerful rinse, sweeping these contaminants from impervious surfaces into our lakes. Studies (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12665-014-3294-6>) have shown that a significant majority of total pollutant loads—sometimes more than half—are transported during this initial phase of runoff. For this reason it is imperative, for the health of our lakes, to intercept and treat this first-inch runoff. The most effective way for homeowners to do this is by installing storm water Best Management Practices, also known as BMP's.

French Drains, Dripline Infiltration Trenches, Dry Wells, Rain Barrels, Infiltration Steps, Rain Gardens, Rubber Razors Diverters, and Infiltration Paths are examples of BMP's commonly installed by 7 Lakes Alliance's Youth Conservation Corps (YCC). All these practices treat the first “deadly inch” of stormwater by capturing it and allowing it to slowly percolate into the soil where pollutants and unwanted nutrients are filtered out. These practices work as standalone BMP's, but their effectiveness is amplified when they are used in conjunction with one another.

Over the 2025 summer season, 7 Lakes YCC installed 133 of these BMPs across the Belgrade Lakes Region. Most homeowners had the YCC install more than one BMP on their property. If you'd like to ensure that your property is set up to treat the first “Deadly Inch” of storm water, send an email to [stuart.cole@7lakesalliance.org](mailto:stuart.cole@7lakesalliance.org) to set up a site evaluation.



*Samples of BMPs that hold the “Deadly Inch” at bay.*



# Raffle Raises \$64,495!

## *Your (our) 2025 BLA Raffle was good for our Lakes!*

By Andy Cook, out-going Raffle Czar

This year we were fortunate to receive \$64,495.36 through the raffle for our lakes – Great Pond and Long Pond. More importantly we provided visibility through our BLA raffle tables, to the importance of maintaining and improving our lakes' water quality. Kudos to the BLA Board and member volunteers who helped out at the tables, a big thank you for the valuable donations from our excellent suppliers (and Board member donations), and a thank you to **you** for your participation. We all made it a success. This year we achieved an all-time raffle revenue record for the BLA. We did it in large part because of the

leadership of BLA Board Member George Atkinson. George has been organizing staffing our raffle tables and manning them for many years. He has made it all happen. He has earned a big thank you from us all (send him a note – he deserves it!).



*George Atkinson manning our raffle table –  
Thank you, George!*

The BLA raffle funds are used to:

- Pay for the Great Pond and Long Pond invasive species courtesy boat inspectors,
- Subsidize the Youth Conservation Core's efforts to stop phosphorous bearing water from flowing into the lakes (via eroding camp shorelines) through the installation of rip rap and water infiltration steps,
- Focus on failed or potentially failing lakeside septic systems by assisting in the funding of an intern to review town records and identify vulnerable shore lands (where there is geological shelving or poor soil) and old, uninspected septic systems (failed septic systems put phosphorous into the lakes),
- Monitor our Loon population through the hiring of two Colby interns (the Loon population is an indicator of lake health), and
- Provide visibility to Great Pond and Long Pond water quality issues via our biannual newsletter.



*Young lake stewards raising funds with a  
booming lemonade and cookie sale.*

Our wonderful prize donors pulled through for us again: Hamlin's Marine, Hammond Lumber, Bert and Sara Languet\*, Lynch Landscaping, Dick Greenan\*, Days Store, John Atkinson\*, the Village Inn, Trent & Sandy Shute\*, Skowhegan Savings Bank, The Farmers Market team, Steve and Anne Smith\*, Lakepoint Realty, the Dilts family lemonade and cookie stand, and Sadie's. The winners loved their prizes. The Hamlin's Marine Godfrey pontoon boat and Board-member-donated Sunfish were on the water as fast as the winners could get them there!

Thank you again to all our members and friends for your support of the Belgrade Lakes Association (BLA) Raffle. We tried some new things this year: an online raffle access website, ads in multiple newspapers, electronic me-



dia, etc. We also did our traditional mailing to members and manning of the raffle tables. It all worked out. We were fortunate to receive \$64,495.36 through the raffle for our lakes – Great Pond and Long Pond.

Most importantly we provided visibility to the importance of maintaining and improving our lakes’ water quality.

On behalf of the BLA Board and everyone on the lakes thank you again. You are great!



First Prize: Pontoon Boat

*\*Board member prize donors*

**2025 Raffle Winners**

First Prize	Pontoon boat, motor and trail from Hamlin’s Marine	Robert Williams
Second Prize	Shoremaster boat lift from Hammond Lumber	Sherrilynn Smith
Third Prize	Shoremaster dock sections from Hammond Lumber	Heather Cole
Fourth Prize	Mainely Handrails fire pit	Ed Charles
Fifth Prize	\$500 Lynch landscaping	Chip Rooney
Sixth Prize	Farmers market \$300 gift basket	Ruth Muenzen
Seventh Prize	\$300 gift certificate Day’s Store	Robert Burgoyne

**Bonus Raffle Winners**

First Prize	Sunfish sailboat	Matti Bradley
Second Prize	Loons for a day	Lorna Mathieson
Third Prize	Four rounds of golf	Colin Woolford
Fourth Prize	Stand up paddle board	Jessie Bradley
Fifth Prize	\$500 gift certificate at 122 Corson	Rick McFarland
Sixth Prize	Dinner for four at the Village Inn	Matt Craig

**We want your Lake Stories!**

Your newsletter crew is very pleased to kick off our Lake Stories column with a lake story from BLA member Mike Barrett (see page 3).

Our hope is to include lake stories in the BLA’s newsletter for years to come!

As a reminder, here’s the idea: we want to hear your favorite stories from life on the lake. Maybe it’s a hilarious misadventure (like the time your canoe took off without you), a sweet family memory (sunset s’mores, anyone?), or a tale that still makes you wince or laugh out loud. Think capsized sailboats, surprise visits from wildlife, wild weather, campfire pranks, or that one unforgettable 4th of July. You know the ones. Whether it’s heartwarming, hair-raising, or downright hysterical — if it happened here on the lake, we want to hear about it. Your stories are what make this place feel like home.

So dust off those memories and send your Lake Story our way. Family and friends are welcome to join in, too! Email your tale to Marcel at [marcelprints@outlook.com](mailto:marcelprints@outlook.com) — and don’t worry if it’s not Pulitzer-ready. We’re here for real-life moments, not perfect grammar.

We can’t wait to read (and maybe share) your lakeside legends in an upcoming issue!

Warmly,  
Polly, Liz & Marcel  
Your BLA Newsletter Team



# A Loon Chick's Journey!

Dick Greenan, Chairman, BLA Loon Preservation Project

There is nothing much cuter in nature than a loon chick. Follow along with a Long Pond chick as he or she learns how to be a grown-up loon and separate from its parents!



This Long Pond Tracy Cove chick is just 1-2 days old!

Loon chicks can swim and dive within their first week but rely on their parents for warmth, food, security and, sometimes just simple transportation.

Our chick is now 2 weeks old and still covered in its nice warm down. After all, it is still mid-June.



Cold raw crayfish? YUM!



They often ride on their parents' backs for warmth and protection during the first few weeks. Initially, parents provide all of the food, but chicks gradually start catching their own. You may even observe a parent purposely dropping a minnow directly in front of the chick to teach it how to catch its own food. At about five weeks, chicks can catch about half of their own food but still beg for food from their parents.



This Long Pond Tracy Cove chick is now 8 weeks old. Note the loss of down!

Our chick is now 10-weeks old. Note the curved back feathers of the juvenile as compared with the square back feathers of the adult.



A loon chick is considered fledged around 11-12 weeks old. That's when it can fly, and it is supposed to be largely independent; however, it will continue begging for food from its parents until the parents leave for their winter vacation, generally somewhere along the Maine coast.



This chick is now 13-weeks (think teenager!) in October and ready for its inaugural trip to the central Maine coast!

Loon chicks typically leave their natal lake shortly after their parents and migrate to the coast for the winter where they will spend the next few years before returning to their original lake or one nearby. As our banding skills are improving, we have now banded three chicks from the Great and Long Ponds just in the past three years. We will be on the lookout for them if they make the trip back home. One of our banded loons did return this past summer.



# From Trout to Pike: The Living History of Fishing on Great and Long Ponds

By Chris Raleigh, BLA Board Member



Showing a few of the Guides and style of Boat used — the Rangely. Note the thickly wooded shores of pine fir.

For centuries, Great Pond and Long Pond have sustained people with their waters, their beauty, and their fish. Long before hotels and summer camps dotted the shoreline, the native peoples of the Kennebec River valley fished here for brook trout, perch, smelt, and American eel - species that are native to these waters and remain part of their story today.

## A Native Foundation

The Kennebec drainage, of which the Belgrades are a part, has always supported a simple yet vibrant mix of fish: brook trout in the cool brooks, white and yellow perch in abundance, chain pickerel prowling the shallows, smelt flashing in schools, and the migratory American eel. These fish were the first to shape local traditions of angling and sustenance.

## Enter the Stocking Era

By the late 1800s, as railroads brought “sports” from Boston and New York, the Belgrades were transformed into a sporting destination. To meet the demand, state fish culturists began stocking landlocked salmon in the Belgrades as early as 1878 and were followed soon after by non-native brown trout and even rainbow trout experiments.

The salmon fishery flourished for decades in Great Pond and Long Pond which became famed waters for trophy catches. Yet stocking was not the only force changing the lakes. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, smallmouth and largemouth bass were introduced to Maine, adding warmwater excitement to anglers’ quarry. By mid-century bass tournaments, fly-fishing for trout, and trolling for salmon all shared the same waters.



## Uninvited Guests

The story took another turn in the 1970s when northern pike were illegally introduced into the Belgrade Lakes. Aggressive and fast-growing, they spread quickly through Great and Long Ponds, reshaping the food web. More recently, the arrival of landlocked alewives in the 1990s disrupted the smelt population—the critical forage for salmon - further challenging the cold-water fishery that once defined the Belgrades.

Today, both ponds support a mixed fishery: bass and pike attract anglers from across New England while carefully-managed trout and salmon stockings continue, a tradition more than a century old.

## The Guiding Tradition

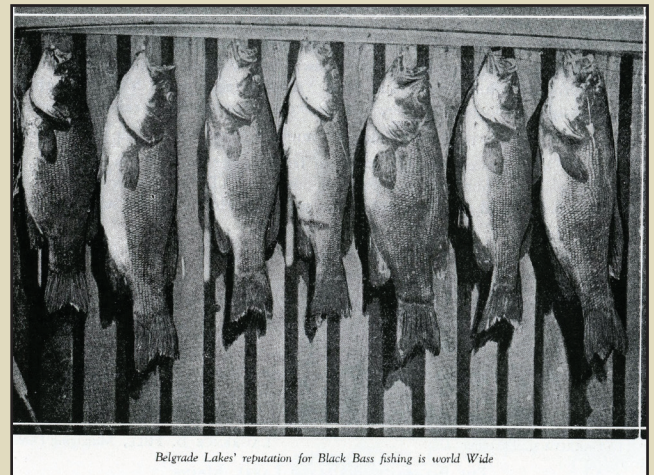
No account of Belgrade fishing would be complete without the guides. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as the great hotels of Belgrade Lakes village rose - the Belgrade Hotel (1900) and Castle Island Camps (1929) among them - Registered Maine Guides became icons of the region. Visitors arriving by train would be met by local guides who were ready with canoes and wooden boats to lead them to salmon, bass, or trout.

Historic photographs show guides, lined up along the village docks, waiting for “sports” to arrive from Boston or New York. Fishing was more than recreation; it was livelihood, heritage, and the spark that built Belgrade’s reputation as a destination.

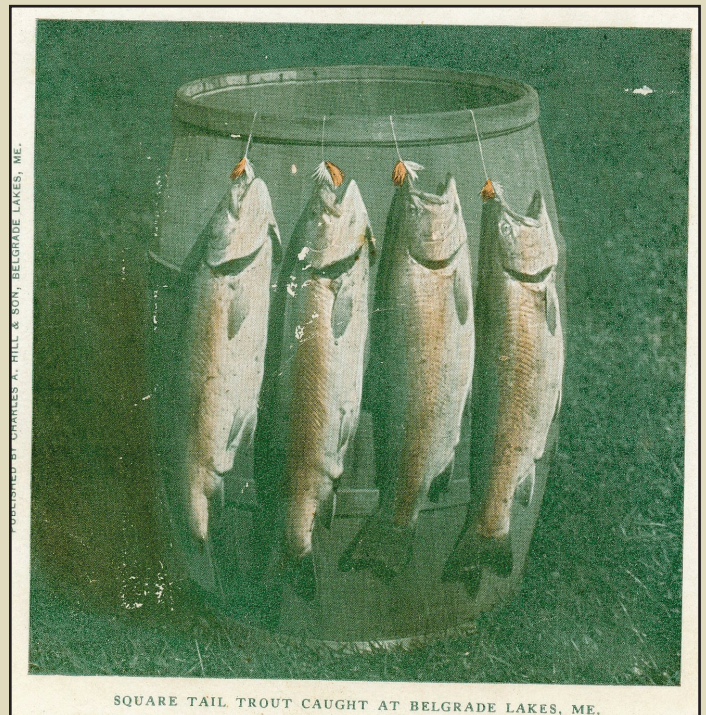
## A Continuing Story

The history of fishing on Great and Long Ponds is not static - it is a living narrative of introductions, challenges, and adaptation. Each new chapter, from the first salmon stockings to the rise of bass tournaments and the unexpected arrival of pike, reminds us that these waters are dynamic.

As stewards of Great and Long Ponds, it is our shared responsibility to balance recreation with conservation so that future generations may know both the thrill of a strike on the line and the deep connection to waters that have shaped Maine’s history for centuries.



*Belgrade Lakes' reputation for Black Bass fishing is world Wide*



*SQUARE TAIL TROUT CAUGHT AT BELGRADE LAKES, ME.*

*“Square Tail” is an old-timey nickname for Brook Trout.*



*Trout Caught in Great Lake, May, 1903  
Weight of two largest: 8.2 and 7.12 oz.*



# The Cook Family's Camp Water Safety Program

By Blaine Horrocks, BLA Treasurer

This past spring, I met up with Dr. Andy and Chris Cook at their residence on Long Pond. During our visit, I observed a series of laser carved plaques with maritime titles ranging from "Mates" to "Admirals" and the names of several of Andy and Chris' grandchildren under two of the plaques. When I asked Andy for an explanation, a huge smile appeared as he proudly announced the plaques were associated with the Cook's Camp Recognition Program, a program centered on water activities and waterfront safety.

As a professional mariner and grandfather of two young boys, I was immediately interested in hearing more. Andy explained that the program's genesis is from Great Pond's Camp Merryweather that was founded in 1900 and managed for many years by Henry "Skipper" Richards and his wife, Laura. Swimming and other water-related activities were central to a day at Camp Merryweather, and the Richards placed a major emphasis on swimming skills. In pursuit of the emphasis on both swimming and waterfront safety, the Richards developed a systematic approach for advancing campers through a series of skills and graduated difficulty levels ranging (in part) from:

Float test with PFD,

Swim from dock to shore,

Swim from dock to point

Swim to Pickerel Rock,

Swim to Oak Island,

Singlehandedly launching a canoe...flooding it....and paddling back to shore, etc.

The Camp Merryweather program for water safety continues in their family to this day.



*Cook Camp Recognition Program Plaques*

Fast forward! Soon after moving into their Long Pond home in North Cove, the Cooks spent a day with friends at Camp Merryweather. While sitting in Adirondack chairs and enjoying the view of Great Pond, a young girl walked by who looked a bit dispirited. Her siblings and cousins were far out into Great Pond on kayaks while she was left ashore. When asked why, the young girl delivered this slightly frustrated response, "I haven't passed my swim test yet!" That led to a discussion about the Camp Merryweather system for advancing through waterfront and safety skills.

When Andy and Chris built their Long Pond Camp in 2008, they included a special bunk room for grandchildren in hopes of that future eventuality. It occurred and so did the need for their own waterfront safety and skills program. Using the Camp Merryweather system as a template, the Cook family assembled a five-tier system of requirements and privileges: "Mates", "Sailors", "Midshipman", "Captain" and "Admiral." Grandpa (Andy) is the head trainer while Grandma (Chris) is the official examiner. Andy explained that this arrangement was particularly important as Chris is the number one person concerned with the safety of the grandchildren. At age five, one of the grandsons became the first certified "Mate." Andy relates that it was an intense



training week; but with Chris' help, the certification was reached just in the nick of time. The first Cook's Camp Recognition Program certification was awarded that evening at a ceremony following dinner. Andy read through the requirements for "Mates" and discussed how the candidate had achieved each requirement. It was a memorable occasion as the family applauded each of the candidates' successes while one young lad's grin grew with every round of applause. The certification culminated in the presentation of an engraved name plaque to be hung below the "Mates" certification plaque.

Subsequently, several Cook family grandchildren have earned their "Mates" certification, and some have achieved "Sailors." A new tradition has also come to pass when one day Chris noted that as the grandchildren descend to the basement bunk room, they each tap their name plaque on the wall of honor.

The Cook family is in the process of refining their program to meet the needs of their North Cove location as their higher-level certification emphasis is being refocused toward motor craft operations. However, Andy has given his blessing to share the certification requirements for "Mates", "Sailors", and "Midshipmen/Sailing" in hopes that families desiring to implement their own water safety program might find the Cook family program helpful.

Andy states, "So far, the approach has been a great success." I couldn't agree more.

### **"Mate" Recognition**

To earn Mate recognition, the candidate must do the following to the satisfaction of the certification examiner (Grandma or Aunt Betsy). The candidate should be trained by any and all others who wish to be of help.

**A. Rules:** The candidate must know and repeat the four rules for Mates, a.k.a **The Four W's:**

1. **W**ear your Personal Floatation Device (PFD)
2. **W**ait for an adult
3. **W**alk
4. **W**histle 3 times (again and again) for help

### **B. Skills:**

1. Put on your own PFD – buckle all the buckles  
The remaining skills are performed with the PFD on:
2. Jump into water over your head with your PFD on (you can jump towards an adult)
3. Blow your whistle three times while you are in the water
4. Put your face in the water and blow bubbles (face down)
5. Rotate from a face down to a face up posture on your own
6. Splash your hands and kick your legs

**C. Privileges:** When you pass you get the following privileges and awards:

1. Awarded a special whistle for your assigned PFD from your parents (and attach it - special ceremony)
2. Allowed to swim in the lake in a PFD near the dock with an adult present
3. Allowed to go in boats with adults
4. Your name and the date you passed on the "Mates" plaque
5. You may kayak on your own in North Cove with an adult watching



*Goal achieved!*

### **"Sailor" Recognition**

To earn Sailor recognition the candidate must do the following to the satisfaction of the certification examiner (Grandma). The candidate should be trained by any and all others who wish to be of help.





*Camp Merryweather Family Swim to Pickerel Rock.*

**A. Rules:** The candidate must know and repeat the four rules for Mates and the five rules for Sailors a.k.a. **The five S's**

1. **S**afety first – always
2. **S**tay with your boat
3. **S**how courteous behavior – help to clean up always
4. Go **s**low
5. **S**top if there is thunder or lightning

**B. Skills:**

1. Tie either a bowline or figure 8 rescue loop and demonstrate its use on yourself in the water
2. Demonstrate the proper cleating technique for a boat painter
3. Name the four parts of a boat (bow, stern, port, and starboard)
4. Know the signs of bad weather
5. Know who is in charge of a boat if more than one person is onboard (e.g., an adult, a 'Captain' or 'Admiral')

The remaining skills are done with the PFD on:

6. Properly put a kayak or canoe in the water from the rack, cleat it, enter it, paddle away from the dock, return, cleat it, get out, pull the canoe or kayak out of the water, put it back on the rack
7. Swim to the rock buoy and back with your PFD on
8. While in your kayak or canoe, overturn the boat, get out, blow your whistle three times, swim the boat to shore
9. Paddle your boat to the Hay's Camp (nearby neighbor) and back

**C. Privileges:** When you pass, you get the following privileges and awards:

1. Kayak or canoe alone anywhere in the North Cove area but always:
  - a. within eye site of the dock and
  - b. an adult must be present on the dock
2. Allowed to swim in the lake in a PFD as far away as the rock buoy with an adult present
3. Allowed to go in boats into all the North basin of Long Pond with an adult, a "Captain" or "Admiral"
4. Your name and the date you passed on the "Sailors" plaque

### **"Midshipman/Sailing" Recognition**

To earn Midshipman recognition, the candidate must do the following to the satisfaction of the certifica-



tion examiner (Grandma). The candidate should be trained by any and all others who wish to be of help.  
**A. Rules:** The candidate must know and repeat the rules of the water and know the meaning of the signage and words below:

1. Priority for Right of way – swimmers, then kayaks and canoes, then sail boats, then motorboats
2. No wake zone
3. Hazard marker
4. Speed in a water safety zone - "Water safety zone" means water within 200 feet of any shoreline, whether the shoreline of the mainland or island
5. Maine age restrictions for operating motorized craft – 16 if they have successfully completed an approved education course otherwise 18 with proof of age
6. Responsibility for the life & safety of "Sailors" and "Mates"
7. Tell an adult where you are going
8. Take a cell phone in a waterproof bag on your body and have the Camp number in the phone
9. Be on the water no earlier than sunrise and no later than sunset (know when they are)

**B. Skills:**

1. Knots – tie a clove hitch, taunt line hitch, two half hitches, truck drivers hitch, and whip the end of a rope (with line)
  2. Name the parts of a sailboat (mast, boom, rudder, centerboard, stay, fore stay, tiller, main sheet, jib sheet, down haul, main halyard, jib halyard, boom traveler, boom vang, anchor, anchor line, telltale)
  3. Using a chart of the Long Pond north basin name various features (hazards, safe places to get off the water, etc.)
  4. Name the four points of the compass and point their perspective directions without a compass. Explain how they relate to the chart
  5. Using a Long Pond north basin chart, show good places to go ashore in the event of bad weather
- The remaining skills are performed with the PFD on
6. Set the sails, strike the sails, properly roll them up, stow them
  7. Swim to the rock buoy and back without a PFD
  8. While in your sailboat, overturn the boat, get out, lower the sails, right the boat, bail it out, raise the sails
  9. Do the following maneuvers in a sailboat alone:  
close reach, beam reach, broad reach, run before the wind, jibe, come about, pull up the center board/dagger  
board in a broad reach before the wind
  10. Demonstrate proper use of the anchor
  11. Sail or paddle a boat alone, following all the rules, to Day's store, buy something, get a receipt, come back to Camp

*Nora becomes a  
"Mate."*



**C. Privileges:** When you pass you get the following privileges and awards:

1. Kayak or canoe alone anywhere in the North Cove area, but always:
  - a. within eye-sight of the dock
  - b. an adult must be present on the dock
2. Allowed to swim in the lake without a PFD as far away as the rock buoy with an adult present
3. Allowed to go in boats into all the Long Pond north basin with an adult, a "Captain" or "Admiral"
4. Your name and the date you passed on the "Sailors" plaque



*Fiona kayaks at camp.*



# A Lake Lover's Guide to Septic Systems

By Lenny Reich, member of MPSLA

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Let's start with two little-known facts about septic systems and lakes: First, as the name implies, septic systems are primarily used to remove pathogens from sewage. They're not intended to deal with the nutrients that turn lakes green, although they can remove those nutrients if they're well maintained and their leach (drainage) fields are in a good mix of clay, silt, and sand – not sand and gravel, which detoxify pathogens but give a pass to the primary nutrient in sewage, phosphorus.

Second little-known fact: One pound of phosphorus in a lake will feed 500 pounds of algae. A family of four deposits about six pounds of phosphorus in its septic system over the course of a year. That's enough to grow *a ton and a half* of lake algae, so it's vital to contain phosphorus in the septic tank (to be pumped out) or capture it in the soil before it reaches our lakes.

Whether or not septic systems compromise lake water quality depends on a number of factors: what kind and how deep the soils their leach fields are in, how far back those fields are from the lake, what users put into their septic systems, and how well the septic systems are maintained.

Before we get into septic systems, though, recall the Good Old Days, when a family home or camp could be characterized as “so-many rooms and a path,” that path leading to an outhouse – a hole in the ground topped by an open seat. With the advent of rural electrification after 1930, owners of these properties began to have deep wells drilled, outfit them with electric pumps, and bring plumbing indoors.

The early indoor commodes flushed human waste into holes, trenches, or buried, perforated 55-gallon metal oil drums. These cesspits and drums also had water piped into them, which diluted the waste solids (unlike the outhouse) and quickly overwhelmed the natural treatment ability of the soils. Because there were as yet no regulations, these foul holes and trenches could be placed as close to lakes as the owners found convenient. Once in the groundwater, contaminants easily migrated into nearby lakes. Fortunately, there weren't many of these pollution factories, so in most cases water quality didn't suffer badly.

Developed in late 19<sup>th</sup> century France, septic systems were introduced around the lakes during the 1950s, but by later standards they were undersized and often placed quite near the water. Beginning in 1971, Maine's first shoreland zoning regulations called for septic systems to treat wastewater, although with minimal specifications. In 1974, updated regulations required septic systems be designed by licensed site evaluators and approved by local plumbing inspectors, with large tanks and leach fields in appropriate soils and no closer than 100 feet to a lake. The regulations were extended and tightened in 1995. However, they only applied to new applications, and many cesspits, metal drums, and undersized leach fields next to lakes remained in operation for decades. Some still are.

So, before we talk about your septic system doing its job, let's ask whether you might have something other than an actual septic system on your property. If you aren't certain, your town's plumbing inspector may be able to tell you. In the event the town has no record of a septic system on your property – or if your septic system is pre-1974 – it's time to have a licensed site evaluator dig into the situation. The town's plumbing inspector can recommend one for you. Should you have to install a new septic system, funding from Maine Department of Environmental Protection's Small Community Grants Program may offset some or all of the cost. <https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/grants/scgp.html> If a licensed site evaluator can't find an appropriate soil bed for the leach field that's 100 feet

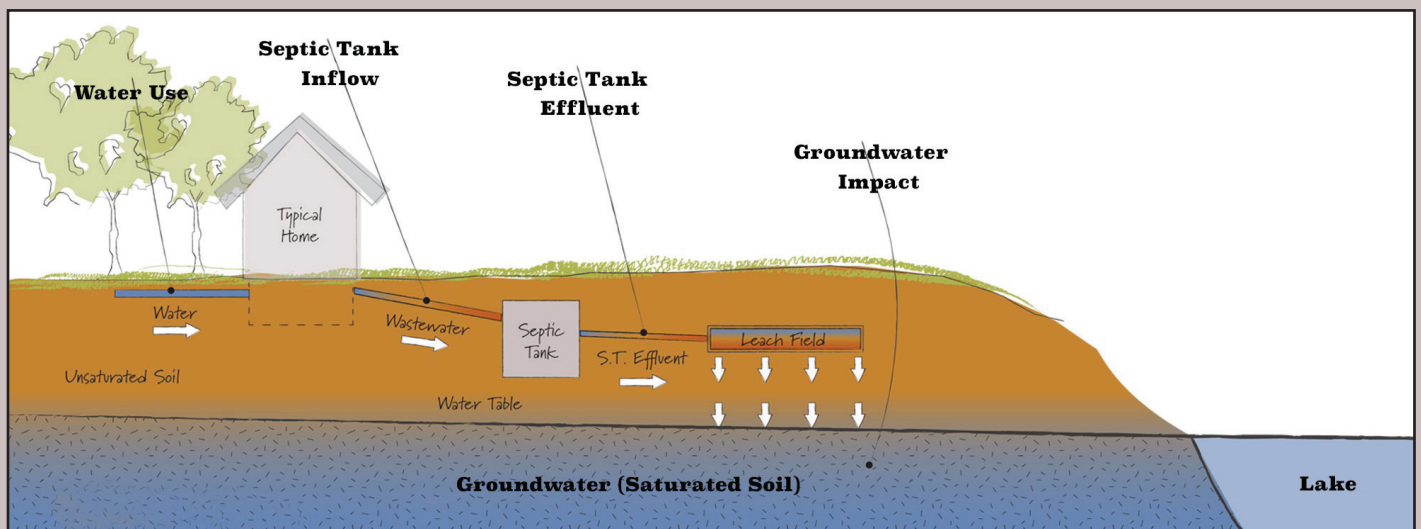


from the lake and lets gravity move liquid from your septic tank to the leach field, a pumped system will be needed. Although these are more expensive to install and maintain, they take contaminants further from the lake and let the site evaluator find soils better able to neutralize pathogens and nutrients. A good leach field's soils can remove almost all of the remaining nutrients through positive ion exchange and biological activity. If possible, position the field so that its surface stays relatively dry during inclement weather. At my own lakeside home, we pump several hundred feet behind and above the house to a large cleared area containing just such a field.

Groundwater, like surface water, flows down toward a lake throughout the lake's watershed, although the groundwater gradient is not as great as that of the land. This means the depth of soil between the surface and groundwater increases with distance from the lake, making the leach field deeper and hence more effective as it's placed further back from the lakeshore. Any nutrients the leach field's soil fails to remove from septic effluent will flow with the groundwater, which moves through saturated soil at a far slower pace than surface water – normally about five to ten feet per year, depending on the type of soil, the slope, and the amount of precipitation. Placing the leach field farther from the lake helps reduce any remaining nutrients from reaching the lake because some are adsorbed on soil particles or broken down by soil microorganisms as the water moves slowly past them. See the accompanying sketch. (Disclaimer: In a normal Maine watershed, the land would rise further away from the lake.)

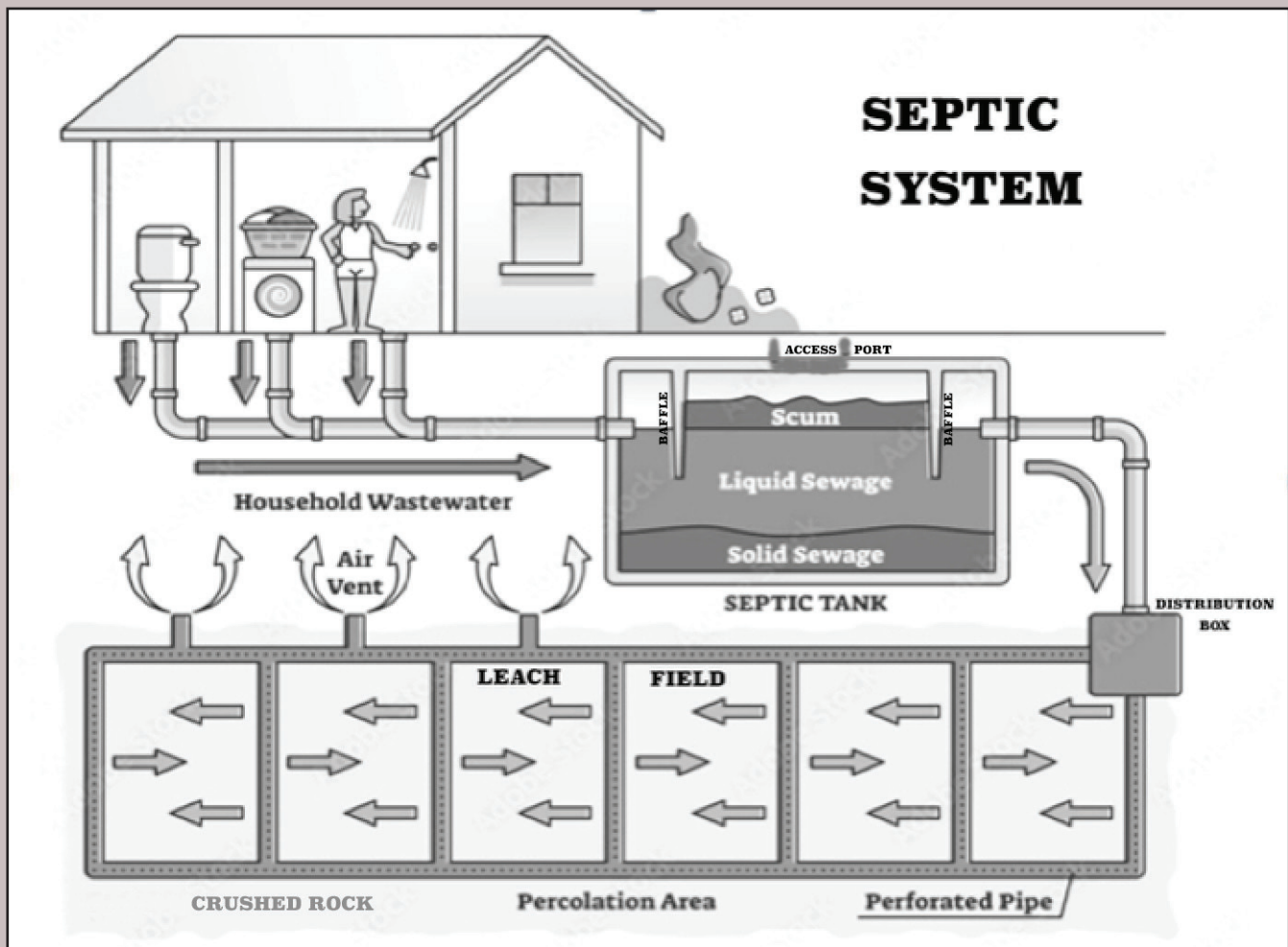
Below is a diagram of a complete, gravity-feed septic system. Note: the house and tank are displayed from the side, the distribution box and leach field (except the air vents) from above. The perforated pipes of the leach field lie horizontally on crushed stone and are covered by soil, with the vents sticking up into the air. There is normally one vent for each long row. The bed of soil under the pipes must be at least three feet deep before contacting bedrock or groundwater. Systems installed since the 1990s may have plastic or concrete chambers, fabric-wrapped pipes, or other proprietary devices making up their leach field equipment, some without vents. Unless that equipment is specifically intended to bear weight, nothing heavier than a lawn mower should be run across the leach field. As the saying goes, "Shield the field!"

The top of the septic tank will be lower than the lowest drain in the building. The tank is usually buried and has one or two access ports for pump-out. Current regulations require the access port(s) to extend up to the surface, but older ones may have to be dug out for pumping. Domestic septic tanks in central Maine are typically 1000-gallon concrete vessels.



*Gravity fed septic system.*





Note the three levels of sewage in the tank. The bottom level is formed as human-waste solids enter the tank, get broken down by anaerobic bacteria, and eventually sink, taking much of their phosphorus with them. What settles to the bottom of the tank is known colloquially as “sludge.” The entering human-waste solids comprise 25%-40% bacteria by weight, so there’s a never-ending bacterial supply.

In the middle, the liquid sewage is mostly household “graywater” from showers, washing machines, etc., and human urine, which also contains some phosphorus. The liquid-sewage layer in the tank holds dissolved organic matter and tiny suspended solids from the decomposing human-waste solids. As new sewage enters the tank from the building, a like volume of liquid flows out toward the distribution box and on to the leach field. Note that as the sludge builds up from the bottom, the layer of liquid sewage gets smaller and hence the suspended solids in it become more concentrated.

Floating at the top of the septic tank, the scum layer is primarily oils, fats, and grease. A vertical baffle, sticking down into the tank near the tank’s outflow, prevents scum from flowing out with liquid sewage. Trapped at the top, the scum will stay in the tank until it’s pumped out.

Maintaining your septic system comes down to a few important “Do’s” and “Don’ts”: Pump out the septic tank often, limit the water going into the system, and be careful what you put down your drain.

The crucial “Do” is to pump out your tank regularly – and probably more often than you think necessary. For year-round homes, that’s once every two years. With seasonal camps, it’s every three years for those getting average use, four years for light use, two years for heavy use

or if the property is a busy short-term rental. This is an inexpensive way to be sure there's always a substantial layer of liquid sewage above the sludge, which is important for leach field longevity. As a case in point, we moved into our home in 1989 and have had the septic tank pumped out every odd-numbered summer since 1991. A licensed site evaluator tested the soils of the leach field last summer and found them in good shape after 35 years of continuous use.

Keep the sludge below  $\frac{1}{3}$  the height of the tank. If you delay pump-outs, the sludge layer builds up and the liquid sewage layer has a higher concentration of suspended solids, which eventually compromises the soil's ability to drain adequately. Should the sludge build up so high that it exits the tank, the leach-field pipes and the soil will be irreparably damaged. If that happens, or if the field becomes saturated with suspended solids, effluent will pool on top of the soil, especially in wet weather. A rainstorm can wash that nutrient bomb right into the lake, a catastrophic failure needing immediate and costly remediation, including a new leach field.

I learned the hard way that you may also need to clean out your distribution box (d-box). I've kept our leach field clear of trees and large plants because their roots, attracted by the moisture and nutrients there, can damage the pipes. However, thousands of filamentous roots from the grass covering the field had worked their way under the lid of the concrete d-box and clogged the effluent pathways, creating enough back pressure to cause the early burnout of a septic pump. Now, I don rubber gloves and clean out the d-box every second time the tank is pumped. (If in doubt about d-box location, check your septic system plans.)

When the tank is pumped out, make sure the pumper inspects the tank for leaks and checks that the baffles are securely in place. The outlet baffle, in particular, is crucial for keeping the scum layer in the tank and out of the leach field. Immediately repair anything amiss.

One other "Do": Use low-flow faucets, showerheads, washing machines, and toilets. Less water is better for the system because it allows bacteria to work more effectively on human-waste solids and expedites their settling to the bottom. This results in "cleaner" liquid sewage leaving the tank and draining through the soil of your leach field. The fewer suspended solids in the liquid sewage, the longer the field will last. Sending lots of graywater and sewage into your system in a day or less can disrupt the tank's biological processes. When in doubt, spread it out.

Here are some important "Don'ts": Don't use a garbage disposal, compost instead. Ground-up food can overwhelm your septic system's ability to break down organic material into sludge. Large particles from the disposal can get out to the leach field and clog perforations in the pipes. Human waste and toilet tissue are the only non-liquids that should go into your septic system. If you *must* use a disposal, pump your tank twice as often as otherwise recommended, put a screen in the tank outlet to contain those large particles, and be sure the screen gets cleaned each time the tank is pumped out.

Human solid waste contains all the bacteria your septic system needs to do its job, so don't add bacteria or enzymes in the form of a commercial product (such as Rid-X). If an additive causes the breakdown of the scum layer so that oil and grease disperse into the liquid sewage layer and exit the tank to the leach field, soils can get coated and become useless for further sewage treatment. That shortens the leach field's useful life significantly.

Don't put anything toxic down the drain. This includes all paints (including latex), solvents, drain cleaners, waxes, fuels, and other petroleum products. Ditto organic fats and grease;



throw them out. As for soap, bleach, and cleaners used in your washing machine, dishwasher, etc., dispense as little as possible to get the job done, and avoid antibacterials and phosphates. Cleaning products left over from the washing cycle go down the drain and kill bacteria.

That's about it. Pump out your septic tank more often than you think you need to, limit the amount of water going into your system, and be very careful what you put down your drain. Do those three things, and your septic system should perform well for decades to come.

If there's any doubt you have a modern, full-functioning system that's keeping both pathogens and phosphorus out of our lakes, get it checked by a licensed site evaluator. Your town Code Enforcement Officer can recommend a good one.

And finally, should you need to install a new leach field, remember that placing it further from the lake will remove more contaminants. If you can, move it back! Our lakes will thank you.

## New Board Member: Bill Mitchell

There are many reasons to be excited about William E. Mitchell, one of our new BLA board members voted in this past summer. Not only is he a Maine native, but he also brings with him a glistening resumé of accomplishments and skills. Born and raised in Waterville, Bill graduated from Waterville High School and received his Bachelors Degree in Business Administration from the University of Maine. After building a very successful career as an insurance agent, more recently, Bill has dedicated himself to the future by developing a thriving commercial real estate business and even a large solar farm. He has served on the board of many state and local organizations, and currently he continues to be actively engaged in them as well as many community projects.



Bill is a true local fixture having lived nearly his whole life in and around the Belgrade Lakes. Currently he has been hanging his hat at his LakeSmart certified home in Belgrade Village (on Long Pond) for the past decade. Bill's dedication to our community makes him a perfect fit for the BLA Board as he continues to educate himself about the Belgrade watershed, lake conservation, and becomes an even more active participant by working with the board towards the betterment of our lakes.

## Mitigating the “Deadly Inch” *(continued from page 7)*



*Lakeside path before.*



*Lakeside path after.*

# Invasive Aquatics Update

By Sharon Mann and Josie Miller, 7 Lakes Alliance Invasive Aquatics Program

## Great Pond & Long Pond

Our 2025 survey season on Great Pond and Long Pond brought encouraging news! A full-perimeter survey in July and August revealed no new invasive species, and several long-managed sites of variable-leaf water milfoil (VWM) continue to show positive progress. Early in the season, two suspicious plants were found in the Lagoon (Hatch Cove) and removed out of caution. Follow-up visits showed no regrowth. Previously concerning areas such as Finger Reef and Swan Brook also remained clear for the second year in a row.

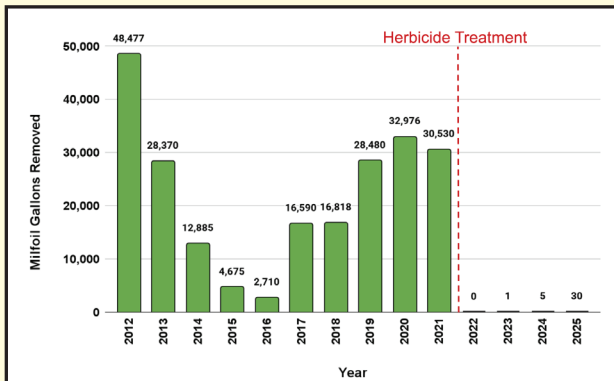


Gallons of invasive milfoil removed since 2012.



New location of variable-leaf milfoil above the Route 225 Bridge in Great Meadow Stream.

Great Meadow Stream, however, kept our team vigilant. Overall, the 2022 herbicide treatment continues to be a standout success, dramatically shrinking the size and spread of milfoil in the stream. However, small numbers of VWM continue to appear near the mouth of the stream each spring. In mid-July, scattered plants were found again—prompting our team to search farther upstream. That search led to a surprising discovery: a new 10×50 ft patch above the Route 225 bridge in an area historically free of VWM. Our divers removed what they could and installed benthic barriers to contain the site. Plant samples will be genetically analyzed to determine whether this patch represents a new introduction from another lake or if it matches the genetic code of the milfoil populations previously documented in the stream before the herbicide treatment.



Years to the right of the red line represent milfoil removed after the herbicide treatment, while years to the left show removal before treatment.

This discovery serves as a clear warning: invasive species are not spread by motorboats alone—duck hunting gear, paddlecraft, and other small watercraft are also significant pathways for introduction.

In Rome Trout Brook, last year's overwintering barriers worked well, but we observed a concerning increase of VWM moving further into the adjacent cove.

Other Great Pond areas showed promising results: the long-standing hotspot in Robbins Mill Stream (around the docks) continues to shrink, and in North Bay we found just a single VWM plant in the same location as last year. To further improve detection in deeper areas, we plan to introduce upgraded underwater drone technology to our North Bay surveys in 2026.

A heartfelt THANK YOU to the Belgrade Lakes Association members for your ongoing dedication to keeping Great and Long Ponds free of invasive aquatic species!



## Elsewhere in the watershed

### ***Messalonskee Lake & Belgrade Stream***

Our 2025 survey of Messalonskee Lake revealed a complex and expanding network of Variable-Leaf Milfoil. Our team identified five new VWM locations and several fragment accumulation zones, with additional sites discovered through independent surveys by Friends of Messalonskee. Heavy growth persists throughout Belgrade Stream and The Marsh where large rafts of fragments drift with wind and waves. Unfortunately, due to the size and severity of the infestation in Belgrade Stream and the southern portions of the lake, herbicide intervention will be necessary to achieve any meaningful improvement.

In contrast, many of the central and northern milfoil sites in the lake can be sustainably managed through manual removal—and have been for years thanks to the dedicated efforts of Friends of Messalonskee. For example, the Oakland Basin was a major focus this year. Early in the summer, deep-water patches were generating large rafts of fragments that washed up at the public launch and swimming beach. After intensive diver removal, fragment reports dropped dramatically. Only a single milfoil fragment was caught by a courtesy boat inspector at this launch for the entire season.

In the coming years, 7 Lakes will continue working with the state and local partners—including the newly formed “Friends of Belgrade Stream” coalition—to make meaningful progress in reducing invasive plant density in Belgrade Stream. Residents along the stream have been waiting decades for action to improve water quality, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. If you’d like to join the movement and be part of the solution for Belgrade Stream, reach out to your faithful Captain Mann at [sharon@7lakes.org](mailto:sharon@7lakes.org).

### ***North Pond & The East Pond Serpentine***

This year brought an unprecedented, community-powered survey effort on North Pond, using paddleboards, motorboats, snorkel surveys, and dive-tows. Unfortunately, curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) is now scattered throughout much of the lake, with the heaviest concentrations along the northeast and southeast shores. Volunteers from the North Pond Association played a critical role—marking plants with buoys and enabling same-day diver response. A major early-season patch near Little Pond was removed thanks to a rapid volunteer report, and an emergency “Plant Paddle” confirmed several more patches in the area. By late October, nearly all plants marked by staff and volunteers had been removed, with minimal regrowth observed. DEP also contracted New England Milfoil (NEM) for one week of deep-water surveying, which uncovered scattered CLP plants in 16–18 ft of water but no dense new patches. In Old Mill Stream, only a single small plant was found—marking the third straight year without CLP in the upstream pooling area.



*Curly leaf pond weed.*

In The East Pond Serpentine, CLP appeared early in May, including a small patch downstream of the bend—an area that had remained clear since 2021. The crew removed a large 20×30 ft patch at the entrance to Bend Cove and several smaller plants farther downstream, but total seasonal biomass remained consistent with previous years. CLP continues to peak in spring and decline through summer; and for the first time since 2021, no late-season regrowth was observed. The final October survey found no CLP present. Across North Pond and the Serpentine, strong partnerships—with volunteers, shoreline owners, and rapid-response support from Maine DEP—allowed divers to cover more ground than ever and remove all known CLP before winter.

## Courtesy Boat Inspection & Adopt-A-Shoreline

We wrapped up another successful season of Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI) at the seven motorized boat launches in the Belgrade Lakes watershed on Indigenous Peoples' Day. This year, our CBIs logged 7,329 hours and inspected 15,500 boats. They intercepted 177 plant fragments, including 14 invasive variable-leaf milfoil found on boats leaving Messalonskee Lake. We're incredibly grateful for our dedicated team of paid and volunteer CBIs—this important work wouldn't be possible without them. If you're interested in joining the CBI team next season, contact Josie at [invasives.coordinator@7lakesalliance.org](mailto:invasives.coordinator@7lakesalliance.org).



*The next generation of invasive aquatic species surveyors in action!*

Have you completed your Adopt-A-Shoreline surveys yet? If so, please remember to submit your findings here: <https://7lakesalliance.org/what-we-do/invasive-aquatics/#early-detection>. Your surveys give us our best chance at rapid response if an invasive species appears—and the time you spend surveying counts as cost-match toward state grant programs that help fund the Invasive Aquatics Program. Thank you for being a critical part of keeping our lakes healthy!

## Boating and Lake Use Etiquette

**Mission Statement:** To familiarize lake users with the customary code of accepted behavior while boating. It is about doing one's part to promote safety and what is generally socially acceptable while sharing the lake resource.

1. When launching or taking out your craft, respect the launch ramp area and those working (milfoil inspectors) as well as other boaters. Offer your help if needed; we are all in this together.
2. Keep the tunes and voices in check (sound travels loudly over water) especially at night.
3. What you bring to the lake, take home from the lake. These waters are precious, carry in – carry out.
4. Know the Rules of the Road. Powered boats must give way to all unpowered craft (paddled, rowed, sailed) – SLOW DOWN and be aware of your wake. Know the meaning of all navigational and information markers (buoys).
5. Keep 200 feet minimum from shore and respect shoreline properties. Limit noise and rafting of boats together that encroach on the serenity of any area. **Headway speed only inside of 200 feet.**
6. While moving in a boat, always watch carefully for wildlife and stay away from sensitive nesting areas.
7. Maintain safe speed and distance under all conditions.
8. Be sensible, it is a large lake, enjoy your activities in the less congested areas.
9. Keep a close eye on the weather, summer thunderstorms can brew up quickly. **DON'T** delay getting off the lake.
10. Maine law states that children aged 10 and under must wear a life jacket. The Maine Warden Service recommends everyone wears his or her life-saving jacket when on the water. Leave alcohol on shore and never drink or drug before or during boat operations. Maine DUI laws apply on the water.
11. Night boating presents potential hazards. Go slow, use proper lights, and be especially vigilant.
12. Using Maine lakes carries with it a responsibility Please take it seriously.

**EMBRACE IT, ENJOY IT, AND SHARE IT WITH OTHERS**



# Great Things Continue with Great Pond Yacht Club

By Lori Fulton, Commodore



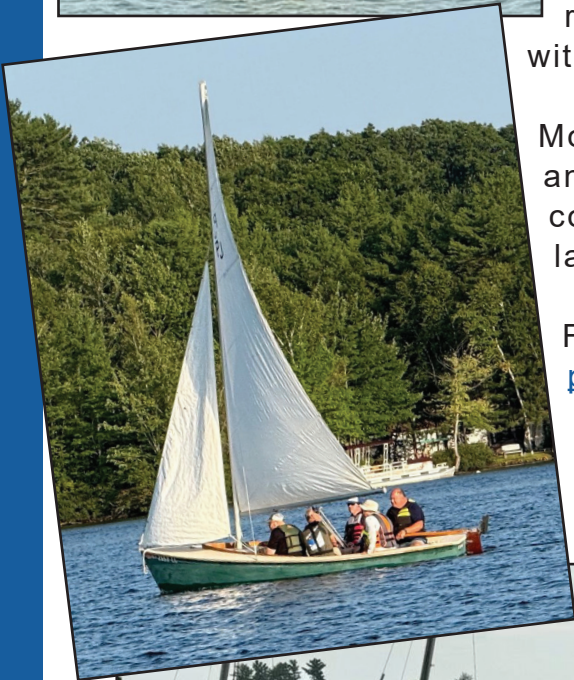
The GPYC fleet had a great summer of racing, social sailing, and participating in the Belgrade Recreation sailing programs. We continued to support the youth program and helped launch two adult sailing sessions.

This summer the GPYC held a Poker Run which made for a fun day on Great Pond. We enjoyed an after party to award the winning hand and laugh about the challenges of collecting cards from inflatable ducks.

The fun doesn't stop when the leaves turn and the boats come out of the water. We do not batten down the hatches, we sail on as we are a social club with a sailing problem. Please join us to keep the momentum going and build year-round camaraderie on the pond. Our Social Director makes sure every gathering is memorable. We enjoy pot luck dinner gatherings complete with live music, impromptu ski days, and even a biathlon.

Motor boaters are welcome! Join the club to enjoy pre- and post-race refreshments and participate as the race committee boat. It is a beautiful way to relax on the lake while watching the race and tracking the results.

For more information, reach out to us at [sail@great-pondyachtclub.com](mailto:sail@great-pondyachtclub.com)



# Unidentified floating objects?

## Great Pond residents intrigued by unmanned vessels

By Jake Freudberg, Morning Sentinel Staff Writer  
(This article excerpted by BLA newsletter staff)

Have the robots arrived to invade Great Pond? Most likely not.

But in recent weeks, those who live and spend time on the lake, which straddles Rome and Belgrade, have been intrigued by the unusual appearance of seemingly unmanned watercraft.

The vessels, also spotted on China Lake, likely are not doing anything nefarious or illicit: They seem to be underwater lake mapping technology deployed by a private company.

Even so, their use has led to questions from some regarding their privacy and how boating laws might apply. Other people are just interested to know what they are seeing.

Photos of the vessels posted online and shared with the Morning Sentinel show the crafts are relatively small and have two pontoons, a small motor that looks like a weed whacker's and lights. Without much knowledge of such crafts, one might be inclined to call them drones. In the photos shared, they do not appear to have any visible signage, company logos or any other identifying information.

(According to) Robert Watson, of Vassalboro (who spoke to a man operating a similar drone on China Lake) ...it uses sonar to record the contour and bottom of lakes.

Danielle Wain, lake science director for 7 Lakes Alliance, also said she believes the crafts likely belong to a private company doing bathymetry mapping — the underwater equivalent of topography — likely to be used for fishing maps.

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*Photo Courtesy of Ed Ducharme  
(Great Pond, Belgrade)*

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*Bright sun and glassy black ice: perfect conditions for skating on Long Pond.*

*Photo courtesy of Craig Killingbeck*

The newsletter staff (Polly, Liz, and Marcel) hope you enjoy this edition.  
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