

BELGRADE LAKES ASSOCIATION

Summer 2026



Proudly protecting and preserving the Belgrade Lakes since 1909.

President's Remarks

Here we are enjoying another beautiful summer among the Belgrade Lakes! The work of the Belgrade Lakes Association continues as we advocate for the protection and preservation of Great Pond and Long Pond.



Over the winter, our Board spent significant time developing a strategic plan for the organization. This effort is an important step in ensuring that we continue guiding the organization in the right direction, both for the long-term health of our lakes and to remain responsible stewards of the trust and support placed in us by our members. We are already implementing the plan, and it is helping guide our priorities and decision-making as we continue focusing on improving water quality on Great Pond and Long Pond. A special thank you goes to BLA Board Member Chris Raleigh for taking the lead on this important project.

Engaging with our members remains one of the most important parts of our work. Building stronger connections among the lakes community not only strengthens relationships, but also serves as a valuable educational and awareness tool. When we come together, we share experiences, ideas, and knowledge, and we all leave better informed. With that in mind, we are working to expand our member engagement opportunities. You will begin seeing the BLA more present at community events and hosting additional gatherings such as “wine-and-learn” events and other informal educational opportunities. If you have any interest in volunteering or helping support our presence at these events, we would love to hear from you and welcome your involvement.

We were thrilled to host another successful event at The Village Inn & Tavern over Memorial Day Weekend. This gathering is quickly becoming a wonderful welcome-back tradition that we look forward to each spring. Looking ahead, we hope you will join us for our Annual Meeting from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 2, at Belgrade Center for All Seasons. We begin the event with a social hour, followed by an opportunity to receive updates on the health of our lakes and the ongoing work of your Belgrade Lakes Association. These events are a great opportunity to connect with fellow members and neighbors while learning more about our lakes and the amazing programs designed to protect them.

Whether you are the first generation to enjoy a season in the Belgrades or part of a fifth, sixth, or even seventh generation of lake residents and visitors, I hope you are creating memories that will last a lifetime and will be shared with future generations. Ultimately, our mission at the BLA, to protect these two beautiful lakes, is so important and will enable future generations to have the same treasures we are really fortunate to experience today.

As always, ***thank you for your continued support***, volunteerism, and dedication to the Belgrade Lakes Association.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard".

Richard LaBelle
BLA President

**BLA member contributions fully fund the milfoil mitigation efforts, performed by the divers on the front cover, on Great Pond and Long Pond. Thank you members!*

***Cover photo courtesy of Sharon Mann, Invasive Aquatic Program Director.*

Vigilance on Long Pond Triggers Action

By Chris Raleigh, BLA Board Member

For generations, Long Pond was simply assumed to be what it had always been: clear, deep and resilient.

By the late 1960s, however, something subtle had begun to change.

Residents around the Belgrade Lakes were noticing signs that were easy to dismiss in isolation - slightly murkier water in late summer, more frequent algae growth near shore, less consistent clarity in coves that had once seemed crystal clear. Across Maine, similar observations were emerging as lakeside camps became larger seasonal homes, septic systems aged, shorelines were cleared, and roads carried increasing runoff toward the water.



Volunteers are at work on our lakes.

In Belgrade, the response came early - and it was unusually farsighted.

In 1970, our members of the Belgrade Lakes Association began systematic water-quality monitoring on Long Pond, launching one of the earliest sustained citizen lake-monitoring efforts in Maine.**** The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) notes that BLA volunteers began collecting regular data on total phosphorus, chlorophyll-a, dissolved oxygen, pH, alkalinity and Secchi transparency in both basins of Long Pond that year - a remarkable commitment long before lake science became commonplace among local associations.

That decision would prove historic.

The Early Warning Signs

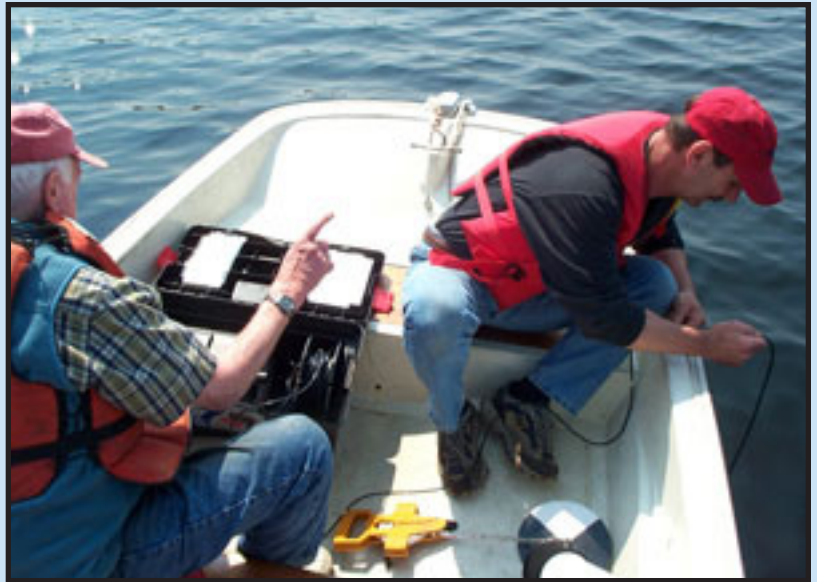
What BLA volunteers began documenting in 1970 was not dramatic pollution in the traditional sense. Unlike other water bodies in the 1970s, there were no factories discharging into Long Pond and no obvious single contamination. The threat was quieter: phosphorus.

Phosphorus is the nutrient that most directly drives algae growth in Maine lakes. Even small increases - from leaking septic systems, eroding camp roads, fertilizer runoff, shoreline clearing, and stormwater drainage - can gradually push a lake toward eutrophication: more algae, less clarity, lower oxygen, and declining habitat quality.

For decades, Long Pond's monitoring data accumulated quietly in notebooks, sampling logs, and DEP files. Then the trend became undeniable.

By the early 2000s, Maine DEP determined that Long Pond's water clarity had declined by more than one meter over roughly three decades. In 2006, the lake was placed on Maine's official 303(d) list of impaired waters because Secchi transparency trends showed an increasing trophic state - meaning Long Pond was becoming measurably less clear and more nutrient-enriched over time. **

Long Pond had become one of the clearest scientific warning signals in the Belgrade chain - not because it was necessarily worse than every neighboring lake, but because BLA had the long-term data to prove what was happening.



Measuring and recording water samples is ongoing.

Why Long Pond Became the Focus

Long Pond's vulnerability is partly geographic.

Unlike isolated lakes, Long Pond sits downstream in the Belgrade watershed. Great Pond drains directly into Long Pond North, meaning nutrient loading upstream affects water quality downstream. In fact, later watershed analysis found that Great Pond contributes 59% of the phosphorus load entering Long Pond North. This analysis also identified the major phosphorus sources within Long Pond North's own watershed (which contribute the other 41% of the load). Of this portion, the primary human related sources are groundwater, including septics, (23%) and developed open space (17%). In Long Pond South, 62% of the phosphorus load comes from Long Pond North. Of the remaining 38% of the load which comes from the direct watershed of the south basin, the primary human sources are developed open space (23%), pasture/hay (19%), and roads (12%). ***

These findings confirmed what lake scientists across Maine were learning in the 1970s: lake decline was increasingly caused not by one large polluter, but by the cumulative effect of many small everyday sources.

The State Study and What It Triggered

Because Long Pond had been listed as impaired under the federal Clean Water Act, Maine DEP was required to prepare a formal restoration plan.

In 2008, DEP issued the **Long Pond Phosphorus Control Action Plan (PCAP) and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)** report. This was not simply a scientific study - it was a mandated blueprint for restoring water quality.

The report concluded that Long Pond remained above average in water quality compared with many Maine lakes, yet was no longer meeting the state requirement for stable or improving trophic condition. The message was clear: Long Pond was still healthy enough to protect, yet no longer healthy enough to ignore.

What Happened Next: Mitigation and Restoration

The Long Pond study shifted the focus from diagnosis to action.

Over the years that followed, BLA, Maine DEP and later 7 Lakes Alliance helped advance a range of mitigation efforts, including:

- Identifying and repairing shoreline erosion sites
- Improving camp road drainage and culvert design
- Encouraging septic inspection and replacement near shore
- Promoting phosphorus-safe landscaping practices
- Expanding watershed education for landowners
- Coordinating watershed-wide phosphorus reduction targets with Great Pond

The watershed-based management plan, adopted in later years, called for reducing phosphorus inflow from Great Pond by 17% - equal to 278 kilograms annually - to help restore Long Pond's northern basin.

These are not dramatic measures, yet that is precisely the point: lake protection is usually achieved through hundreds of small corrections, but need to be made consistently over time.

The Volunteers Behind the Work

What often goes unseen in this story is the role of the Belgrade Lakes Association itself.

BLA's work has always depended on the dedication of its all-volunteer Board of Directors and standing committees - residents and members who give their time not because they must, but because they care deeply about the future of these lakes. From the earliest Long Pond monitoring efforts in 1970 to today's partnerships with 7 Lakes Alliance and Maine DEP, volunteer leadership has been at the heart of every major step forward.

Just as important, BLA's ability to act depends on the continued support of its membership. Membership dues, donations, volunteer hours, committee participation, and community engagement make possible the science, advocacy, education, and stewardship that protect Great Pond, Long Pond, and the surrounding watershed.

As Long Pond's history reminds us, lasting lake protection begins when ordinary people decide to get involved.

If you care about the future of the Belgrade Lakes, consider taking the next step beyond membership: reach out to any BLA board member and ask how you can serve on one of BLA's standing committees. Whether your interests are water quality, community outreach, education, communications, or organizational sustainability, there is meaningful work to be done - and new voices are always welcome.

The Legacy of 1970

Looking back, the most important moment in Long Pond's water-quality history may not have been the impairment listing in 2006 or the DEP restoration plan in 2008.

It was the decision, in 1970, by BLA volunteers to begin measuring.

As a result, Long Pond became one of the best-documented lakes in Maine. It also allowed the decline to be detected before it became irreversible. Moreover, today's lake stewards inherit not only a clearer understanding of Long Pond's challenges, but also a roadmap for protecting it.

The story of Long Pond is not about decline, rather it is about vigilance - and the power of volunteers in our community who chose to engage early enough to make a difference.

Sources:

- Maine DEP, Long Pond PCAP/TMDL Report (2008) *
- Maine DEP 303(d) Impaired Waters Listing **
- BLA & 7 Lakes Alliance Long Pond Watershed Management Plan (2023) ***
- Lake Stewards of Maine historical monitoring archives ****



This sign on a local camp road embodies the mission of the BLA to protect and preserve. We love the very specific speed limit and the inclusion of rabbits. If you see a 'lake sign' that you would like to see in this newsletter, take a picture and send it to us (marcelprints@outlook.com). We'll use it when we can!

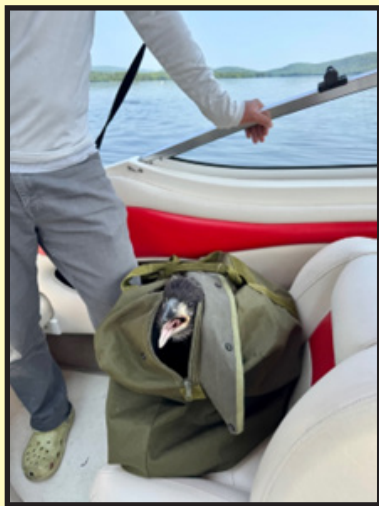
Long Pond Loon and Eaglet Banding

By Dick Greenan, BLA Board Member

This past July 31st, 2025, our two Colby College Loon Interns assisted in another successful nighttime banding of two Long Pond chicks and three adult loons. Recording their measurements, blood and feather sampling for heavy metals, sex, etc., along with the banding, are all very important steps used to monitor the health of our loon population.

But six weeks prior, our Colby Interns got the call from technicians at Biodiversity Research Institute's (BRI) Eagle and Osprey Program in Portland, Maine, to assist in capturing, evaluating, and banding what we thought were two eaglets, seven to eight-weeks old. What we later discovered was a third eaglet in the nest which is quite unusual and, not to mention, quite the surprise! Recent data shows 3-egg clutches occurring in roughly

14%–29% of nests, but survival to fledging for all three is, unfortunately, uncommon. Three is an incredible burden on the parents, not only to feed themselves, but also these new teenagers – a very difficult task today, but doable considering the overall good health of our lakes' water quality and fisheries plus thanks to our watershed efforts. Our work is paying off! We'll be keeping our eyes open for three juveniles that may possibly be returning to their natal lake this summer or a lake nearby.



We 'assume' this is the eaglet's first boat ride!

inants such as PFAS, lead, and mercury in our avian wildlife.

Over a period of four hours, each eaglet was lowered down and boated over to a resident's lawn where we did our workup. Our technician remained up in the tree the entire time! Only once did an adult do a fly-by with half of a trout for its offspring, only to discover our technician. Fortunately, it kept on flying but returned when we drove away in the boat.



Colby Loon Intern Ari holds a Long Pond chick waiting its banding turn.

Similar to the loon banding procedure, we also collect blood, saliva, etc., samples to ascertain the effects of contaminants



BRI's technician climbs the nesting tree on upper Long Pond's Pinewold Point.

To answer the obvious questions, no, the eaglets did not try to bite nor claw us. At this age, they have not learned their parent's aggressive tricks quite yet. All they really did was occasionally hiss! Although they do not look like it, they are very quiet – fortunately! Note how flat the 8' diameter nest has become. Once the eggs have hatched, the parents fill in the nest bowl with pine needle duff to create a comfortable and efficient platform.



From 2001 to present, BRI has captured and sampled eagles at 297 nests across the Kennebec River watershed in central Maine. Mercury, analyzed in blood and feathers from these birds, provides key data into understanding both wildlife and human exposure to mercury, and to identify point- and non-point mercury sources.

We are looking forward to another healthy clutch of eaglets again this summer. Stay tuned!!

← *Each evaluation took approximately 45 minutes.*



← *Intern Makena is securing those talons! Even at 7-8 wks., the talons are almost full size.*

The 3 'Laughing Hyenas' are showing → off their new jewelry (bands!). That is Day's Store in the background.



BLA Raffle In Full Swing!

By Christine Emmons, new BLA Raffle Chair

Our 2026 Belgrade Lakes Association Summer Raffle is well underway at the Village Post Office, during the Farmers Market on Sundays, and online! The Summer Raffle supports our ongoing mission for the protection and preservation of Long Pond and Great Pond, as well as the watersheds that make our Lakes Region special to all who live and visit. This year's raffle features an incredible lineup of prizes, highlighted by our Grand Prize:

16' Hewescraft Sportsman 160, 75hp Honda outboard motor, EZ Loader trailer

This outstanding boat package was generously donated by Hamlin's Marine of Waterville, and we extend our sincere appreciation for their continued support of the Belgrade Lakes community.

Additional prizes include:

- Shoremaster boat lift was generously donated by Hammond Lumber Company
- Three Shoremaster dock sections were generously donated by Hammond Lumber Company
- \$1,000 gift certificate for Lynch Landscaping was also generously given
- Four rounds of golf at the beautiful Belgrade Lakes Golf Club were also generously donated by John & Flor Atkinson

Every raffle ticket purchased directly supports the mission of the Belgrade Lakes Association, including water quality protection, invasive species prevention, conservation initiatives, community education, stewardship efforts throughout the watershed, and loon preservation. Your support helps ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy clean water, healthy lakes, and the natural beauty that defines the Belgrade Lakes region.

How can you help support the Summer Raffle? Please stop at one of our in-person ticket tables at the Village Post Office or Farmers Market, go online, or send by mail to buy your tickets and participate in this year's important fund-raising event.

The drawing will take place on Sunday, August 9, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. at the Farmers Market.

Will you be one of this year's lucky winners?



This boat is solid as a tank!
Come have a look at the Belgrade Lakes Post Office in the Village.

BLA Provides Scholarships to Two Deserving Students

By Cassie Marden, Administrative Assistant, Guidance Office, Messalonskee High School

We are pleased to announce that these are the 2 recipients of this year's BLA scholarships:

Deirdre D'Amico

Attending University of Southern Maine
Majoring in Biotechnology
Awarded \$1,250.00

Logan Baron

Attending University of New Hampshire
Majoring in Biomedical Science
Awarded \$1,250.00

Over the winter, the Belgrade Lakes Association (BLA) worked diligently to establish a scholarship for a graduating senior from within its mission area of Belgrade, Rome, and Mount Vernon. With Board Member Louise Hogan leading the effort, the group developed criteria focused on supporting students who plan to further their education in fields that contribute to the health and sustainability of our lakes. These areas of study may include environmental science, biology, ecology, environmental engineering, natural resource management, conservation law, sustainability studies, hydrology, or related disciplines that support lake protection and watershed stewardship. The BLA believes strongly in maintaining a meaningful connection with our community. By investing in our young people, we are investing in the future as we help to cultivate the next generation of stewards who will protect, preserve, and cherish our lakes for years to come. Thank you to BLA for providing our students with this opportunity to assist them in furthering their post-secondary education. ~*Richard LaBelle, BLA President*

BLA Teams Up with the Belgrade Historical Society

By Bert Languet, past BLA President

The Belgrade Central School fourth grade class had a field trip to the Belgrade Lakes Village to learn about its history from the Belgrade Historical Society. The BLA sponsored the lunch as part of its effort to reach out and educate the younger ages on water quality and its importance to our community. Bert Languet and Dick Greenan spoke on water quality and about our loons. Dick had our current Colby Loon interns speak to the children about what the future careers and education might be in environmental sciences. We provided sandwiches, chips, water, and ice cream sandwiches from Day's store which the children enjoyed. It was great to team up with the historical society.



When is Ice Out?

By Dick Greenan, BLA Board Member

As I write this column on April 9th, the title of this article is the question of the day here in Belgrade Lakes. You either talk about the weather, the incessant mud, or when the ice is going out? Ice out marks the official end of winter for the local ecosystem.

The ice usually goes out mid-April, but in 2010 it went out March 20th. One just never knows what Mother Nature has in store for us. So, what are the “rules” for ice out in Great and Long Ponds? Basically, on Long Pond, when the ice is out from Sandy Cove in Lower Long all the way up to the top of Tracy Cove in upper Long, the ice is considered OUT! Beaver and Lynch Coves might still be iced-in, but coves are so unpredictable that they are not included in the calculation.



April 12, 2023

Great Pond boat ramp is pictured on the day before Ice-Out. Notice the dark and porous ice.



April 9, 2026

Tracy Cove, N Long Pond. Ice went out the next day! “Watching it isn’t going to make it go out any faster!”



Pre-K Steward Makes Choice

Earlier this year, a granddaughter of one of our BLA Board Members participated in an Earth Day lesson with her Pre-K class. Students were asked to draw a picture and share a story about something important to them. Her choice? CLEAN WATER.

Her thoughtful response is a wonderful reminder that caring for our lakes and protecting water quality are values that can begin at any age. By sharing our love of the lakes with young people, we help inspire the next generation of environmental stewards who will carry this important work forward.

Youth Conservation Corps Continues Its Work

By Stuart Cole, Erosion Control Project Manager

The 7 Lakes Alliance Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) is up and running for 2026. Led by six college-aged Crew Leaders, our teams are working hard to mitigate non-point source pollution, caused by erosion and run-off, by implementing Best Management Practices (BMP's) on lakefront properties.

All lakefront properties are located in the riparian zone, a highly complex transitional ecosystem that supports over 70% of the state's wildlife species. Undisturbed, forested shorelines filter pollutants from runoff, stabilize banks to prevent erosion, maintain water temperatures, and provide essential food and shelter for aquatic and terrestrial life. The health of these riparian zones is dramatically impacted when humans build within them.

Heavy foot traffic, expansive lawns, and large areas of impervious surface lead to excessive stormwater runoff and the fragmentation of habitat for native critters. Human activity within 100ft of the shoreline leads to excessive erosion and the degradation of natural habitat and water quality, in turn reducing shorefront property value. Many shorefront property owners have homes, built within 100ft of the water, before shoreland zoning came into effect. In these situations, it's important to be conscientious about the fact you're inhabiting what is arguably the most important habitat in our ecosystem.

Healthy riparian vegetation acts as a natural buffer between developed land and the lake. Trees, shrubs, grasses, and native groundcover slow rainfall and surface runoff, allowing water to soak into the soil before reaching the shoreline. This process helps trap sediment, nutrients, and pollutants that would otherwise wash directly into the lake. By filtering runoff, riparian zones help maintain water clarity, reduce algae blooms, and protect overall water quality.

Many homeowners are concerned about shoreline erosion. Natural riparian areas stabilize shorelines. Root systems from native plants hold soil in place and reduce erosion caused by stormwater, wave action, and seasonal runoff. This is especially important in Maine, where snowmelt and increasingly intense rain events can contribute significant erosion and sediment movement into lakes.

Beyond water quality benefits, riparian zones provide essential habitat. They offer food, nesting sites, travel corridors, and shelter for birds, amphibians, fish, insects, mammals, and reptiles. Fallen leaves and woody debris from shoreline vegetation feed aquatic food webs and



Rip rap halts shoreline erosion.



Stormwater run-off controls are in place.



Measure twice, dig once.

create habitat structure in nearshore waters. Overhanging trees also shade the water, helping maintain cooler temperatures important for many native aquatic species.

The YCC can help you mitigate your impact on the riparian zone. 7 Lakes Alliance's Erosion Control Project Manager performs site evaluations and works with homeowners to create personalized plans for mitigating stormwater runoff, erosion, and restoration of the natural ecosystem services. After collaborating with the homeowner to address their concerns and perfect a plan for them, we come up with a cost estimate and send a YCC crew over to their property to install the various BMP's. If you have any concerns for your property or questions about erosion, please contact Stuart Cole at stuart.cole@7lakesalliance.org or call (207) 495-6039 with the extension 110.

Our crews are trained in erosion control practices. Crew members learn how to operate tools, such as saws and drills, while also learning safety procedures. Our crew members develop important teamwork and critical thinking skills that they carry with them into their professional careers. If you are interested in learning more about job opportunities with the YCC, please email stuart.cole@7lakesalliance.org or look on <https://7lakesalliance.org/what-we-do/erosion-control/> for more information.



BLA Logo Updated!

The BLA has been protecting and preserving Great Pond and Long Pond officially since 1909 and is proudly Maine's oldest lake association.



Above are three completed BMPs.

Invasive Aquatics Program Updates

Spring 2026

Sharon Mann, Invasive Aquatics Program Director
7 Lakes Alliance

'Tis the season for prepping camp, unfurling sails, and launching boats! As you head to public boat launches across the watershed, you'll likely be greeted by a friendly face in a bright yellow T-shirt. Courtesy Boat Inspectors officially begin for the season on May 22 and will remain stationed at many launches through mid-October. As usual, the Belgrade Lakes Association has signed up for the "Gold Plan," providing the maximum paid CBI coverage available from 7 AM to 7 PM, seven days a week. Even with this financial support, filling shifts during the shoulder seasons can be challenging as many CBIs are high school and college students with limited availability outside the summer months. If you are interested in helping protect our lakes, please consider becoming a volunteer CBI this season. Training and equipment are provided, and every volunteer shift plays an important role in preventing the spread of invasive aquatic species.

For many residents of Great Pond and Long Pond, invasive aquatic plant management happening elsewhere in the watershed can feel distant—until you consider how closely connected these lakes truly are. Protecting Belgrade's most iconic lakes depends not only on prevention at local boat launches, but also on the need for aggressive monitoring and management throughout the surrounding watershed.

Today, four waterbodies within the seven-lake chain are actively managed for invasive aquatic plant infestations. Great Pond and Messalonskee Lake continue to contend with long-standing infestations of variable-leaf milfoil, while East Pond (stream only) and North Pond are managing newer infestations of curly-leaf pondweed. Meanwhile, Long Pond, Salmon Lake, and McGrath Pond remain free of known invasive aquatic plant species for the time being.

Continued protection is not something we take for granted. North Pond, currently managing a lake-wide curly-leaf pondweed infestation, flows directly into Great Pond through Great Meadow Stream. Likewise, Long Pond sits immediately upstream of one of the most severe variable-leaf milfoil infestations in Maine within the Belgrade Stream. Fortunately, the dam separating Long Pond from Belgrade Stream, combined with the upstream flow direction, has likely played a major role in preventing milfoil from spreading into Long Pond. Anglers at Wings Mills dam frequently cast lines on both sides of the dam, which can easily transport invasive milfoil fragments.

Last season, 7 Lakes Alliance officially adopted Messalonskee Lake and its connected streams to fall under our invasive aquatic species management responsibilities. Following extensive surveys throughout Belgrade Stream and a full lake perimeter survey of Messalonskee Lake, it became clear that several infestation areas are now too large for manual removal alone to make meaningful progress. As a result, select areas within Messalonskee Lake are expected to undergo herbicide treatment in 2026 under the direction of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. At the same time, diver-led manual removal efforts will continue in several areas previously managed by Friends of Messalonskee, but who remain vital partners in protecting the lake through fundraising, education, and milfoil surveys. Ultimately, the long-term goal is to treat the majority of Belgrade Stream, Messalonskee Marsh, and other heavily infested areas of Messalonskee Lake—totaling roughly 1,000 acres of infested habitat. This will be a large, multi-year project that combines targeted herbicide treatment with continued manual removal in order to keep milfoil at manageable levels in treated areas.

Survey and early detection efforts remain the backbone of invasive species management across the watershed. Each summer, volunteers and staff participate in “Invasive Plant Paddles” (IPPs), systematically surveying shorelines in search of new infestations before they become established. These volunteer-powered efforts are paired with Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBIs), professional dive surveys, and rapid-response management teams. In many cases, these programs are the reason infestations are caught while they are still manageable.

That spirit of early detection and rapid response has been especially important in East Pond’s Serpentine where curly-leaf pondweed was first discovered by a volunteer in 2021. Since then, the infestation has been reduced by approximately 89% through intensive hand removal by SCUBA divers. In 2026, a dedicated “Curly Crew” of certified divers will continue surveying and removing curly-leaf pondweed throughout The Serpentine and North Pond. Last season alone, divers logged more than 1,600 underwater hours in North Pond to carefully remove plants by hand. So far, those efforts appear to be paying off, with no large patches identified yet this season.

Managing invasive aquatic species is rarely a quick fix. These plants exploit connected waterways, heavy recreation, and changing environmental conditions. However, the Belgrade Lakes watershed has something many lake systems do not: strong partnerships, engaged volunteers, and a community willing to invest in long-term protection of its lakes.

Contact sharon@7lakes.org to learn more and become a volunteer.

Plans for 2026

- Weekly Aquatic Plant ID and Adopt-A-Shoreline workshops are returning with a new time! Workshops will be held every Wednesday from 1:00–2:00 PM at 7 Lakes. Come learn aquatic plant identification skills and how you can help protect our lakes through early detection.
- Courtesy Boat Inspectors will be stationed at Great Pond and Long Pond boat launches from 7:00 AM–7:00 PM, seven days a week through mid-October to help prevent the spread of invasive aquatic species.
- Volunteer Courtesy Boat Inspectors are especially needed now through July 4th and again from late August through October. Even a few hours of volunteer time helps keep our launches covered during critical periods of the season.
- We will have three dive teams operating this year:
 1. A crew is dedicated to curly-leaf pondweed survey and removal in East and North Ponds.
 2. A crew focuses on invasive aquatic plant survey and removal in Messalonskee Lake and connected streams.
 3. A dedicated crew continues the invasive aquatic plant survey and plant removal in Great Pond and Long Pond.
- Seasonal dive crews will operate from June through the end of August, while our year-round management team will continue survey and removal operations through the end of October to extend control efforts later into the season.
- All milfoil sites in Great Pond will be surveyed and maintained by 7 Lakes divers weekly/biweekly. This includes: Great Meadow Stream, North Bay, Swan Brook, Rome Trout Brook, Robbins Mill Stream, and the Lagoon.
- Our initial kick off dive in Great Meadow Stream during the first week of May revealed only a couple of small milfoil plants in the mouth of the stream.
- Invasive Plant Paddles will be co-hosted with local Lake Associations. See the 7 Lakes events page for dates.

THE LAKESMART LAKER'S DOZEN

Lakes are fragile. Care for them today. Enjoy them tomorrow.



1. Support Lake Associations.

Join the board. Attend an annual meeting. Get involved. Visit lakes.me/map to see a map of Maine Lakes association members.

2. Stop The Spread of Invasives.

Clean plant fragments off your boat, trailer and equipment before moving your boat.

Drain bilges away from the lake when you leave a waterbody.

Dry your boat or let it sit several days between uses on different water bodies.

Never transfer water or fish from lake to lake.

3. Follow Shoreland Zoning Rules.

What happens on land doesn't stay on land. Actions you take on your property can have devastating consequences for the health of your lake. Before any project, check with your town office or Code Enforcement Officer to see if you need a permit for work within the shoreland zone, the 250 feet deep strip of land along the edge of a lake.

4. End Erosion.

Check around your buildings, paths, driveways and roads on a rainy day to find places where soil is eroding or washing away. Erosion brings phosphorus into the lake, feeding algae and causing lakes to turn green and "bloom." Fix erosion by planting vegetation downslope; placing crushed stone or erosion control mulch; or constructing swales or rain gardens. For more information on these and other stormwater Best Management Practices, visit lakes.me/BMPs.

5. Build Better Buffers.

Trees, shrubs and grasses protect water quality by slowing rainwater and filtering out soil and other pollutants before they wash into the lake. Deeper buffers are better, as are those with more layers of vegetation. Native plants do more for pollinators, birds and other wildlife. Visit lakes.me/protect for resources on buffer plantings.

6. Ditch Fertilizers, Herbicides and Pesticides.

Long-lasting chemicals in these products can harm children, pets, and aquatic life. They can also feed algae in your lake and turn it green and smelly.

7. Take a Break.

Stash Your Rake. Save the Lake!

Limit lawn size, mow less often, leave clippings, and you won't need fertilizer. Don't rake within 75' of shore. Not only is it the law, it is a practice that helps promote native pollinators, and shelters and feeds wildlife.

8. Don't Stress Your Septic.

Check your system and pump the tank regularly as advised by your service provider. Use phosphorus-free cleaners and detergents. Stagger laundry loads and dishwasher runs with no more than one a day. Avoid using the disposal, and minimize water use when possible. Don't put toxics or grease down the drain. Visit lakes.me/septic FMI.

9. Build Lake-Friendly Docks.

Cedar, cypress, plastic or aluminum are good dock materials; as is new, pressure-treated lumber.

10. Don't Treat Your Lake Like a Washtub.

Dogs, humans or boats should *never* be washed in the lake! Soap is not good for water quality. It feeds algae and isn't good for fish or other wildlife.

11. Observe Headway Speed Close to Shore.

Maine law prohibits wakes from boats within 200' of shore. Wakes in shallow water disturb aquatic habitat, stir up sediment, destabilizes shoreline, and damage or destroy loon nests.

12. Give Wildlife a Chance.

Lake shallows and land near the water provide food and shelter for more than 60 native wildlife species and serve as nurseries for their young. Don't "Tidy them up!"

13. Learn About LakeSmart.

LakeSmart provides site-specific suggestions to homeowners that protect water quality and property values, and prevent lake degradation. To learn more, visit lakesmart.org, or contact Maine Lakes at lakesmart@lakes.me.

Since 1970, Maine Lakes has worked across the state to protect and preserve the values and benefits of Maine's lakes, ponds and watersheds for future generations. With our more than 100 partner lake associations and our flagship LakeSmart program, we form a nucleus of lake conservation activity that strengthens the capacity of lake ecosystems to resist destabilizing threats and helps build the effectiveness of local lake organizations and allies. FMI and to join us today, please visit www.lakes.me.

Thank you, Maine Lakes!

BLA Sponsors Trip to ASLO Convention

New Insights and Broader Perspective Gained

Sharon Mann, Invasive Aquatics Program Director - 7 Lakes Alliance

Earlier this month, the board of the Belgrade Lakes Association sponsored my trip to the Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO) conference in Montréal. The conference brought together thousands of researchers and resource managers working across freshwater and marine systems to share new science and management approaches. Program sessions covered a broad range of topics including physical limnology, food web dynamics, biodiversity, and aquatic ecosystem management.



I was especially excited to find several sessions focused specifically on macrophytes, a scientific term for aquatic plants, which is where I spent much of my time while in Montréal by learning about the newest research and insights relevant to our work here in Maine.

There's nothing like a dip in a clean and clear lake.

In stark contrast to many of our local meetings, this international venue brought together scientists from around the globe who were primarily interested in protecting and restoring aquatic plant communities rather than just removing them. In our local "lake world," aquatic plants are often discussed through the lens of invasive species management. At the conference, however, that relationship was flipped: invasive aquatic plants took a backseat while native macrophytes finally had their time in the spotlight.

Researchers highlighted the many benefits healthy native plant communities provide, including supporting biodiversity, improving water quality through nutrient sequestration, stabilizing sediments, reducing shoreline erosion, and providing critical habitat for fish and wildlife—not to mention the intrinsic value of these beautiful freshwater gardens.

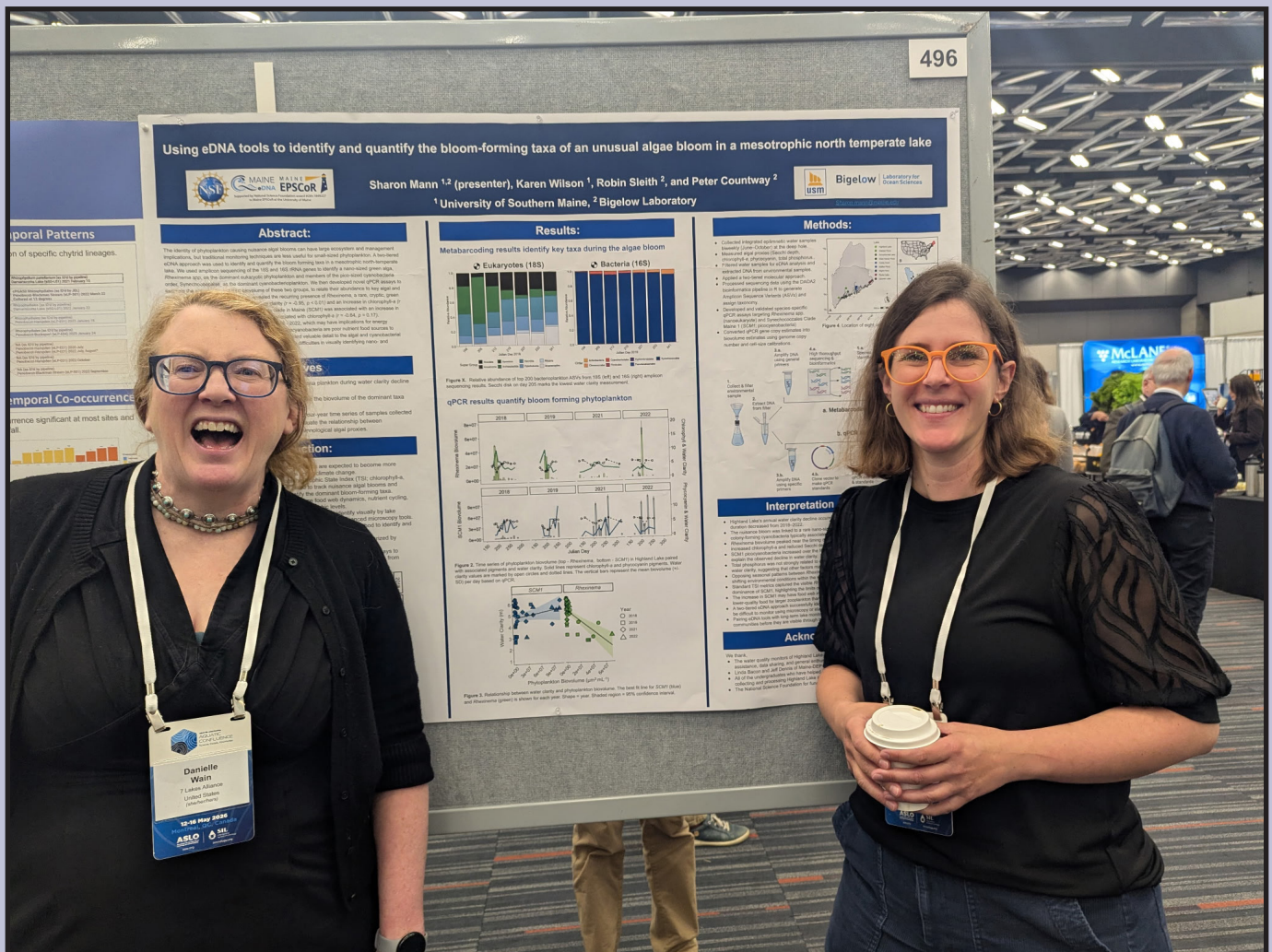
This broader perspective on aquatic plants is especially important because freshwater ecosystems are among the most threatened ecosystems on Earth. Despite containing only a tiny fraction of the planet's water and covering less than 1% of the Earth's surface, freshwater habitats support an incredible amount of biodiversity, including roughly 10% of all known species and nearly one-third of vertebrate species. Yet freshwater species are declining faster than those in terrestrial and marine systems.

Why are freshwater species so vulnerable? Unlike oceans or forests, freshwater systems act like downstream collection points. Everything happening across the landscape—development, erosion, road runoff, nutrient pollution, invasive species introductions, warming temperatures, and changing precipitation patterns—eventually flows into lakes, ponds, streams, and wetlands. These stressors

stack on top of one another in relatively small, isolated habitats that species often cannot easily escape.

Aquatic plants sit at the center of this story. Healthy native plant communities are not simply “weeds in the way;” they are ecosystem engineers. They provide nursery habitat for fish, refuge for zooplankton and invertebrates (fish food), stabilize sediments that would otherwise cloud water, cycle nutrients, buffer shorelines from erosion, and help support the biodiversity that makes healthy lakes resilient to change.

Here in the Belgrade Lakes region, invasive species management will always remain an important part of our work. But perhaps there is also room for us to spend more time celebrating and protecting the native aquatic plant communities that quietly support our lakes every day. Through education programs, shoreline stewardship, thoughtful lake use, and continued monitoring, 7 Lakes and BLA have an opportunity to help shift the conversation from simply removing the bad plants to also protecting the good ones.



Danielle Wain (left) and Sharon Mann (right) at ASLO in Montreal.

Gloeotrichia in the Belgrade Lakes

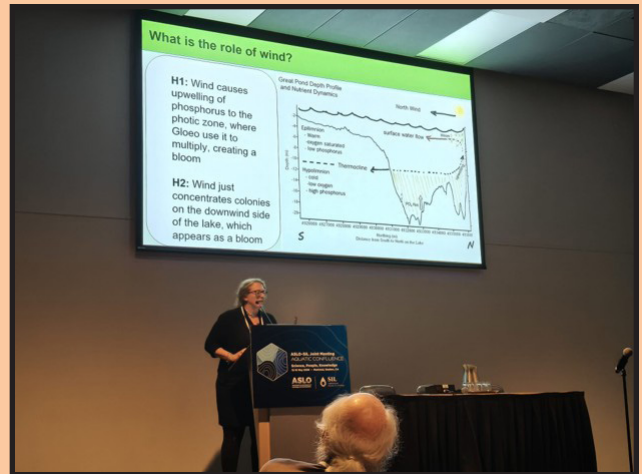
Dr. Danielle Wain, Lake Science Director, 7 Lakes Alliance

Did you have accumulations of tiny poof balls of algae on your shoreline last summer, like in the photo below. The summer of 2025 was one of the worst summers on record for blooms of *Gloeotrichia*, a blue-green algae (or cyanobacteria), in Great Pond and Long Pond. The blooms of *Gloeotrichia* (or “Gleo” for short) that we get in Great and Long Ponds are very different from the full lake blooms of neighboring North Pond, which are comprised of another type of cyanobacteria that makes the entire lake green. While Gleo blooms aren’t as dramatic, the accumulation of Gleo scums on shorelines impacts recreational enjoyment of our lakes and can cause some swimmers to have itchy skin reactions.

The water clarity on Great Pond and Long Pond is the best in the Belgrades. Per the modeling done as part of the Watershed Based Management Plans for both lakes, the water quality in both lakes is largely driven by runoff from the watershed. Because we had low rain in 2025, there was less runoff, and the immediate impact was clearer water. Gleo spends part of its life cycle in the lake sediments (where it uses existing phosphorus to grow) and needs light to start blooming. So ironically, the clearer water helped initiate the Gleo bloom we had last summer.

Since 2005, BLA volunteers have been measuring Gleo on their shoreline. There have been 72 sites across Great Pond and both basins of Long Pond, and almost 6000 observations over the years. This unique volunteer monitoring program has captured occurrences of Gleo blooms that standard monitoring at the deep holes of each lake would miss; without this volunteer effort, it would be impossible to monitor the shoreline so thoroughly. It is from this data that we know that 2025 was one of the worst years in our records (Figure 1) where, approximately 85% of the time, volunteers observed the presence of Gleo.

At 7 Lakes, we are trying to use this data to understand what drives Gleo blooms. While we know that water clarity plays a role, there are other important factors that make it a “good” Gleo year or a “bad” Gleo year, such as water temperature and wind conditions. I was fortunate enough to present this data and some preliminary work to understand drivers of Gleo blooms, done in con-



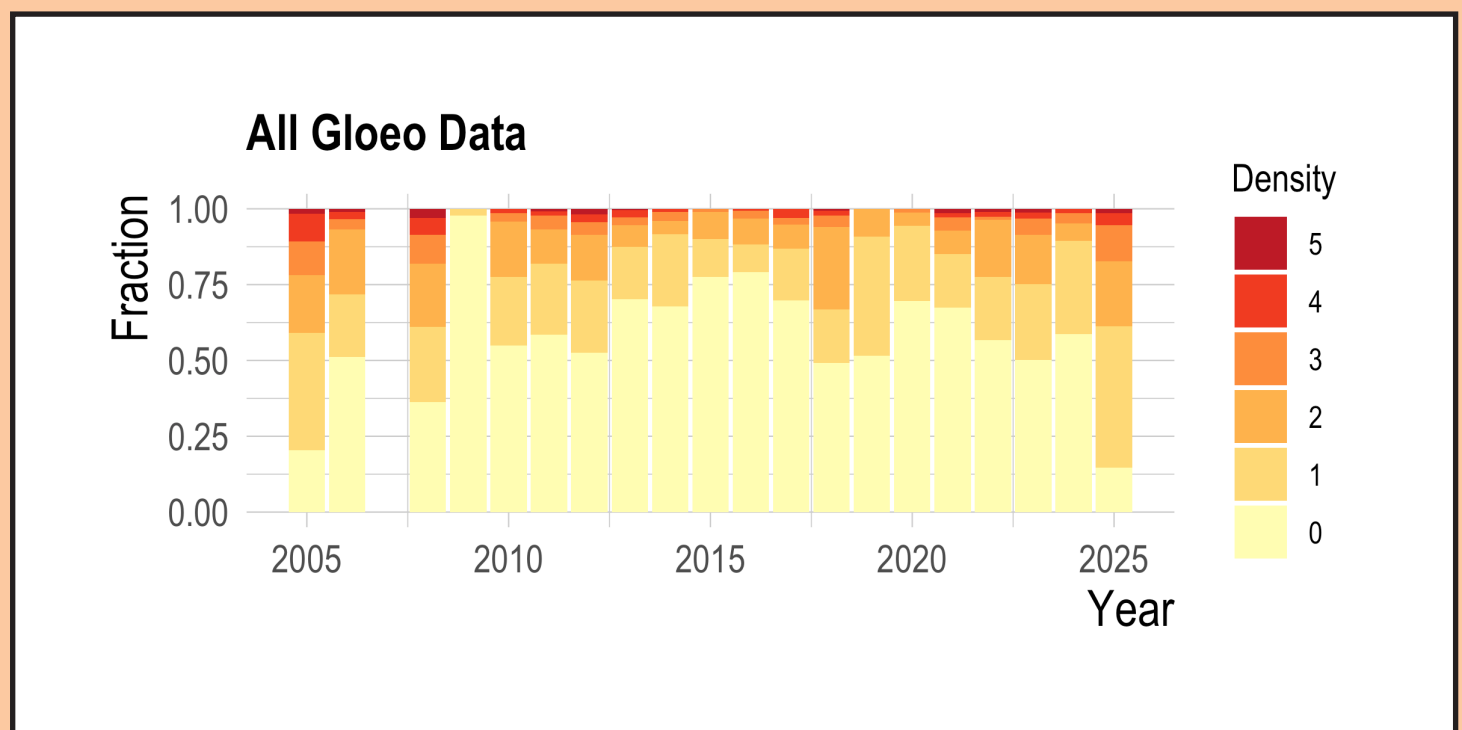
Dr. Danielle Wain presented a lecture on *Gloeotrichia* in Great Pond at the ASLO meeting in 2026.



Gloeotrichia blooms near the shoreline.
(photo credit: Lynn Hannum)

junction with Colby College, at the meeting of Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography in Montreal in May 2026, with partial support from the BLA. Colby student Alena Rossi '28 will be working with this dataset this summer to improve our knowledge of the conditions leading to the blooms. The 7 Lakes-Colby Summer Research Students will be presenting at 7 Lakes in late July – keep your eye on the 7 Lakes calendar!

Finally, the phosphorus in the lake sediments, that the Gloeo feed on, originally came from runoff in the watershed. To reduce future blooms, you can do your part to address erosion and other sources of phosphorus on your shoreline through LakeSmart – contact stuart.cole@7lakesalliance.org to have your property evaluated. Already LakeSmart, but still want to help? We are always looking for more volunteers for shoreline monitoring! 7 Lakes will organize another training session this summer once Gloeo starts appearing. Contact danielle.wain@7lakesalliance.org if you would like to be notified about upcoming trainings.

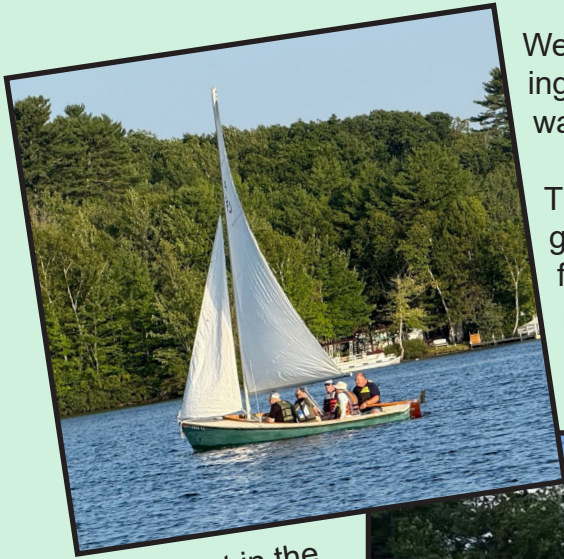


These are *Gloeotrichia* observations near the shoreline (photo credit: Lynn Hannum).

Figure 1. Summary of all Gloeo observations since 2005. Volunteers rate the density of Gloeo on a scale from 0-5 (recently updated to 0-6). This graph shows what fraction of observations in a given year were 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. For example, in 2005 (a bad year), approximately 20% were 0, 35% were 1, 20% were 2, 10% were 3, 10% were 4, and 5% were 5. Compare this to 2009 (a good year), where most of the data were zeroes and only a small fraction were ones.

Ahoy from the Great Pond Yacht Club

By Lori Fulton, Commodore



Is this boat in the race?!

We enjoyed a wonderful off season with social gatherings for skating, snowshoeing, and wine tasting. Now we are looking forward to warmer weather and launching the boats for the sailing season.

The 2026 race calendar is up on the GPYC website, and we are gearing up for another great summer on the lake. There is room for everyone on race day. If you are not a sailor, join us, and/or participate as the race committee boat. It's a great day on the lake, and every race starts and ends with food, drinks, camaraderie, and laughter.



Three boats are from the sailing program.

GPYC continues to support the sailing programs offered by Belgrade Parks & Recreation. Please visit their website for updates on the youth and adult programs.

We look forward to seeing you "out on the blue waves" and hope you would like to join the GPYC. For more information, reach out to us at sail@greatpondyachtclub.com

BLA attends Lake Conference Maine 2026

BLA Raffle Chair Christine Emmons and BLA Treasurer Blaine Horrocks participated in the Lake Conference Maine 2026 held at the Wells Conference Center, University of Maine, Orono. Organized by Lake Stewards of Maine and Maine Lakes, this year's conference centered on Lake Resilience in the Face of Change. The conference included keynote address How to Win the Messaging Battle on Climate Change: Our Lakes Need Your Help delivered by Keith Carson. Keith is a former meteorologist for News Center Maine and The Weather Channel and currently serves as Director of Environmental and Science Communications at Maine Conservation Voters.



←Director of Environmental and Science Communications Keith Carson with BLA Raffle Chair Christine Emmons and BLA Treasurer Blaine Horrocks at Lake Conference Maine 2026.

40 Years of Memories and Counting

A Lake Story by Larry Kolloff

My wife's parents came to Belgrade Lakes in the late 70's because her mother's cousin, Terry, had opened Old Macdonald's restaurant a few years earlier. Since they were looking toward retirement, Belgrade Lakes seemed like a better alternative than Florida. They started building a home a few years later on a hill in Rome overlooking Great Pond.

At that time Terry's house was down by the town beach, and she owned the grassy point next to it where my wife and I set up a small tent and camped for a week. It was idyllic and felt so remote from anything. In the mid-80s we bought a 3 season camp on Peninsula Drive with undeveloped lots on each side of us. Dick and Mimi Parks were neighbors as were Bill and Karen Swan. Larry Dipietro was our snowplow go-to guy, and he would get to it when he could.

As soon as summer was in swing, it required a trip to Day's Store where a young Mark Day would be selling, on the 2nd floor, fishing licenses and lures that were "guaranteed to catch a fish." As it is now, we always looked forward to the 4th of July with Buzz as Uncle Sam who led the parade through town.

No summer was complete without a night or two at the Skowhegan Fair. The excitement was more than enough to carry you for the next few days.

One of the most endearing things that we always looked forward to was a Saturday night in Rome Hollow at Harold Hawes Auction House. The moment you walked through the door, you smelled the fresh pies being sold at the back of the room that competed with Harold for attention.

Harold, starting off slowly, would sell "box lots" or boxes of assorted kitchen utensils, etc. After a successful bid you could search through the box for anything useful and then give the box, and its remaining contents, back to him to be resold.

One special evening Harold was auctioning a "portrait of Jesus" on black velvet with the guarantee that whoever was the successful bidder would most likely gain entry to heaven. Kind of a religious "velvet Elvis," he said. Most of the items for auction were more mundane, but the descriptions were priceless. "I've got a Mister Coffee and a coffee pot...they don't go together, but they both work" was typical of the evening banter and, oh, how we miss him.

We sold our home on Peninsula Drive after 20 years and moved down to lower Long Pond where we have been for the last 20 years. We have enjoyed watching the subtle changes to Belgrade Lakes and are happy that it still retains its special character.



Harold and Irene Hawes are in the Auction House doorway.



If you needed a Texaco or Colonial Gas sign, it could be found in Rome.

History of the Rome Auction Hall

By Mike Hawes (son of Harold and Irene Hawes)

The Rome Auction Hall was built in 1984. Harold Hawes and his wife Irene were anxious to start their auctions.

People had heard of this place and came from everywhere. Saturday nights became a place for people to bid or visit, but also to enjoy an evening of fun and laughs.



People gathered, starting at 1 PM, to preview and get a seat saved. The yard was full of auction items as was the 100-foot hall.

This is the infamous Rome Auction Hall.

Auctions started fairly promptly at 6 PM, and Harold entertained the crowd with his humor. Irene was in the kitchen making burgers and her delicious pies.

Harold was a collector of many things – anyone who attended would remember all his signs.

The auction ran from 1984 to 2009 when Harold suffered a stroke and passed January 25, 2009.

We want your Lake Stories!

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 part of 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 — 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



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NOTICE!

ANNUAL MEETING CHANGE OF VENUE TO THE CENTER FOR ALL SEASONS!

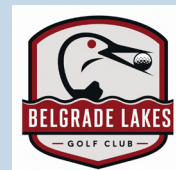
**The BLA Member Reception and Annual Meeting will be
held on Sunday, August 2nd, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm at**

**The Center for All Seasons
1 Center Drive
Belgrade, ME 04917**

This is always a fun time and great opportunity to see old friends and meet your hardworking Board of Directors at an information-packed meeting. Here's what's in store:

An interesting lineup of guest speakers will update us on local conservation activities, and mouth-watering hors d'oeuvres will be served by Rita's Catering.

Please make reservations by calling the BLA office at (207) 512-5150 or email info@BLAMaine.org no later than July 25th. Invite your lake neighbors and friends to join us. See you there!



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