



BELGRADE LAKES ASSOCIATION

To protect and improve the watershed of Great Pond and Long Pond through Preservation, Education and Action.

Winter 2020



Holiday lights glitter at dusk on the Village Green

Photo: Ernst Merckens

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Greetings from the lake. The winter solstice arrived, the lakes are frozen, and it is a time of rest and regrouping. It reminds me of that time of day when everyone is snuggled down. You sit in the quiet of the house, simply enjoying the quiet, and taking time to assess the past while planning for the future.

This tumultuous year has changed all of us. This year we have learned the value of companionship and friendship, the importance of friends and family, the comfort of the lake, or the yearning to be there. We have been challenged to look at what really matters: being kind to one another and looking out for others. We have been forced to learn to Zoom and communicate through portals, to video chat, to order online, to quarantine, and to social distance.

The ice covering our lakes gives them time to rest as well. It is a time for hope, for longer days, for a long ice-in to provide the lakes respite, for plans to return to the lake, especially if you were unable to visit this year.

Thanks to your generosity we were able to continue our work with minor hiccups. We met our budget, were able to continue the milfoil work, funded Courtesy Boat Inspectors 12 hours a day/7 days a week, and helped establish an Erosion Control Coordinator with the 7 Lakes Alliance for work on high impact sites in our watershed. We have completed the Great Pond Watershed Survey, and its recommendations will be presented in the next couple of months. We completed the Long Pond Watershed Survey this past fall and identified more sites needing erosion control measures. LakeSmart continued despite limited in-person site visits, and our YCC corps was busy as well.

We have good news regarding the water quality of Great Pond and subsequently Long Pond. Based on continuing monitoring efforts, it has been determined by our dedicated science committee that the internal phosphorous load is significantly lower than previously thought. Currently, there is no basis for an in-lake treatment nor any justification in spending millions of dollars on alum.

Now we need to concentrate on **stopping the External Loading of phosphorous**. How do we do this? We need to do one thing and do it very well! We need to...

KEEP THE DIRT OUT OF THE LAKE!

It's that simple and that complicated. It's up to each of us: our family, our friends, our neighbors, and those folks we don't even know. This will be hard work. It will need many volunteers. Water runs downhill and moves dirt with it. We need to monitor our streams. We need to fix the run-off from camp roads. We need to install buffers. We need to encourage others to learn about LakeSmart and utilize YCC. We need to check our septic systems and have them pumped out regularly. We need to educate the public, not just waterfront owners. We need to act individually and collectively. But the best news of all is that it can be done. We can do it. We have pulled together to tackle big challenges before, and we can do it again.

Thank you for all your support over the years and especially during this very different and difficult Covid year. Next summer is looking brighter. We will be there making a difference. In closing, I'd like to share one more thought I read today.

"Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second to be kind; and the third is to be kind."

Have a happy and healthy New Year!



Carol Johnson, BLA President

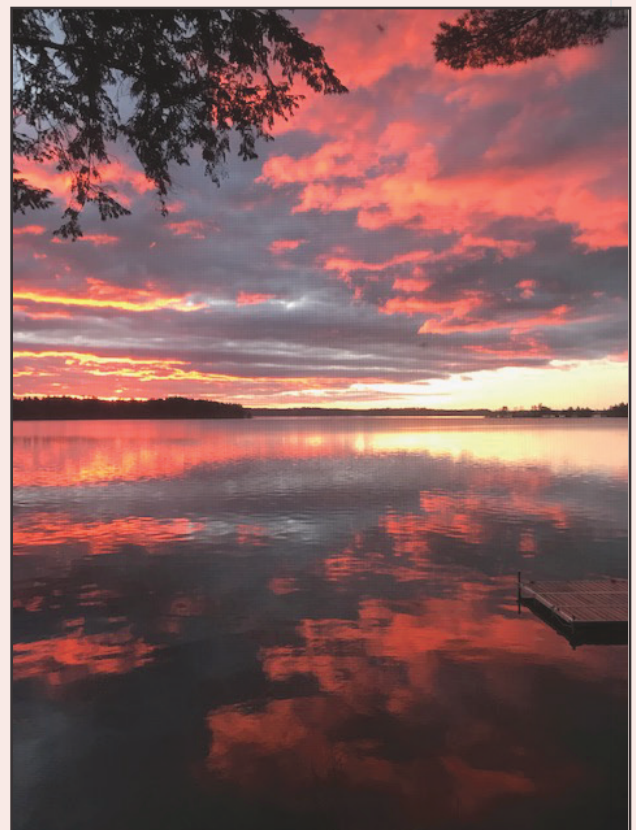


Photo: Bill Shontell

BE (LAKE)SMART ABOUT WINTER PREPARATIONS

by Brooke Hafford MacDonald, Lakesmart Director

Happy New Year! If you are anything like me, you find it difficult to accept the fact that our LakeSmart evaluation season (which runs approximately from April through November) is ended. While I saw some brave souls out boating in colder temperatures, there are clear indicators – primarily snow on the ground and darkness at 4:30pm – that winter is here.

While many of you closed your camps and have headed south, others planned to stay a little bit longer. If you are one who delayed the process of preparing your lakefront property for winter, there are many “off-season” things you can do each year to be LakeSmart! Here are some helpful tips to prepare your camp for winter in a lake-friendly manner every fall.

- **Drain Pipes** – Did you know that antifreeze isn’t necessary if your fixtures are completely drained? Antifreeze is toxic and poses a threat to ground and surface waters – if you drain pipes completely there is no need to use it! Your lake will thank you.
- **Leave the Leaves** – Dry, dead leaves provide habitat for all kinds of critters! Butterflies, chipmunks, turtles, toads, shrews, earthworms, and many other creatures either eat, lay eggs in, or live in the leaf litter. Who wants to waste time raking anyway?
- **Protect from rodents** – The best ways to keep pests out of your camp are to remove all food sources and to carefully inspect indoor and outdoor walls for openings. Rodenticides are harmful to wildlife (think about the owl or fox that eats the poisoned mouse) and aren’t necessary if there is no way to get in or nothing to eat.
- **Remove dock** – Store your dock in a designated area in a way that is not harmful to vegetation. A stable shoreline and healthy buffer are important in keeping eroding soil from harming water quality.
- **Prepare your boat** – Instead of draining gasoline from fuel tanks, use fuel stabilizer to keep it fresh for next season. Make sure to wash and clean your boat away from the water to keep chemicals and detergents from harming aquatic wildlife.
- **For more information** - <https://www.maine.gov/dep/land/watershed/camp/openclose.htm>

I want to thank all of you in the Belgrade Lakes region for a wonderful LakeSmart season! Despite the many obstacles we all faced this past year, there was still a great deal of collaboration between LakeSmart evaluators and property owners in your area. We were able to accomplish a great deal, and I thank you all for your continued dedication to our program.

Have a terrific winter – looking forward to 2021!



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR IN THE FIGHT AGAINST AQUATIC INVADERS!

by Sharon Mann, Milfoil Program Director

New method pays off

During the 2020 season, BLA and 7 Lakes Alliance invested in burlap benthic barriers to cover invasive milfoil in Great Meadow Stream, Rome Trout Brook, and Robbins Mill Stream. Burlap is 100% natural, which means it does not have to be removed like the former plastic tarp barriers. This new method saves us time AND money while we gain ground on the invasive milfoil infestation! We covered a total of 1.5 acres of invasive milfoil in 2020 and still have material left over to use in 2021!

Benthic barriers can only be used on large patches of invasive milfoil. Our divers continue to use Diver Assisted Suction Harvester (DASH) and hand pulling methods while breathing surface-supplied air. A total of 33,006 gallons* of invasive milfoil were removed from areas mixed with native plants.

Worse than Milfoil?

It might be hard to picture any bigger threats to our local ecosystem than invasive variable milfoil, but there certainly are, and a couple of those threats are less than a 30-minute drive away! Our CBIs and survey crews are trained to catch a variety of aquatic invaders from plants to mollusks, but we need EVERYONE to remain vigilant and educated on these threats! This year we are looking to increase volunteer recruitment. Our waters need your support more than ever!



Returning crew member, Erin O'Leary prepares a burlap barrier in Robbins Mill Stream.



Program manager and lead diver, Sharon Mann, unloads pulled invasive milfoil in Great Meadow Stream.



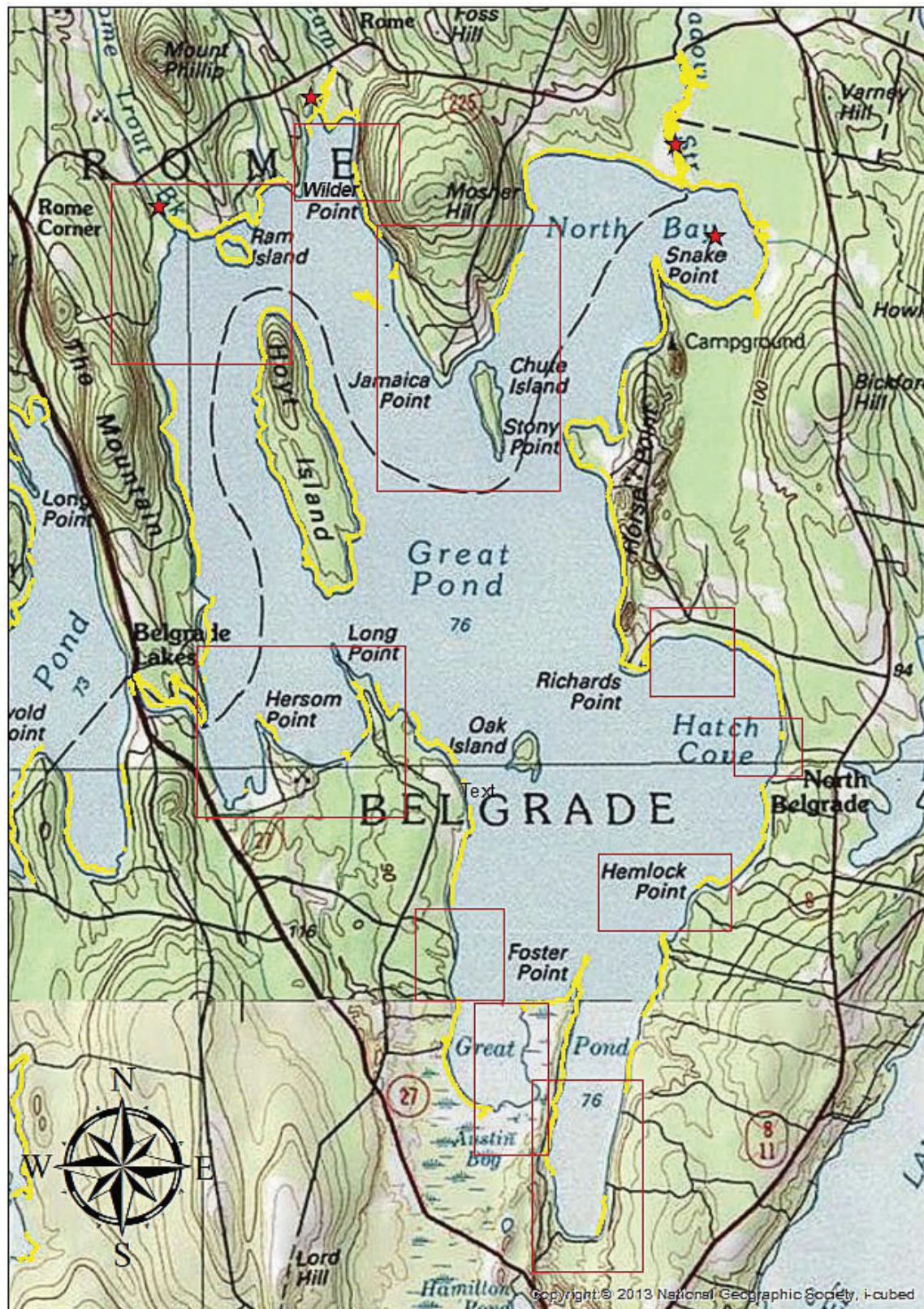
Take pride in our waters and join the fight!

We have volunteer opportunities even for those who do not make it to the lake as often as they would like to.

- Courtesy Boat Inspector, 6-hour shifts
- Fragment Collectors (via kayak), 3-hour shifts
- Barrier support and weed puller, 3-hour shifts
- Adopt-a-Shoreline, twice per summer
- Gallery greeter, 6-hour shifts

Please contact sharon.mann@7lakesalliance.org for more information and to sign up for a shift!

*See table at bottom of Page 6 showing yearly milfoil removal since 2012



Adopt-a-Shoreline 2020

- ★ variable milfoil areas
- Adopted Shorelines
- Areas that need adopting!

This map was created by Sharon Mann
Milfoil Remediation Manager
7 Lakes Alliance in partnership with
Belgrade Lakes Association
Fall 2020

71% of Great Pond Shoreline has been adopted. If your property is in a red square, please consider adopting.

YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS CONTINUES WORK

by Art Grindle, YCC Director

This 2020 summer season, the 7 Lakes Alliance Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) completed more projects than we could have expected given the virus outbreak. The YCC provides high school and college students summer employment working to protect the water quality of the region by decreasing soil erosion.

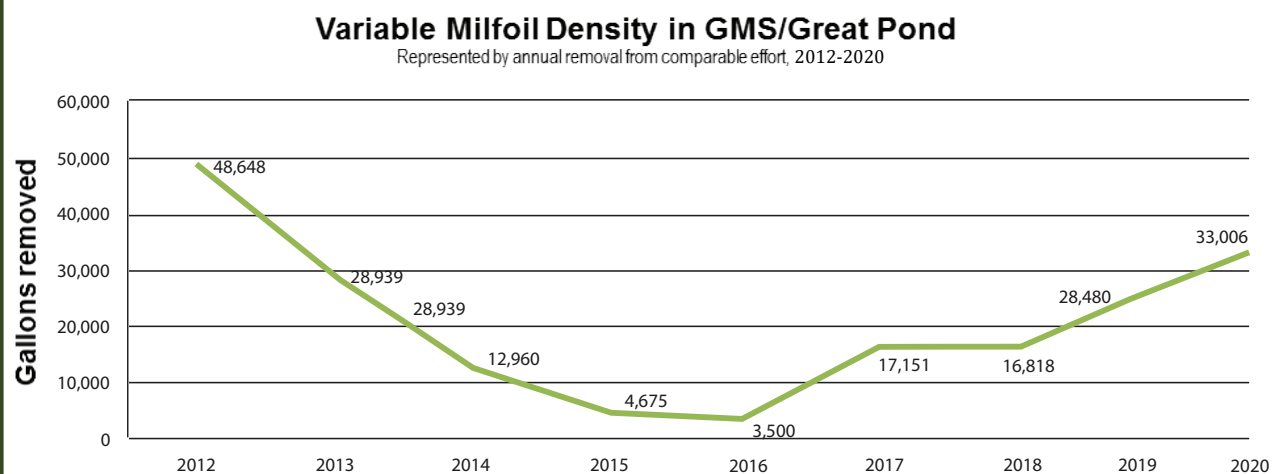


After careful consideration, the 7 Lakes' YCC Committee decided to run one crew (see photo above) instead of the usual three. Even with this cautious approach following CDC protocols, the YCC was able to complete 25 erosion control projects throughout the Belgrade Lakes Watershed.

These projects are great examples of what can be accomplished through the long-standing collaboration between BLA, LakeSmart, and 7 Lakes Alliance. This winter, the YCC program is being incorporated into an integrated erosion control approach by 7 Lakes Alliance, under the umbrella of the newly established Erosion Control Coordinator. The new position is generously co-funded by the BLA.

Soil erosion carries excess phosphorus into the lakes threatening algal blooms and impaired water quality. The YCC is a cost-effective prevention program for erosion-related algal problems. The YCC team works throughout the Belgrade Lakes watershed and is generously funded by Belgrade Lakes Association, East Pond Association, North Pond Association, McGrath Pond Salmon Lake Association, surrounding towns, and private donors. If you believe you have an erosion issue that the YCC could help with, please contact us at ycc@7lakesalliance.org.

* continued from page 4.



LOON PRESERVATION REPORT

by Dick Greenan, Chairman, Loon Preservation Committee

The results of our 2020 Belgrade Lakes Association's second year of the 5-year Loon Project are now available on the BLA website @ blamaine.org or <https://belgradelakesassociation>.

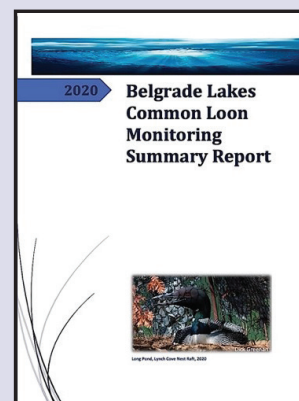
The following is an excerpt from this year's Summary Report.

In 2020, 23 of 24 known territories (96%) were occupied by loon pairs, with some additional, suitable habitat available for occupation by new pairs. This continued high occupancy rate demonstrates a strong breeding base in numbers, with potential to sustain a healthy breeding population.



Loon adults with chick, Lynch Cove, Long Pond

Nesting conditions were favorable in 2020. Water levels during nesting remained fairly consistent. No nests were lost due to flooding which is often a cause of loon nest failures. The number of nesting pairs was down when compared to 2019, with just ten of the 23 pairs on the two ponds nesting (43%). Monitoring surveys during the prime nesting period of May/June found large rafts of loons in open water, not in territory. This helps explain the reduction in nest attempts and the corresponding drop in overall productivity, although there is no apparent cause for this behavior.



Summary Report

Eight of 12 confirmed nest attempts failed (75%). This high failure rate was another significant cause of extremely low productivity. Determining the cause of nest failure is important when evaluating current productivity, and equally as important when considering future conservation measures to improve productivity.

The 2020 overall productivity of 0.17 CH/TP is extremely low and well below the established sustainable population threshold of 0.48 CH/TP. In 2019 the result was 0.35 CH/TP. Although both years fall below 0.48 CH/TP, loon productivity is subject to significant year-to-year fluctuations, and these results may not indicate this is a long-term trend. Multi-year studies, typically no less than five years in duration, are required to adequately assess the population status.

Two nest rafts were introduced many years ago on Long Pond, and two new rafts were placed in the study area in 2020. Reproductive success from those territories has been monitored closely. It is likely the reproductive success exceeds the success rate of pairs nesting naturally on the ponds. Many current territories lack natural nesting islands, requiring loons to nest on the mainland which increases the risk of failure from mammalian predators and loss due to flooding events. There are suitable spots for placement of additional nest rafts, in some territories, should circumstances warrant (successive years of natural nest failure). This conservation measure requires a serious commitment to construct, maintain, deploy, and remove rafts annually and in a timely manner.

Tracking the movements, territory and mate fidelity, and long-term survival of banded loons is key to understanding the dynamics of the local population. Launching a new banding initiative in 2020 was a key action, allowing for more informed evaluation of the movements, territory fidelity, and survival of the local loon population. First-year lab results of samples analyzed for mercury (Hg) show only low and moderate levels in both blood and feathers. These results don't indicate any levels of concern at this time.

In the first two years, this project demonstrated the effectiveness of collaboration between trained professional researchers and volunteer citizen scientists. More dedicated volunteers are needed to help assure the overall success of the project and its sustainability in the future. Formal training and education, modeled after successful



Loon eggs, Ingham Pond, Long Pond

programs in other regions, will be an important next step whenever circumstances change to allow safe group gatherings again. This unique partnership allows for the development of sustainable conservation efforts which, in turn, provides valuable information to local communities and scientists concerned about the health of loon populations.

Here's to 2021 and the continuing efforts of our stewardship.



Photo to Right: Volunteer Roy Lane putting finishing touches on artificial loon nest

LOCAL LOON RESCUED!

by Dick Greenan (First Responder, Loon Squad)

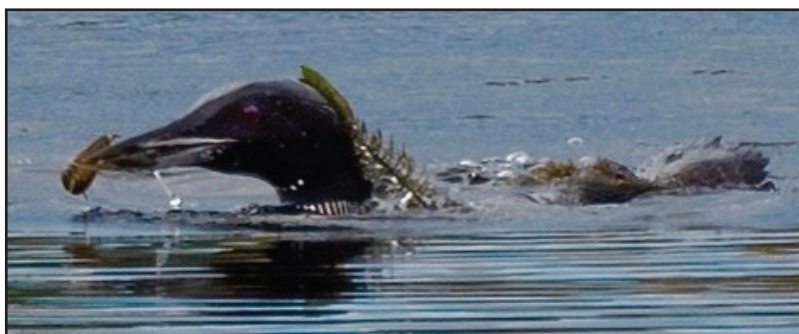
This past summer we received a call from a Belgrade Stream resident who found a live loon just under their dock in shallow water with its left leg out at an odd angle. They were able to approach within just a few feet, which added to the mystery.

I drove down within the hour and observed (and photographed) the loon feeding on four individual crawfish in three to four feet of weed-infested water and doing some version of a wing flap which required some leg strength. All of this led us to believe that, as our loon was also adequately feeding, it was healthy and most likely just stretching a leg.



Injured loon

THEN, we received another call, two days later, that our loon was back again on the beach with, most certainly, a broken left leg. The residents inquired as to the next step which would entail one person distracting the loon while another gently secured it with a large net. Well, after another quick trip down to the site, I discovered that our volunteer residents had beautifully and kindly towel-wrapped and secured the loon while awaiting assistance. We secured the beak* with a towel, loaded our friend into a cooler for the trip East to a rendezvous with Mark from our friends at Avian Haven (<https://www.avianhaven.org>) in Freedom, Maine. They have subsequently reported that our loon did have an infected and severely swollen ankle in addition to a suspected abdominal peritonitis and was being referred to a veterinarian angel. So, as of this writing, we are optimistically hopefully of a good outcome and wish to extend our warmest and sincerest Thank You to our neighbors on Belgrade Stream and the angels at Avian Haven.



**A loon's best defensive weapon is its beak*

REVERSE THE TREND! WHAT SCIENCE REVEALS ABOUT GREAT POND'S WATER QUALITY

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

Water quality has been measured in Great Pond and Long Pond since the early 1970s through the dedicated work of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Lake Stewards of Maine. This 50-year dataset tells us how the water quality has changed over this time period. In 2010, the Maine DEP listed Great Pond as "impaired" due to declining water clarity, increasing periods of low oxygen, and the growing presence of *Gloeotrichia*, the tiny, suspended specks that many people might have

seen off their docks (the specks are colonies of blue-green algae that irritates the skin of some swimmers). In 2015, Colby College began more intensive monitoring of all the Belgrade Lakes and in 2017, the Colby College-7 Lakes Alliance Water Quality Initiative was formed. Currently, the 7 Lakes Alliance and Colby do most of the water quality sampling in Great Pond, with measurements also done by the DEP and volunteer monitors.

Our baseline water quality monitoring includes taking Secchi disc readings for water clarity, temperature and oxygen profiles, and water samples to measure phosphorus later. The longest dataset we have is for Secchi Disc Transparency (SDT). Secchi disc measurements are very simple – a black and white disc is lowered into the water with a surveying tape until you can't see it anymore, and that depth is recorded.

Secchi disc measurements have been done around the world for over 150 years! So, while a simple measurement, it tells a lot about trends in water quality.

So, what have we learned? The long-term trend over the past 50 years showed a decrease in Secchi depth (which is bad), which is why the lake was listed as impaired in 2010. Since 2010, we have continued to see a decrease in the Secchi depth (Figure 1). In other words, the water has become **less clear** over the last 10 years.

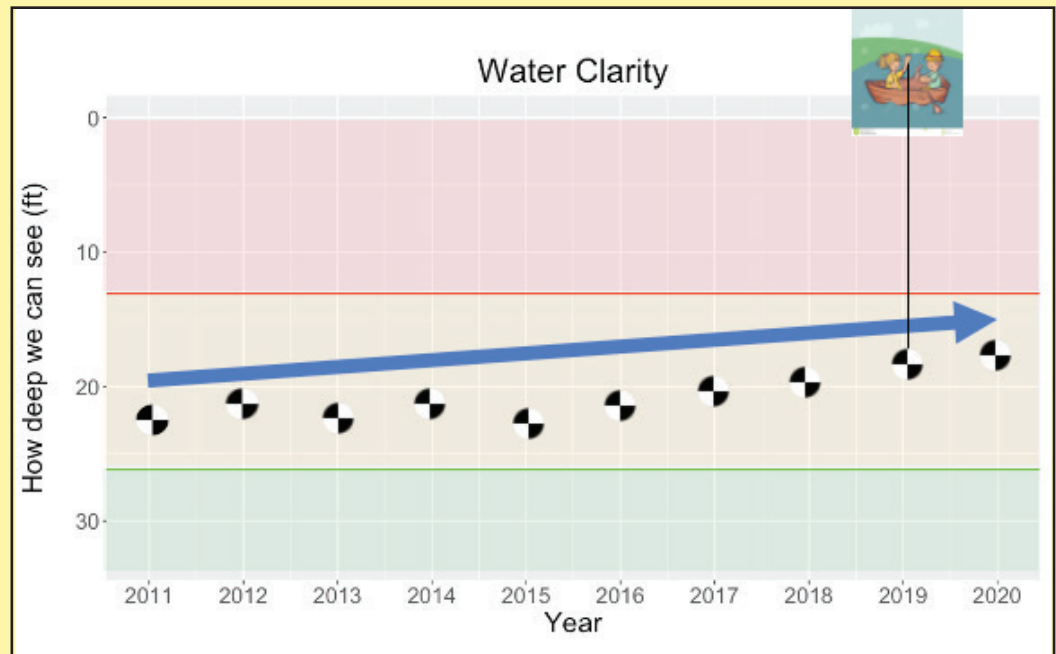


Figure 1: The annual average Secchi Depth Transparency over the last 10 years. The three colors denote good, moderate, and poor water quality.

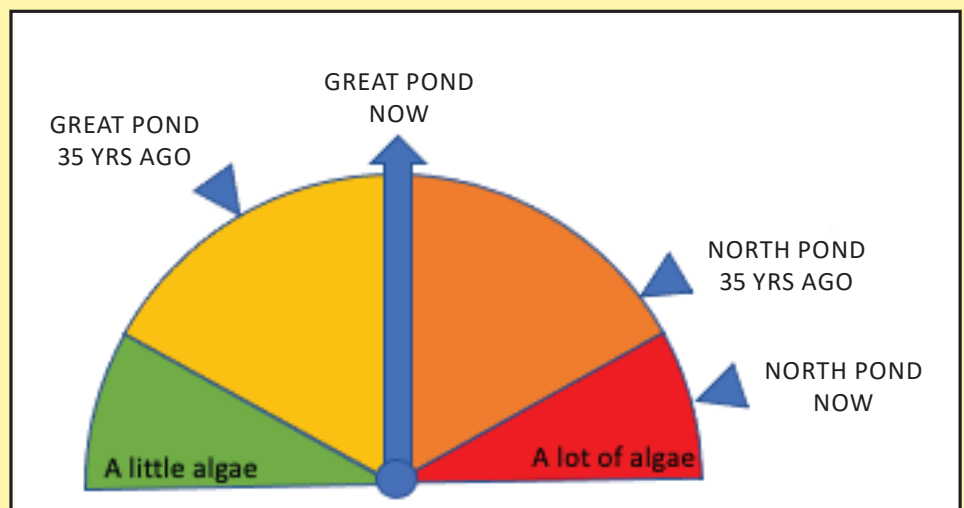


Figure 2: Great Pond's water quality compared with 35 years ago, and of North Pond, which had a significant algal bloom this summer.

So how is the water quality overall? Right now, Great Pond falls right in the middle between what the DEP defines as oligotrophic lakes (which have low amounts of algae) and eutrophic lakes (which have a lot of algae). But Great Pond used to be much closer to the green end of the dial than to the red end of the dial (Figure 2). The bloom in North Pond this summer is an example of what happens when your lake moves into the red end of the dial. We want to ensure that Great Pond **never** hits the red zone. To achieve this, we need to reduce phosphorus inputs into the lake so we can **Reverse the Trend!**

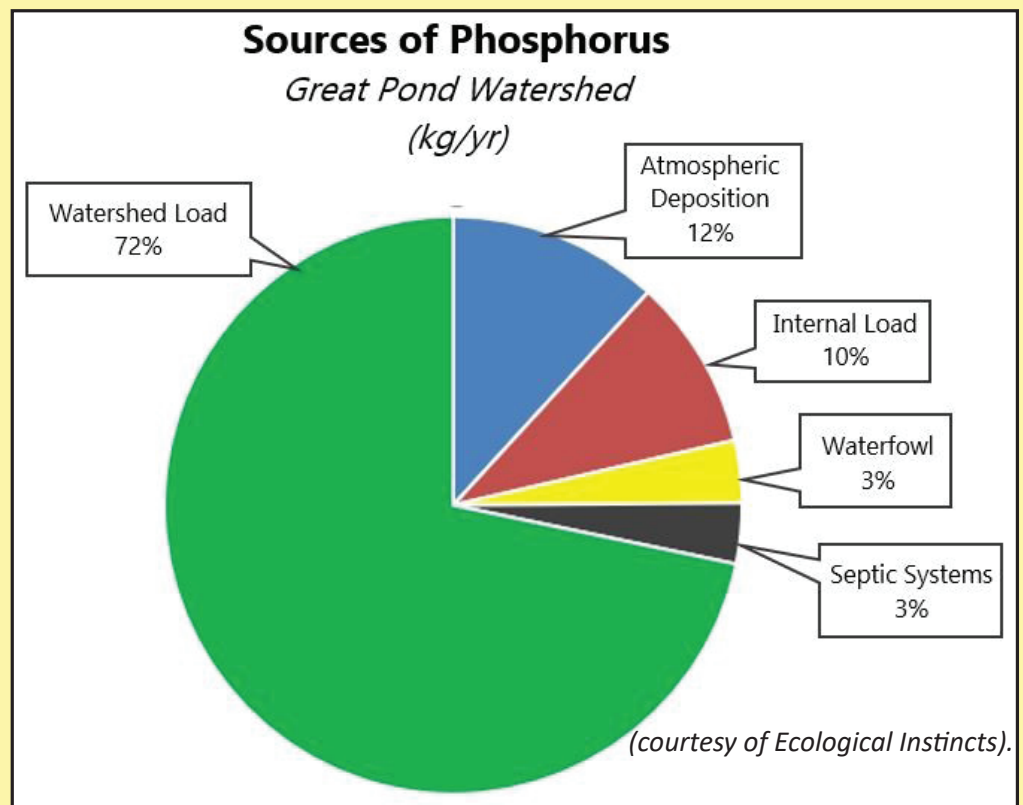


Figure 3. Breakdown of sources of phosphorus into Great Pond

So how can we do go about reversing the trend? The first step is identifying where the phosphorus in the lake is coming from. A preliminary analysis of the sources of phosphorus was performed as part of the Great Pond Watershed Based Management Plan. Phosphorus can come from watershed runoff, groundwater (including septs), the atmosphere, internal recycling (the lake sediments), and wildlife (waterfowl). The Great Pond Technical Advisory Committee (TAC - comprised of representatives from 7 Lakes Alliance, BLA, Colby College, Ecological Instincts, Maine DEP, and Water Resources Services, Inc.) compiled data on all these sources to estimate the relative magnitude of each one. The results of this analysis indicated that the primary source of phosphorus was watershed runoff (72%), followed by the atmosphere (12%), internal recycling (10%), groundwater (3%), and wildlife (3%) (Figure 3).

This analysis indicates that the key focus in reducing phosphorus must be in reducing watershed runoff. Earlier preliminary versions of this analysis suggested that internal loading of phosphorus might be as high as 30% of the total. But a detailed look at additional data by the TAC showed that there was much less phosphorus release than the previous coarse estimate. Because the internal load is only 10%, in-lake treatment (e.g. alum or aeration) will not have a meaningful impact on the phosphorus in the lake.

One source for which we currently do not have good data is for groundwater/septics. The current analysis suggests that this source is 3% of the phosphorus in the lake, but it could potentially be twice as high. While that is a still a relatively small contribution to the overall phosphorus in the lake, bad septic systems can lead to significant algae problems in localized regions along the shoreline where people recreate. Besides phosphorus, poorly maintained septic systems add nitrogen (another nutrient that algae love) and fecal bacteria into the lake. So it is important for the lake health and public health that all septs in the watershed are built and maintained properly.

Reducing the primary source of phosphorus to the lake, watershed runoff, is a team effort amongst all stakeholders in the watershed. Individual landowners can do their part by building buffers and participating in programs like LakeSmart and Youth Conservation Corps. The 7 Lakes Alliance and the BLA are working together to help coordinate larger erosion control projects in the watershed. All these actions together will help us **Reverse the Trend!**

WE'RE ALL PART OF THE PROBLEM ... AND THE SOLUTION

by Lynn Matson

This past summer our lakes looked clearer than they have in years. Yet below the surface there are problems.

One of our big challenges is invasive milfoil. We're holding our own against it for now. It hasn't spread far out of Great Meadow Stream or into Long Pond. But it's a relentless foe. We're in for a long fight.

The other big problem is phosphorus. You can't see it like the milfoil, but it's the culprit behind all our algae problems and the long-term decline in our water quality.

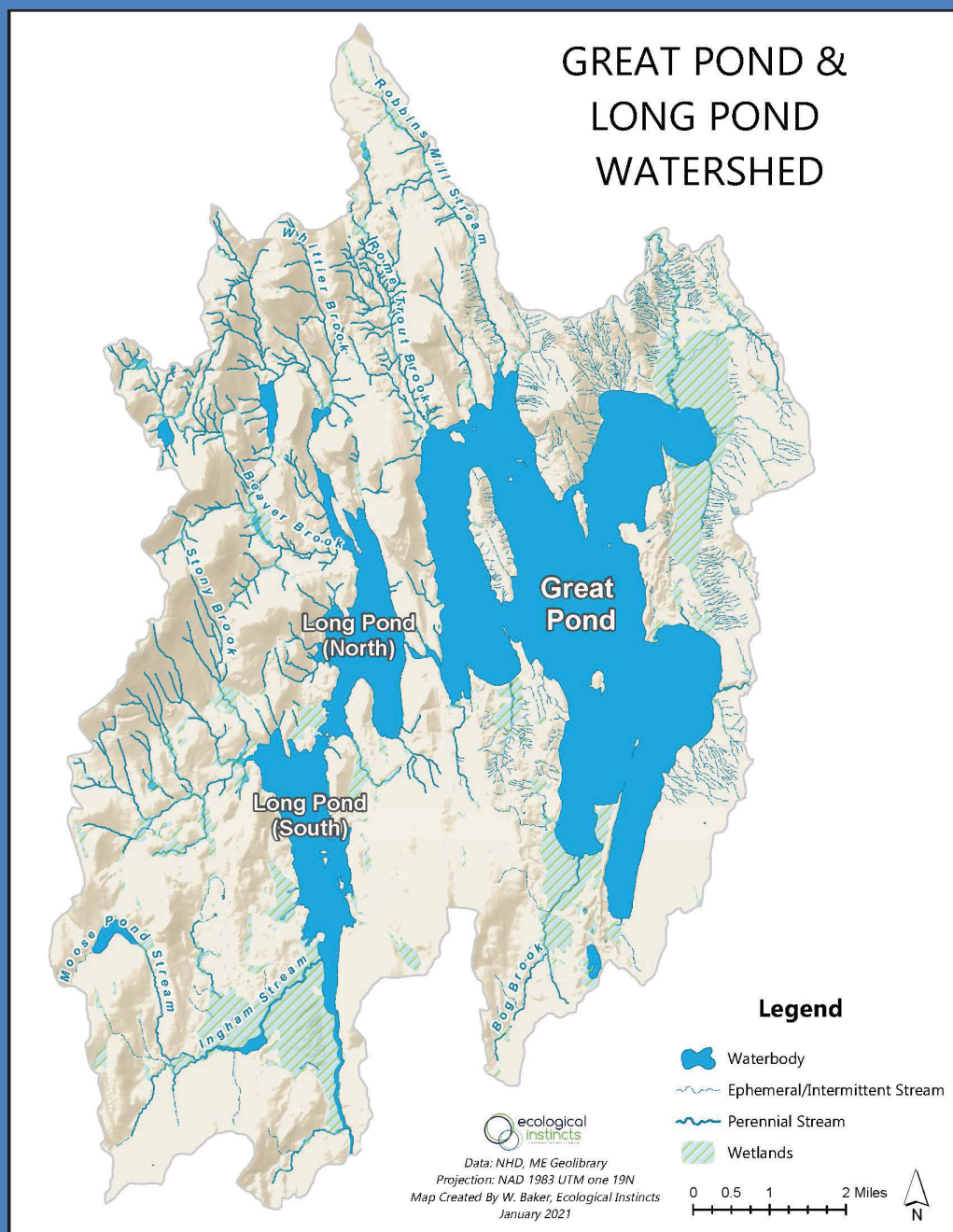
We've done a great deal of water quality research and testing in the last few years. We'll do even more in the future. We now know that our real problem is the phosphorus that's running into the lake with every rainstorm. This is called "external loading" because it's phosphorus coming from external sources from outside of the lakes.

There's also phosphorus right in the lakes, in the muck and sediment on the lake bottom. This is called the "internal load." It's now estimated that only 10% of the phosphorus problem in Great Pond is this internal load, but it's not nearly enough to justify an in-lake treatment, like alum, which would cost \$4-5 million and last, at best, 15-20 years.

By comparison, the phosphorus internal load in East Pond was 50% when a decision was made in 2018 that an alum treatment was an essential part of solution to treat its annual algae bloom. Again, the internal phosphorus load in Great Pond is only 10%.

(For the full story on the decline of the Great Pond water quality see the article by 7 Lakes Alliance Lake Science Director, Dr. Danielle Wain, on page, 10 of this newsletter.)

So, if the internal phosphorus is not the key problem and an alum treatment is not the silver bullet solution, how do we reverse the long-term decline in the Great Pond water quality?



*Note: See all the streams and tributaries in our watersheds that are feeding phosphorus from our properties right into the lakes. We're all part of the problem. We all need to be part of the solution. **KEEP THE DIRT OUT OF OUR LAKES.***

Answer ... we attack the external loading. It's by far the biggest part of the problem. It's over 70% of the phosphorus in Great Pond. That means we can't reverse our declining water quality problem if we don't address the external loading. It's a much more challenging solution, but it's the only one left. We simply must reduce the amount of phosphorus running into our lakes.

Should we have to do an alum treatment some day, addressing the external loading will continue to be a top priority. That's because the more we reduce the amount of the new phosphorus entering into the lakes, the longer the alum treatment will last.

So everything points to an all out effort to reduce the external loading. If we do it well, we'll never have to do an alum treatment.

Now, here's the thing. EVERYTHING in the Great Pond and Long Pond watersheds runs downhill right into the lakes. There's no getting around that. It's basic physics. The phosphorus is washing right down with it.

So, if you live in the watershed, have property anywhere in the watershed, or just vacation or recreate on the lakes, as we all do, we are all part of the problem and, therefore, part of the solution. All of us.

Take a look at the map of the Great Pond and Long Pond watershed that accompanies this article. Look at all the streams and larger tributaries that feed into our lakes. Each one is carrying phosphorus, and you know where it's winding up.

So, even if you don't have property right on the lakeshore, you are likely near one of these streams. The runoff from your driveway, your yard, or a ditch on your property is also feeding the phosphorus problem.

Phosphorous is a natural element found in our soil. So, any bare soil puts more phosphorus in the streams and lakes when it rains. Heavy rainstorms, which are occurring more frequently here in New England, mean more erosion, more channeling, and more soil and phosphorus flowing downhill into our waters.

How do we address this problem? Here's the key ... **KEEP THE DIRT OUT OF OUR LAKES.** It's really that simple. It's the one key thing we all can do to help.

That means wherever you have bare ground, plant it or cover it with environmental mulch. Where you have camp roads or driveways that are washing out, build in channels to divert that runoff water into the woods where it can soak into the ground. Where you have unprotected shoreline, plant buffers and boulder the banks.

You can get help doing this work simply by calling the 7 Lakes Alliance at 207-495-6039. They can provide technical assistance and even free labor through the Youth Conservation Corps. You just pay for materials. For big projects, like camp roads and ditches, they can access federal and state funding.

Yes, there are other things we all need to do to help, by not using fertilizers, cleaning up pet waste, and maintaining our septic systems. However, the big challenge and opportunity is to keep the dirt out of our streams and lakes.

We need to keep as much of our forestland intact as possible. The more of your property that is undeveloped and undisturbed the better. That's especially true along the lake shoreline, stream edges, and the buffers because natural forestland is the very best at capturing and absorbing free phosphorus.

Keep in mind there were no water quality problems before people settled this area and began developing this land. We created the problem. We can't undo the development. We don't want to. We're here, and we want to stay and enjoy this beautiful part of the world. But we all want our lakes to be clean and healthy for our enjoyment and for our kids and grandkids. That means we all have to be part of the solution and not just part of the problem.

Please do whatever you possibly can to **KEEP THE DIRT OUT OF OUR LAKES.** It's really just that simple. Thanks for doing your part.

SECRETS OF THE BELGRADE OLD TOWN MEETING HOUSE

by Dianne Dowd, President, Belgrade Historical Society

In December of 2019, The Belgrade Historical Society began a full renovation of the Old Town Meeting House. The building was cleaned out, and all rotting wood and interior walls were removed. One of the big questions was, "Would the building give up any secrets?"

The answer is yes! There were several surprises. After the interior walls were removed, evidence of an original second door on the front side and an original window on the back of the building were evident. Also wainscoting with original paint was found.

Another surprise was finding an amber glass bottle intact in the crawl space. The bottle has "Veronica Medicinal Spring Water" in raised letters going around the top of the bottle. Research on the bottle would reveal it was the product of Veronica Springs Water Company of Santa Barbara, CA. The Veronica spring water was said to be healthful and was popular in the 1880s up until the late 1920s. The bottle dates to a time frame of 1880 to 1906. Interestingly the San Francisco glass manufacturing firm that produced the bottle burned to the ground following the 1906 earthquake. When the firm reopened, the amber bottles were replaced with green glass. How our bottle got to Maine and who left it in the crawl space will remain a mystery.



Another mystery surrounded the four small cemetery stones found under the floor. Two of the markers were blank, and the other two had stylized initials. One of these had the Initials, J. C. J.

Bob Lewis of the BHS and the Cemetery Committee was intrigued and, by looking at pictures of the gravestones in Woodside Cemetery on Find a Grave website, he was able to determine the initials stand for James C. Jones. The Jones plot was found and revealed that Mr. James C. Jones died Dec. 4, 1838 at age 74. His large gravestone has ornate carvings done by Gilbert Pullen of Augusta. A stone cutter who specialized in gravestones, Gilbert Pullen, had shops in Augusta and Winthrop. There are many examples of his work in Woodside Cemetery. Adjacent to the stone for Mr. Jones is a matching stone for his wife, Mary, who died in 1832. It is possible



that the smaller stone with the initials was a place marker until the monument for Mr. Jones was completed.

If anyone has any information to add to our mysteries, please contact the Belgrade Historical Society at belgradehistoricalsociety@gmail.com or visit our website at belgradehistoricalsociety.org.

WATER QUALITY DETERMINES PROPERTY VALUES

by Liz Fontaine, BLA Board Member, Realtor

This has been an unusual year in real estate. Property values have increased throughout Maine during the Covid-19 crisis due to increased interest in real estate from both in-state and out-of-state buyers. Anyway, who would blame anyone for wanting to leave the crowded urban areas for our beautiful wide open lakes and mountains in Belgrade and its surroundings.

Even though we are experiencing higher than normal real estate values, it is very important to know that we are living with declining water quality in the Belgrade Lakes Region. This is a major environmental issue facing us today. Studies have shown declining water quality in the Belgrade Lakes Region for the past 10 years. Whether or not you are a lakefront property owner, or live near a lake, the full or partial loss of any waterbody does have a severe impact on the overall community.

Real Estate valuations decrease with the impact of low water quality. One study by the Florida Realtors Association found that a single county saw accumulated property values increase approximately \$541,000,000 due to improved water quality in that region.

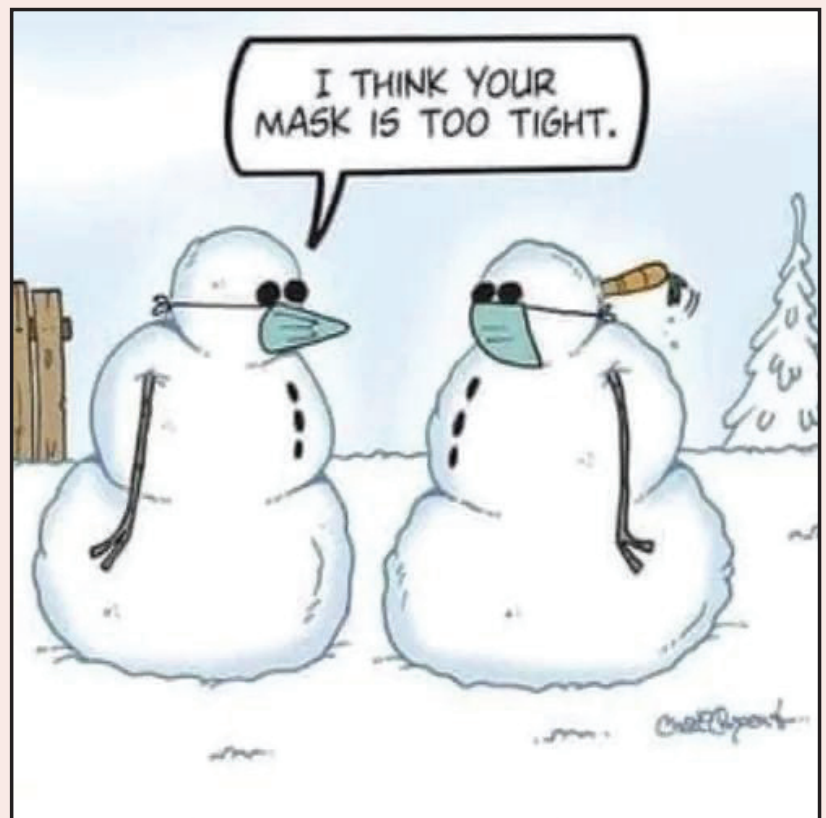
These studies found that one of the key factors in determining water quality and real estate values is the clarity of the water. As water quality decreases, the desire to use the water decreases, which then reduces the desirability and value of the surrounding real estate.

According to the Maine Department for Environmental Protection (Maine DEP), almost 60% of municipal revenues in the state of Maine are generated from taxes on property. In Belgrade, for example, more than 60% of property taxes come from lakefront homes, and studies suggest that if water clarity were to decline by one meter of visibility, Belgrade could lose \$10.5 million in property values.

According to Maine's DEP, residents spend a grand total of more than \$153 million every year on recreational activities and more than 50% of that is spent within the local community. This ultimately generates a revenue of \$30 million for the state's residents through economic turnaround.

As members of the Belgrade Lakes Association, it is up to us to make sure the water quality of our lakes is maintained at the highest level possible. We all need to lobby for laws and ordinances that protect our lakes from future pollution.

Furthermore, we must all set good examples as stewards of our lakes for others to follow. Use LakeSmart practices at all times: work to stop erosion, do not use fertilizers, be sure to plant buffers, and keep your septic functioning properly.



Finally, spread the word! Have all your friends and family become informed by joining the BLA!

THE ANNUAL BLA RAFFLE – YOU’RE INVITED TO JOIN THE FUN!!!

by George Atkinson, BLA Board Member

Although we took a COVID break last year, the BLA Raffle will continue its summer tradition in the Belgrade Lakes region as it has since its inception fourteen years ago. Please note that, with tickets sold in years past at the post office, Day’s Store, the Farmers Market throughout the summer, and also at the annual meeting, the raffle is the BLA’s largest source of income.

In the past, the two-person raffle tables have been staffed primarily by BLA Board of Directors along with a few stalwart BLA members. Starting with the 2021 raffle, we’re inviting more of our members to join the fun.

In addition to generating income to protect our lakes, some of the perks of staffing a raffle table include:

- Explaining the mission of the BLA
- Discussing the BLA’s major initiatives: milfoil and phosphorous remediation; loon preservation
- Getting reacquainted with friends and neighbors you haven’t seen since last summer -- or maybe two summers ago due to COVID
- Sharing what you like most about the Belgrades with new vacationers
- Watching with amazement the speed at which vehicles travel through town!

The 2021 raffle will kick off over the Memorial Day weekend and then run from mid-June through mid-August. Please contact George Atkinson (gatkinson295@yahoo.com), our raffle table scheduler, to join the fun and staff some shifts. Become part of this wonderful Belgrade tradition!

NEW LEADERSHIP AT 7 LAKES ALLIANCE ANNOUNCED

by Lynn Matson

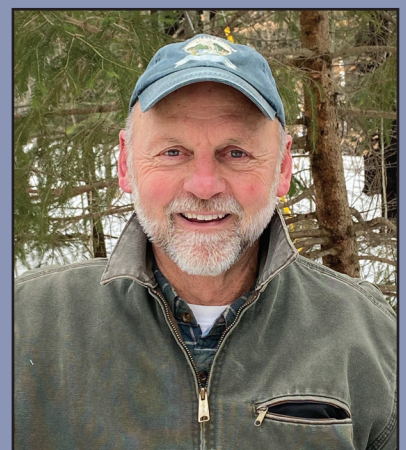
Just about 10 years ago I was invited to join the BLA Board of Directors. Thank you. Serving on your board has turned out to be one of the most enjoyable and gratifying experiences of my life.

Last month Matti Bradley and I were elected co-chairs of the Board of Directors of the 7 Lakes Alliance. We’re both honored to serve in this role.

As you know, the mission of the 7 Lakes Alliance is very close to the BLA. Both organizations work to preserve the lakes and lands of our area. While the BLA targets its efforts on Great Pond and Long Pond, the 7 Lakes Alliance works on all seven lakes in the Belgrade watershed.

To be credible with all the lake associations, I resigned from the BLA board as of the end of 2020. However, I am very much looking forward to working with the BLA in my new role to further the cooperation and collaboration of the two organizations.

Thank you for all your encouragement and support. A lot has been accomplished, but there is a great deal more to do. Working together I know we’ll protect this beautiful area and give to our kids and grandkids the same precious Belgrade experience we have all come to love and cherish.



*Out-going Board Member
Lynn Matson*

PHASE I OF WINGS MILL DAM REPAIR COMPLETED

by Dick Greenan, Secretary, Inter-lakes Dam Committee

As I write this update, all of our ponds are in great shape and far better than at any time in the past five years due to what felt like endless heavy rain events this past Fall. As we are well into our 2020-21 Fall/Winter Lakes Drawdown, Long Pond is currently 13.56" below full pond, Great Pond, 7.32" below full and Salmon down just 9" from full.

Actually, with these rain events, we still have all of the gates opened just to get back down to our Fall-Winter Lake Drawdown schedule (which can be found on our website at <https://belgradelakesassociation.org>) which calls for Great and Long Ponds to be drawn down to 1.5'- 2.0' and Salmon down to 1.0'-1.5' by November 1st., which is now a moot point!

The Dams Committee had a very successful 2020 despite the COVID distractions. Phase I of the Wings Mill Dam Remediation project went according to plan with Phase II to commence this coming Spring. It was quite an engineering feat to successfully complete restoration of the 100' spillway/walkway without losing any of our precious water in the process thanks to a state of the art 100' x 30' x 8' rubber and nylon reinforced coffer dam which is essentially a large water bag that weighs 2,500 lbs. dry and which required three visits from the Central Maine Crane Company.

Phase II involves replacement of most of the lumber in the walkway to and including the caged gate facility and will, once again, require the services of the Waterville-based Kavestone, LLC Construction Company and their cofferdam.

The persistent leaking of this 100-year old dam has finally stopped! With several thousand dollars of stainless steel hardware and pressure treated hemlock, we should easily get another hundred years this time around!

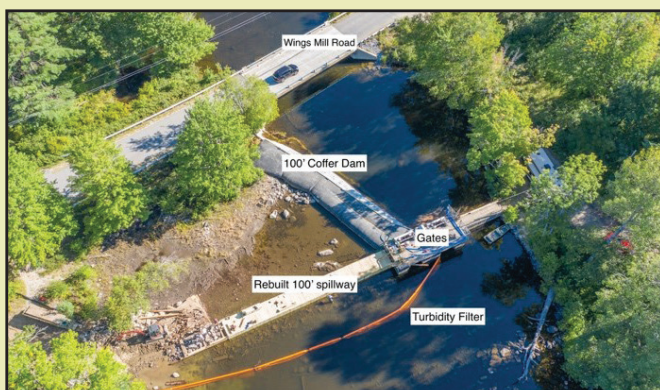
Thank you all for your continued support, and enjoy your winter as much as possible! It's supposed to be another classic, but it's always beautiful here in the Belgrades.



Coffer dam being positioned



Coffer dam in place



Wings Mill Dam, August 2020



Completed spillway, September 2020

THE RAFFLE THAT WASN'T

by Dr. Andrew Cook, BLA Board Member

Given the beautiful summer and how much traffic increased in the village later in July and August, we had to reconsider our decision. "Did we do the right thing by cancelling the raffle?" We think we did. No one got COVID because of the raffle. On the other hand, we also did not get our usual and important \$40,000 of important BLA revenue from the raffle. This meant we had to reach into the piggy bank to pay for the many wonderful programs the BLA supports every year: water quality work, loon survey work, erosion control work, milfoil work, and so on.

Fortunately many stepped up and made special BLA donations to help cover for the missing raffle revenue. We are still short. Even more donations would be helpful.

As you consider if you can make a second or a large BLA donation this year, recall that the recent CARES Act provides special allowances for "cash" (versus securities) donations to charities like the BLA. So, for example, everyone can take up to an additional \$300.00 donation off the top line (income) of your 2020 income tax if you donate cash to a charity (the BLA!). Or if you take more than the \$24,000 standard deduction, you can deduct an unlimited amount of your charitable donations, up to your entire income amount, off your 2020 taxes. If you are in that group, check with your tax advisor to be sure you are clear on how to do this.

The point is, IF YOU WERE DEBATING AS TO WHEN TO GIVE THAT ONE BIG ONE TIME GIFT YOU HAVE BEEN THINKING OF GIVING TO THE BLA FOR THE IMPORTANT WORK IT DOES – this is the year!

And you can be a winner. Just take a copy of this great picture (which was our #1 2020 raffle prize), frame it and say to yourself, "This year, during the COVID crisis, I won the virtual raffle prize – this beautiful virtual Hamlin's Marine pontoon boat." It will look beautiful on your wall, in your study, or den – and will lead to many wonderful stories as the years roll by after the raffle that wasn't. Plus you don't have to take it out of the water, store it, or get the engine worked on – an added bonus!

You will feel great knowing you went the extra mile for the lakes at the time when the lakes needed it.

Thank you for all your support. We are going to have the raffle for real in 2021 – a real raffle with real prizes – and really good ones. For sure, as usual, thank you for helping all of us preserve and protect our beautiful lakes.



Hamlin Marine's Magnificent 19' Bennington 188SLV Pontoon Boat with a F40 Yamaha motor

TRUTH VS FICTION: YOU AND A “YACHT”

by Matti Bradley, GPYC Commodore

The term, **yacht**, originally referred to light, fast sailing vessels that were used to pursue pirates into shallow waters. Modern **yacht clubs** are geared towards honing sailing skills, versus **sailing clubs** which are primarily social. The GPYC (Great Pond Yacht Club) mission is simple, “to spread the love of sailing.” We meet that goal by getting on the water and sailing with friends and neighbors (we do have social moments, too!).

Somehow, fictional characters such as Thurston Howell, III, on Gilligan’s Island, and Rodney Dangerfield in the movie Caddyshack, have usurped the term yacht to represent highfalutin folk. I have not met any of those in Belgrade Lakes! The boats you see most often on Great Pond are the beautiful 18ft Minuets, originally built from 1965 to 1973 in Nova Scotia. Local folks have found them and are fixing them up. They are the boats you see lined up in the stream as you head into town. There are lots of different boats in the GPYC. I think the smallest is 14 feet & the longest is 26 feet. If it has sails, it is good to go! But you don’t need a sailboat to learn to sail or to participate in the GPYC. What you DO need to do is let us know you are interested! Want to learn more about sailing? Want to get out on the lake with some fun, passionate people who are all still learning, too? We would love to have you! No prerequisite or lake house required. Bring the kids! It’s a family affair.



Minuets On The Stream

In 2014, the GPYC, in conjunction with the town of Belgrade and the non-profit, SailMaine, founded the Belgrade Youth Sailing Program operating out of the Center For All Seasons. The successful program offers six affordable 1-week instruction sessions to youth aged 8 to 17. I am thrilled to share that the program is retiring the run-down loaner boats the kids have been using and is getting six fun new boats! It took a village to raise the \$25,000 we needed. Luckily, we live in a wonderful and generous village! THANK YOU!!



Less than 100 days left to ice out!

THE BEST OF TIMES

by Peggy Stander (known to many as Maggie Shannon) and Diana Fenn Schultz

Did you ask when that was?

It was when Dave Webster could and did deliver letters to our dock addressed simply to "Peggy Stander, Belgrade Lakes, Maine," as long as they had that 4-cent first class stamp in the corner. It was the 50's!

For a few sunlit summers back then Diana Fenn, Mitzi Curtin and I often headed down the lake to Day's in our 3 little outboards to provision our campouts. We'd tie up at Johnson's Marina and tiptoe over its oil-stained floor past busy men and revving outboard motors churning in water barrels before we headed across the road to Day's Store. The store back then was as chock-full of everything needful and much, much more, as it is today. One whole wall was covered with animal skins that Mr. Day and his brothers had trapped and cured. Equipped with necessities - - Hershey bars, graham crackers, marshmallows, comics, and the boring useful stuff - - we headed out. The western shore was empty north of the Blaisdell Shoal back then, as was the whole west side of Hoyts, so we had our pick of campsites long since become camps.



Swimming, water-skiing, camp chores, sailing, canoeing, berrying on Mosher Hill, climbing Mt. Phillip, picnicking on Crooked Island or Sandy Beach in North Bay filled the days, but there were adventures off the water, too. Every Wednesday night without fail we Great Pond kids would join guests from Boomer's Camps at the Sunbeam Roller Rink in Smithfield to skate and flirt during "North End Night." All our friends were there, and we went religiously every year until Ray Boomer sold his fishing camp on Hoyt's. McGrath's White Fawn on Route 27 got families to forsake the lake for Sunday dinner or an evening meal of crispy 'Chicken in the Ruff' alfresco. Glamour wrapped our nights out at Lakewood Summer Theater in Skowhegan where famous actors appeared in plays that later might make it all the way to Broadway. For a few magical years we had our own summer stock theater right in the Village when Mr. Engelsman, an impresario and summer visitor, conjured drama from the air by luring vacationing soap opera stars to the lakes and borrowing his props and furniture from friends around



Mid 1950s. Far right: Diana Fenn Schultz. Rear right: Mitzi Curtin Cushing. Girl with "middle hat": Maggie (Peggy Stander) Shannon.

the lake. (From time to time, the audience might hear a whisper like, "I hope they don't break Mrs. Whitney's antique chair.")

Just north of the Village, another summer resident, John J. Casale, bred Arabian horses at Rome Farms and kept a few saddle horses in the smaller barn. Diana and I were lucky enough to get the job of exercising them on a track in the pasture that lies between the farmhouse and Windover Drive today. Mr. Casale favored a massive, silver-decked Western saddle and rode a great chestnut mare broad enough to carry him with ease. The groom made sure to water the track to keep her hooves from raising clouds of dust, but he couldn't

keep the wildlife at bay. Foxes in the woods often unsettled our high-spirited mounts, and the morning a six-point buck leapt the pasture fence occasioned some excitement.

It's been fun for us to remember when summers were an ocean of time in this rare place which seems to make you more, somehow, than you are anywhere else. Thanks for asking.

Peggy and Dee

The newsletter staff (Polly, Liz and Marcel) hope you enjoy this edition.
Printed by The Print Shop in the Village, marcelprints@outlook.com.



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\$ REBATE \$



Save Money When You Protect Your Lake!

**YOU'LL EARN MONEY BACK ON BUFFER PLANTS AND LANDSCAPING,
AS WELL AS SEPTIC PUMP-OUTS AND SEPTIC SYSTEM INSPECTIONS!**

Stable shorelines and stopping stormwater runoff are so vital to lake health that **BLA** will reimburse Great and Long Pond shorefront homeowners 10% of their investment when they build or reinforce their vegetated buffer strip, and/or complete a septic tank or cistern pump-out, and/or septic inspection this year.

This offer is good for buffer work or purchase and completed septic pump-out and/or septic system inspection between August 1 and December 31, 2020. The Rebate limit: \$500.
Proof of completed work required.

Get your **REBATE** by mailing your receipt, showing plant materials purchased and itemizing completed work to:

BLA REBATE
PO Box 551
Belgrade Lakes, ME 04918

Be sure to include your USPS address so we can send you your money!
Include phone and email too, please.