

# Washington Lakes Watershed Association

Water quality advocacy and conservation education since 1991

**JANUARY 2023**

**Greetings ~ Welcome to 2023!**

Another year has come, and as I look back at 2022 for WLWA we definitely got back to normal. We were able to meet in person, which was very nice considering the past two years. We had two events that I feel got us off to a nice reboot. We held a very well attended guided educational walk for kids and parents at Nelson-Butterfield park on Crystal Lake which we were able to provide for free with all materials included, which kicked off our community outreach and education initiative.

The second was our 2nd annual Photo Contest/ Annual Meeting & Keynote in August, which again was well attended. We got to enjoy wine and cheese that was donated by the Washington General at the Corner Gallery who donated the space while we perused all the outstanding photos that were submitted and then listened to a great talk about Maine loons. It was a very enjoyable evening.

WLWA conveyed our gratitude to the Town of Washington and to Frank Jones Jr. for the improvements made to Crystal Lake Park.

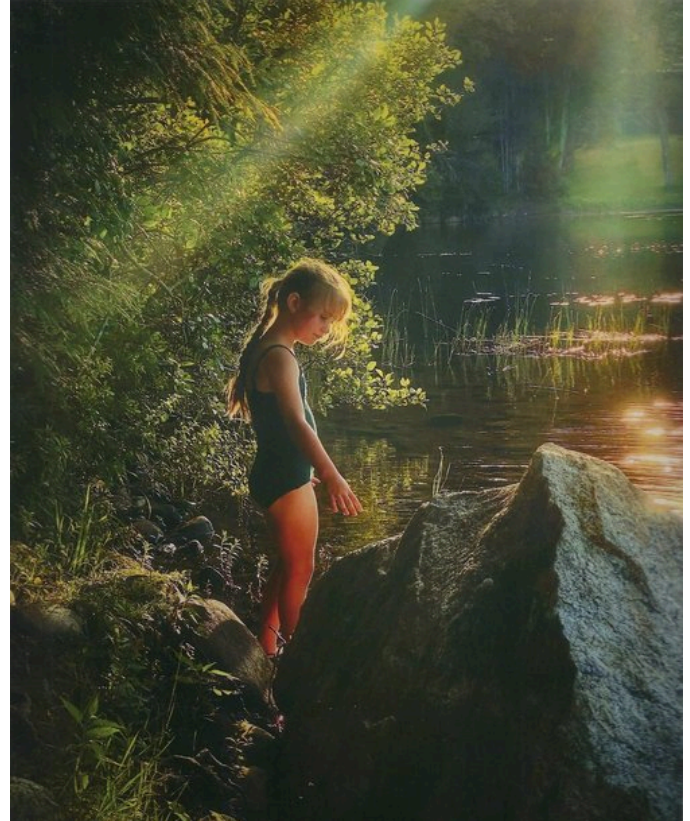
As we head into 2023, we have some new ideas that we are going to flesh out. We hope to expand our 3rd annual Photo Contest as well as get out more information about invasive snails. We also hope to start trail reclamation work in the watershed and update all the signage at our boat landings. As always, we would love to have anyone interested join us for our meetings and see what's going on. I also want to thank all those that made 2022 such a success for us and look forward to working with you in 2023.

*Thank you,*

**Jeff Grinnell, WLWA President**

## **WLWA Second Annual Photo Contest**

The second annual photo contest was exhibited with ribbons awarded in conjunction with the annual meeting in August.





*Photo contest cont...*

From the 17 entries illustrating everything from people enjoying the fun of racing boats on Washington Pond, to winter scenes, to quiet serene moments, two amazing photos were selected as winners of the 2022 contest.

A first place ribbon was presented to Rachel Oakes for the striking photo of her daughter titled "Golden Hour 1." Doug Crossley received the second-place ribbon for a beautiful underwater view of "Lily Pads from Down Under."

All the entries can be seen on the WLWA website (<https://www.washingtonlakesassociation.org/2022-photo-contest>). Congratulations to the winners and all who submitted their wonderful photos.

WLWA will announce the 2023 contest in May. Keep an eye out for fliers in the library and the Washington General Store, as well as on the WLWA website and Facebook. What a great way to promote awareness of the waters and watershed of Washington, Maine.

### **Annual Meeting featured Loon Keynote**

We are graced with Maine's iconic loons in our midst and to learn more about them, we invited Susan Gallo, Maine Lakes Executive Director to present "**Our Loons & Our Lakes.**" She described the work of the Maine Lakes Association and also shared information about the "LakeSmart" program, Sue shared updates on how Washington Pond is doing, and some easy things lakeshore owners and visitors can do to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities for everyone.

Sue shared some interesting loon facts...the habits, preferred habitats and threats...much of which you can learn from:

*Your Loon Questions Answered:*

<https://maineaudubon.org/projects/loons/your-loon-questions-answered/>

And a restoration project to protect loons:  
<https://maineaudubon.org/projects/loons/loon-restoration-project/>

*Save the Date:*

**2023 Annual Meeting: August 11th**

### **Shoreline Nature Walk**



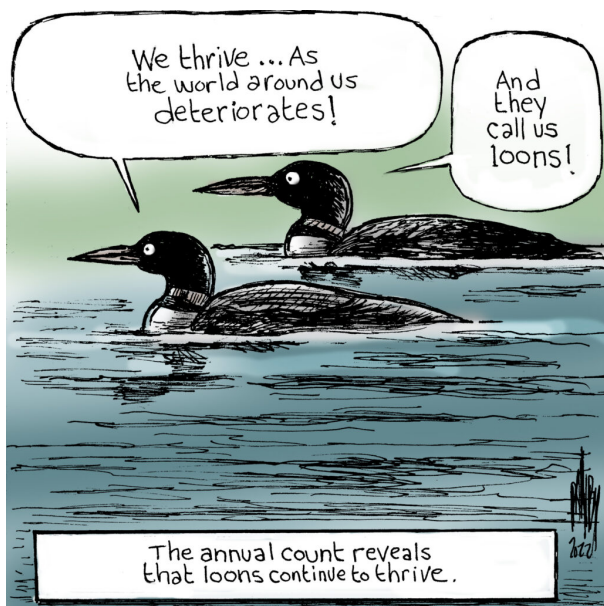
WLWA sponsored an educational nature walk for local families in July. The walk was held at the Crystal Lake Boat Launch. Brett Willard, Merrysprings Program Director led the walk. Six children and seven adults attended the session. It was a perfect sunny summer day. The session started at 10:00, at the boat landing parking lot. Brett immediately engaged the children with information about some local birds that were moving about in the trees. Next Brett told the group about the local ferns and how they reproduce. The group moved onto the path leading to the swimming area where Brett talked about sarsaparilla plants, jewel plants, carpenter ants in a pine tree and many other species of fauna and wildlife. Next was the swimming area where Brett told the children about the blueberries, both low and high bush, huckleberry plants, and how the native plants along the water's edge help to keep erosion down. Then all the children received dip nets and bug catchers, the children used these to explore the water and shoreline. They discovered diving beetles, loons and other water wildlife. The session ended with a snack for all the children.

The walk was very successful and we feel we met our goal of beginning to educate future generations on the importance of our lakes, ponds and rivers.

## Water Quality Report

Winter is my time to reflect on lake quality for Washington Lakes. We had a good year in 2022. Just about all readings taken this spring-summer-fall fell in the middle of historical numbers, just what we all want. The most exciting news for 2022 was the training of new volunteers to help with water measurements. Jeff Grinnell and Scott Edwards completed their training and were certified in May. Anne Jenkins missed training due to Covid, but has been out on the water with both Scott and me enthusiastically taking and recording measurements. I am sure she will be certified this spring: she knows her stuff. Scott took many of the readings this year, especially while I was away in late August into September. We are blessed with great water quality in both Washington Pond, and Crystal Lake, and even more blessed with new volunteers to keep an eye on it and make sure it stays that way. The detailed report for 2022 is posted on the website under the "About" tab.

– Roger Cady



## Statewide Loon Count

Nesting adults are up... chicks are down. See Maine Audubon Annual Loon Count. Please help us spot and track our 3 pairs; we have reports of losing one of a pair of chicks in 2022.

\*Reprint graciously permitted by George Danby, Staff Editorial Cartoonist for the Bangor Daily News

## Is there a Rain Garden in your future?

I love that there is always something to learn when you are a gardener, avid or occasional. One type of garden that I am learning about is the "rain garden." Not only are they cool to look at, they prevent erosion and run-off.

A rain garden is simply a shallow depression filled with adaptable native plants that can absorb and slowly filtrate water into soil. And in light of recent heavy rains followed by drought, putting in a rain garden and choosing the correct native will tolerate the fluctuation makes a lot of sense.

We want our garden to do the job and not cause problems so there are a few guidelines to consider: locate away from your foundation, well, leach field or septic system, in an area free of tree roots or wetlands. Don't forget to check for underground power or pipes and DIG SAFE. If you have waterfront property, please check with the Code Enforcement Officer regarding special shoreland consideration.

Native plants help pollinators, butterflies, bees, birds, and reptiles and amphibians. Native plants also contribute to soil health. We are lucky here in the Midcoast area to have nurseries that specialize in native plants and most at least have a selection. So, start your research this winter so you are all ready to get your fingernails dirty in the spring!

For more information on making a Rain Garden:  
<https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2702e/#what-is>

– Peg Hobbs

## Invasive Snail Project Update

WLWA has developed a three-pronged response to the presence of the invasive snails in Washington Pond. Our first priority is to prevent the spread though education and *Protect the Lakes You Love* signage we will post at the town landing alongside the Clean, Drain & Dry campaign from the department of fisheries. The second effort is public education, through our website, fliers and informative postings at the kiosk at the landing and other locations. We will hold an informational forum in June. Finally, we will continue remediation efforts by collecting and safely composting these unwanted invaders.

*Look for posters and flyers and join us at the snail forum. We will announce a mid-summer Snail Derby...and invite local adventurers to help in collecting and mapping the invasive snails. We will also be turning our attention to learning about and identifying native mollusks in our waters.*

### **Way to be Citizen Scientists!**

*Kudos to all those in the growing citizen science movement...and how you can get in on it.*

Audubon's annual bird counts must be the grandmother of citizen science. Our mobile phones have put wide participation and vital data collection in the hands of all of us.

WLWA engages in Citizen Science through our volunteer water monitoring and reporting. We want to encourage more of our neighbors to join in this and more. Visit our website to learn about *iNaturalist* and *iMapInvasives*, social networks of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists mapping and sharing observations locally and around the world. And also *The Big Night* project to protect salamanders migrating to vernal ponds and crossing our roads.

### **Ice-Out Contest and Tracking Ice-In**

The 2022 Ice-out date for Washington Pond was 4/2/22, with Sean Donaghy nailing the date at the annual Hill & Gully Snowmobile Club Fishing Derby, where many of our predictors gather.

The contest to foretell the ice-out date begins January 31 and ends February 18<sup>th</sup> at the Derby...watch our Facebook page. Also, give us a holler if you notice the ice-in on our lakes...the date that the surface is completely covered by ice. We report these to the Lakes Environmental Association.

### **Summer Paddles**

The annual paddle races and the lovely and peaceful Sunset Paddle are not to be missed. Check the website for dates and join us!

### **Who moved my buoy?**

Moving cheese is one thing. Moving the buoy is just cheesy. If you don't get why that isn't funny...please read the full text of our excellent Water Quality Report on the WLWA website.

### **Update on WLWA Projects**

- We are prioritizing education projects with Prescott Memorial Elementary School
- With the support of the Town of Washington, our planning and grant application for a dock at the Washington Pond Public Access Landing will be resubmitted (again!).
- We are continuing to work with the Medomak Brook Connection to support next steps on the alewives project.

### **The WLWA Board of Directors:**

Jeff Grinnell (President), Scott Edwards (Treasurer), Dale Griffin (Secretary), Casey Carr, Sue Sainio Edwards, Roxanne Eggen, Neil Gross, Kathleen Gross, AnnaMary "Peg" Hobbs, and George Stone.

### **JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP**

Membership donations are due in January. Your donations are our only source of revenue. Dues for individuals are \$15, and families are \$25. These contributions pay for projects, water testing, memberships with related organizations, and are gratefully accepted. As a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations are tax-deductible.

#### **Mail to:**

Washington Lakes Watershed Association  
P.O. Box 373  
Washington, ME 04574

We count ourselves lucky to live and to vacation in this beautiful town and watershed, and to play a part in protecting and celebrating the health of our lakes and streams and the web of life they support. And we thank our members who join us in our stewardship.

#### **Visit WLWA online:**

Facebook: **Washington Lakes and Watershed 2.0**  
Give us a "like" and visit often as we post news, events, updates and items of interest. We also invite your photos, comments, questions and lake observations.

#### **Our website:**

[www.washingtonlakesassociation.org](http://www.washingtonlakesassociation.org)

#### **Contact Us:**

wlwassn@gmail.com