



Washington Lakes Watershed Association

Water quality advocacy and conservation education since 1991

DECEMBER 2021

Greetings ~

This year marked a milestone in the history of the Association. Our long time president Charlotte Henderson decided it was time to step down as president. Over the years, Charlotte has been a stalwart champion for our watershed and has a long history of achievements to hang her hat on. One of the last was leading the push to restore an alewives fishery to Washington Pond and through her efforts, that program is now underway. It's not often you find someone who is as kind and gentle as Charlotte who also has the grit and determination to lead a project such as this but that she did. Charlotte did agree to stay on the board as the "keeper of institutional knowledge". Thank you Charlotte for all that you have done and continue to do.

As we turn the page to another year with the WLWA, I also want to thank the board for all the teamwork and support I have had as the new president during the transition. It certainly is a remarkable group. I look forward to working with you all in the future.

This next year is going to be fun and educational for everyone. We are going to work on and complete projects that we have going, as well as our new idea of doing things that are aimed at encouraging a younger demographic in joining us and learning about protecting, and promoting our own little corner of the world. I think this is going to be a good upcoming year and look forward to this endeavor.

Thank you,

Jeff Grinnell, WLWA President

The WLWA Board of Directors:

Frank Braun, Casey Carr, Scott Edwards (Treasurer), Sue Sainio Edwards, Roxanne Eggen, Dale Griffin, Jeff Grinnell (President), Neil Gross, Kathleen Gross, Charlotte Henderson, AnnaMary "Peg" Hobbs (Secretary), Anne Jenkins, George Stone, and Alewife Project Coordinator, Brian Alves.

Good year for Water Quality

The big story in 2021 about the water is finding invasive "Chinese Mystery Snails" in Washington Pond. While the appearance of snails, at least in the quantities that have been found is a nuisance, the health of both Washington Pond and Crystal Lake water was excellent this past summer. Washington Pond measurements were entirely within normal ranges despite some very wet and very dry weather months.

Crystal Lake, which gave us a scare with readings in 2019 returned to normal in 2020 and continued within normal ranges this year. Thanks to all the watershed residents who are being good stewards and helping to keep our lakes pristine.

– **Roger Cady**

Summer Paddles

We teamed up with the Rec Committee again this past July for the annual paddle races with kids and adult divisions. We had all kayaks this year (looking at you, canoes and paddle boards!). We also added our first annual Sunset Paddle on a lovely July evening. Our numbers were few; however, a good time was had by all.

Annual Meeting featured Historical Presentations and Photo Contest

The Corner Gallery was open in August for WLWA's first annual photo contest, an impressive display.



Congratulations to contest winners:

Best in Show:

—Matthew Shannon, *Junebug and the River*

1st Prize, Adult Category:

—Sandy Hall Bourrie, *Crystal Pond Watch*

2nd Prize, Adult Category:

—Helen Maas, *Fall Into Winter*

3rd Prize, Adult Category:

—Sue Edwards, *Pink Reflections*

1st Prize, Family Category:

—Moody Family, *Purple Pickerel Rushes*

We look forward to next year's contest and encourage our area young people to enter!

The **History of Medomak Camp** was presented by Holly Stone, with photos and mementos. This was fascinating and evoked an earlier era...as well as chronicling her passion as a former camper (with her partner) to restore part of the camp as a camp for families, and develop a center for retreats to be held in this special place.

Jeff Grinnell presented the **History of Dams and Mills in our Watershed**. Jeff discovered a map of Washington that was hand-marked by his father to identify the old mills of the area. That history came alive as Jeff described a once bustling Washington before the turn of the previous century, milling and assembling barrels for the lime trade. Waterpower at work! A PDF of the map will be posted on the WLWA website.

Washington Pond Landing

Washington Pond Landing, a small spit of access on Razorville Road, is our local swimming hole. And a popular spot it is. Along with swimmers there is hand carry access and it remains busy with kayakers and in more recent years stand-up paddle boarders.

The WLWA along with the Washington Recreation Committee have provided a port-a-potty and there are signs flagging the poison ivy along the edge of the vernal area east of the access road.

It is a Carry In and Carry Out facility and I wish to applaud the users of this facility for the respect they have shown.



Our Washington Pond landing is a gem.

— Peg Hobbs

Crystal Lake Park available to all

Did you know that there is a waterfront park available to all Washington residents? It is on Crystal Lake and has been open to the public for over 55 years.

In the mid-1960s, the Town of Washington acquired a piece of lake front property on Crystal

Lake and decided to make it a public park for all residents to enjoy. Since the property required a lot of work to make it user friendly, the Washington Wonder Workers 4-H Club chose it as a community project. The 4-H club drafted boy scouts and various town people to assist them for several weekends to accomplish this mission.

Crystal Lake Park is an excellent place to swim, paddle and picnic. For those who like winter sports, it is also a good place for ice skating and snowshoeing. The next time you are looking for a place to enjoy the outdoors you may want to consider visiting this gem.

– Sue Edwards

Invasive Snails found in Washington Pond

A report of unusual, large snails (a lot of them) was emailed to our WLWA website in August. Peg Hobbs and Roxanne Eggen organized a swift response. We were able to confirm them as Chinese Mystery Snails (unfondly referred to as CMS). WLWA and volunteers went onto action. An expanding crew waded, snorkeled, and dove to collect buckets of the invaders. These must be professionally composted in a secure manner as they reproduce rapidly and survive outside of water for extended periods. The CMS are widespread—the only practical mitigation is removal—one bucket at a time, disposed of properly. Their potential impact is under study, but certainly they are crowding out other species and disturbing the ecology. We will resume scouting and removal next year and greatly appreciate all reports and assistance. For more information on collecting and disposal text or call Peg Hobbs (207) 790-0723.



Tracking Ice-Out, Ice-In

The 2021 Ice-out dates for both Washington Pond and Crystal Lake were 3/29/21.

The annual contest to predict the Ice-out date begins January 31 and ends February 28...watch our Facebook page for information. Also, give us a holler if you notice the ice-in on Washington Pond, the date that the pond surface is completely covered by ice. Thanks for your help.

Update on WLWA Projects

- We are planning to sponsor local training for water quality measurement certification, headed up by Roger Cady. We'd love to get area young people involved in this important and fascinating project.
- 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.
- We are continuing to work with the Medomak Brook Connection to support next steps on the alewives project.

Balloon releases now illegal in Maine

Studies show these releases are injurious or lethal to wildlife, especial in shoreline areas. Even biodegradable balloons are hazardous, as they break down slowly. Maine has joined several other states in enacting a law to prohibit the intentional release of balloons. Releasing 16-24 balloons would bring a first-time offense fine of \$100 to \$500. Anyone responsible for releasing more than that would face a fine of at least \$500.

Here are two resources offering alternatives for memorial and celebratory occasions:

- <https://www.preventballoonlitter.org/>
- <https://www.legacy.com/advice/10-eco-friendly-alternatives-to-a-memorial-balloon-launch/>

Is This the New Normal?

After the protracted drought of last Spring, the rains came and thankfully brought our water levels up to near normal. But the rain events are increasing in their intensity.

This trend is likely to continue as reflected in the newly issued **Maine Won't Wait** climate action plan:

<https://www.maine.gov/climateplan/climate-impacts/central-zone>

Even if not in a flood zone, we may need to consider managing the water near our homes. Gutters, rain gardens, French drains, dry creeks, swales, and buffer zones are potential solutions.

Maine Extension has bulletins to help:

<https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2702e/>

Also see the Stewardship tab on our website for additional resources.

The difference between a lake and a pond?

Our watershed presents a head-scratcher...the larger body of water is a pond, and the smaller is a lake. It seems that there is no definitive criteria, but the classic distinction is that sunlight penetrates to the bottom of all areas of a pond in contrast to lakes, which have deep waters that receive no sunlight at all. Maine is home to the largest pond in the world, the Great Pond in Kennebec County.

About Our Loons

We are looking for volunteer loon-counters for the annual Maine Loon Count held on the third Saturday in July. We missed out last year...so we are eager to connect our volunteers with Maine Audubon. Please contact us if you are willing to help.

In 2021, the Maine adult loon count was up over previous year, but the chick count was lower.

<https://maineaudubon.org/projects/loons/annual-loon-count/>

Loon fans will be happy to learn that WLWA will soon have a Loon Cam trained on a loon hot spot on Washington Pond...stay tuned!

We all live in a Watershed...or two...

We are part of the Gulf of Maine watershed, which extends from Cape Cod east to the Bay of Fundy and north to the St. Lawrence River valley. The land mass draining into the Gulf encompasses all of

Maine and portions of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Quebec.

The National Ocean Service of NOAA describes a watershed as a land area that channels rainfall and snowmelt to creeks, streams, and rivers, and eventually to outflow points such as reservoirs, bays, and the ocean.

Closer to home, Washington is divided into two watersheds, one containing both of our lakes, and draining into the Medomak River, and the other is the land area that drains into the Davis Stream, and then into Damariscotta Lake.

JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Membership donations are due on January 31, 2022. Your donations are our only source of revenue. Dues for individuals are \$15, and families are \$25. These contributions go toward increasing the general fund and to pay for water testing, memberships with related organizations and projects are gratefully accepted. As a 501(C)(3) organization, all donations are tax-deductible.

Mail to:

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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.

Wishing the best of the season to all

Visit WLWA online:

Facebook: **Washington Lakes and Watershed 2.0**

This is a **new** FB site...so give us a "like" and visit often as we post news, events, updates and items of interest. We also invite your photos, comments, and lake observations.

Our website:

www.washingtonlakesassociation.org

Contact Us:

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