

Washington Lakes Watershed Association

Newsletter 2017

Twenty-six years of water quality advocacy and conservation education

Newsletter #30

March 2017

Ice-Out Contest



Washington Lakes Association promotes an annual Ice-Out Date Contest to highlight an important annual event on lakes. The length of time lakes are “airless” affects aquatic animal and plant life and is tracked by Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program among others. Guessing ice-out is fun, serves a purpose, and includes a \$50 prize to the correct guesser. The 2017 winner will be announced as soon as ice-out happens as determined by WLWA observers. Past ice-out dates include: 4/10/2009, 4/16/2011, 4/8/2013, 4/15/2014, 04/21/15 and 3/11/2016. Last year’s winner was Hannah Carr.

Swimming lessons scheduled

This summer swimming lessons with certified swim instructor, Clairlynn Rountree, will be held at Beaver Lodge on Alford Lake. There will be 6 once-a-week lessons and the cost is \$36 for the course. Students and an adult should commit to attending all six sessions. Exact dates will be announced in local newspapers, on our Facebook page, with posters, and the Prescott Memorial and Union Elementary newsletters. If you’re interested, please email the instructor, Clairlynn Rountree, crountree@tidewater.net or call her at 785-2287. She’s handling all the arrangements. We are so grateful to her and also thank Sharon Turner and Peg Hobbs for working on details.

Trout Stocking Discontinued

At Town Meeting last year (March 26, 2016), citizens voted not to remove the boulders that block access for trailered boats at the Route 105 Washington Pond public access. The consequence of that vote is that Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Department (IF&W) discontinued trout stocking in Washington Pond as of spring 2016. As it is, Inland Fisheries personnel are required to enforce the “equitable access policy” of the department. In brief, that obligates them to stock only ponds that are fully accessible to all licensed Maine fishermen. Restricting trailered boat access to Washington Pond violates that obligation. IF&W Fisheries Biologist for this region, Jason Seiders, presented the department’s position to the select board prior to town meeting last year and has been very helpful in clarifying this situation for the WLWA newsletter. Jason can be reached at (207) 547-5314.

Washington Lakes Watershed Association

Annual Meeting

Thursday, July 20, 2017 7 p.m.

Rebecca Jacobs

**Knox Soil and Water Conservation
District**

**How plants and shrubs safeguard shorelines and
"treat" water before it runs into the lake.**

**Free seeds and shrubs suitable for buffer zones
and ground covers**

What is LakeSmart, anyway?

LakeSmart is a program adopted by Washington Lakes Watershed Association (WLWA) two years ago. It advises and recognizes lake shore property owners who help maintain the excellent water quality we have on Washington Pond and Crystal Lake, and throughout the watershed. How we do this is to meet with landowners and discuss ways to ①prevent heavy rain storms from dragging silt and other pollutants such as phosphorus into the lake, ② maintain a buffer zone, and ③avoid use of toxic chemicals.

Who can take part?

LakeSmart is for everyone with frontage on fresh water properties. You can show your pride in the way you help sustain the clarity and quality of the waters by applying for a LakeSmart evaluation.

What do I have to do?

It's easy to participate and costs nothing. Call or email WLWA members Frank Braun at 207-542-3679, frankxbraun@gmail.com or Roger Cady at 941-356-3471, roger@arcadia-associates.com and set up a time (in summer) to meet them for about an hour outside your house or camp. You will guide them around your place. Roger and Frank are both trained to observe runoff, buffer zones, and other features of the property and offer suggestions for upgrades if needed and will also make recommendations for Lake Smart Awards. What Frank and Roger do is not complex, but it does increase awareness of all the little things around your lake front that can make a difference. Importantly, their suggestions are just that – you decide what or if you want to use them. There is no pressure from us because LakeSmart is a completely voluntary program.

Who's behind this?

LakeSmart is a voluntary education and reward program for lakefront property owners. The program was created in 2004 by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), expanded in 2009 by a partnership between the Maine Lakes Society and DEP, and has been fully under the Maine Lakes Society since 2013. With 54 participating lake groups in 13 counties, Maine Lakes Society is approaching its 5-year goal of 60 LakeSmart participants by 2018. There's much more about LakeSmart on the website:

www.minelakessociety.org/lakesmart.

LakeSmart is not a governmental group or agency of any kind, just property owners voluntarily caring for their property in ways that will benefit us all in the long run. WLWA's LakeSmart Coordinators are looking forward to talking with more owners about living lightly on the lake. Call for a walk through and conversation.

LakeSmart Awards



Several property owners earned LakeSmart recognition during 2016. By maintaining their lakeshore properties to prevent surface water runoff, sustain a stable shoreline and avoid use of chemicals, Terry Bromfield, Ann & Jim Jenkins, Marianne O'Dell, Afton Stenger, and Sharon Turner will receive a plaque to display on their property. Commendations were made to David Allen, Ruth & Jim Carney, Richard Castonguay, and Ron & Linda Luce. Award recipients the previous year were Patricia Medeika, Roger & Mary Cady, Victor & Marlene Cohn, and Frank & Nancy Braun.

WLWA is deeply grateful to everybody who works to make and keep their properties beautiful, enjoyable and sustainable. Frank and Roger would love to hear from you.

How Water Quality Is Tracked

from Roger Cady, member of Washington Lakes Association and Certified Water Quality Monitor

The **first** measure of water quality is clarity or transparency. We measure this by dropping a black and white disk in the water and measuring how deep it can go before we no longer can see it. This is called the Secchi Disk Depth. We do this every 7 to 14 days from May through September. The readings are recorded and submitted to the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (MVLMT). This data is used by the State of Maine, Maine Lakes Society, and several other agencies. Water quality monitors must attend a training for certification and recertify every three years.

The **second** measure we take is to determine the amount of dissolved oxygen in the lake at various levels. Dissolved oxygen is needed for fish life. It gets depleted, especially at lower levels, by plant and algae growth. A sophisticated electronic probe is let down and both dissolved oxygen and temperature are recorded every meter. We do this once a month.

Thirdly, once a summer we do a series of comprehensive tests for pH, conductivity, color, phosphorus, alkalinity, dissolved oxygen, chloro-phyll and similar tests using special instruments.

Data from above procedures are compared with data from previous years to determine trends. This helps us understand lake chemistry and stresses on our lake. This is one way to see how well we are doing at keeping good water quality and the value of our properties.

Water Quality good in our lakes

Water quality testing was done through last summer by our two volunteer monitors, Roger Cady and Rob Stenger.

Most of the testing was confined to Washington Pond but both big lakes are holding their own and retaining good numbers for clarity and cleanliness.

A **Secchi disk** is an **8-inch** disc is mounted on a pole or line and lowered slowly down in the water. The depth at which the disk is no longer visible is taken as a measure of the transparency of the water and is called the **Secchi depth** which measures water turbidity. Since its invention in **1865**, the black and white design disk has been used, to measure freshwater transparency.



Dissolved oxygen is the amount of gaseous **oxygen (O₂)** dissolved in the water. **Oxygen** enters the water by absorption from the atmosphere, by rapid movement, or as a waste product of plant photosynthesis and is affected by water temperature and the volume of moving water.



Professional water test kits measure pH, phosphorus, CO₂, or other elements. WLWA gathers samples and pays for the analyses. When we develop a consistent test crew, we may be able to assemble our own means for all the testing. Many thanks to Rob and Roger for their steady work on this important part of lake stewardship.

? VOLUNTEER FOR WATER MONITORING ?
Contact Roger: 941-356-3471, roger@arcadia-associates.com

WLWA's 8-page 2016 Comprehensive Water Quality Report is available on our website

www.washingtonlakesassociation.com

OR

Call us – we'll send you a copy.