



THE CONSERVATIONIST

VOLUME 14
Spring 2024

WELCOME CHRIS MONZ!

The Board of Directors of the 7 Lakes Alliance is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Chris Monz as Chief Executive Officer, succeeding Laura Rose Day who will serve as Chief Conservation and Special Initiatives Officer on a part-time basis at 7 Lakes as she reengages her work as a nationally-recognized river restoration expert.

Chris Monz has been a tenured professor in the Department of Environment and Society at Utah State University. In this role, he has been a key player in recreation resource management, focused on managing and protecting outdoor recreational settings, such as state and national parks and wilderness areas. Monz is a highly respected leader in land conservation who aims to provide exceptional outdoor experiences for visitors while safeguarding the health and beauty of natural resources for future generations.

Peter Kallin, 7 Lakes Alliance board co-chair and interim CEO, noted: "We are pleased to welcome Chris Monz and believe his proven experience in recreational ecology, leadership skills and commitment

"I am particularly excited about being part of an organization of professionals who are dedicated to the fundamental work of science-based conservation, environmental education and community engagement."

—Chris Monz

to conservation make him the right leader for 7 Lakes' skilled team of dedicated lake and land conservationists at this time." Kallin added, "With Dr. Monz as CEO, we are confident that 7 Lakes Alliance will have continued success in meeting the pressures of increased recreational use of our lands and the growing challenges posed by climate change, including algal blooms and invasive species in our lakes."

Dr. Monz will officially join 7 Lakes on a full-time basis on June 1st, upon completion of his teaching commitments. He recently spent a week in Belgrade Lakes with the team at 7 Lakes Alliance and shared that he is thrilled to be returning to Maine, where he received his masters degree in ecology at the University of Maine, Orono.

Monz noted, "I am particularly excited about being part of an organization of professionals who are dedicated to the fundamental work of science-based conservation, environmental education and community engagement. I started my career with a land trust in the Hudson Valley, so working with 7 Lakes will be a return

to the fundamental conservation work that has inspired me throughout my career. I fell in love with Maine as a graduate student and have family here, so it's a wonderful homecoming for me as well as an exciting opportunity to hopefully make a lasting impact on conservation work that is vital to the Belgrade Lakes region."

Chris and his wife, Wyatt, an educator with both higher and secondary education experience, enjoy hiking, rock climbing, Nordic skiing and kayaking. Their son, Jackson, attends Bates College. 🍓



TABLE OF CONTENTS

7 Lakes Alliance Conserves Land for All	4
7 Lakes Alliance Awarded Key Federal Funding with 319 Grants	5
Invasive Aquatics Program Director, Sharon Mann Advances Cutting Edge Science at 7 Lakes Alliance	6–7
Water Quality Report by Lake and Pond	8–9
How Climate Change is Affecting the Belgrade Lakes Watershed	10
PFAS (Forever) Chemicals	11
Staff Shout Outs	12–13
Why I Give to 7 Lakes	14
Ways to Give	15

We hope you like our new newsletter format. It is printed on FSC paper (Forest Stewardship Council). This magazine format is less expensive than our previous newspaper layout, making your donations go further.

A LETTER FROM INTERIM CEO, PETER KALLIN

Dear friends of 7 Lakes Alliance,

As we head into our 6th year of conserving the lakes and lands of the Belgrade Lakes region, we are proud to be recognized as one of Maine's preeminent conservation organizations. Despite the complications of a multi-year national pandemic early in our history, our conservation programs have grown in every area as we continue to expand efforts to improve water quality, combat existing and new invasive aquatic plants, and conserve land that protects our entire watershed. This has been accomplished through the generosity of our donors and the talent and dedication of our staff and board members. This newsletter discusses some of those accomplishments, profiles some of the people making it happen, and provides insights into the challenges we tackle 12 months of the year to conserve a place that is near and dear to each of us. I hope you enjoy it!

Our former CEO and now Chief Conservation Officer, Laura Rose Day, put together a highly effective team of talented and passionate conservation professionals, who continue to work with her to protect and conserve the timeless and delicate nature of the Belgrade Lakes Watershed. A few of these staff members are profiled in this newsletter. Also profiled in this edition are community volunteers like Jeff Poulin, one of our stewardship volunteers. To be successful in landscape-scale conservation work and watershed-scale remediation requires the contributions of many people and it's only by working together as collaborative partners and teams that we will be able to succeed. Our new CEO, Chris Monz, will soon be leading these collaborations and bringing his expertise as a recreational ecologist to help solve evolving issues such as climate change and increased development pressure. This will require advancing the science behind our conservation efforts in our strongly linked land and water programs, increasing our understanding of "forever chemicals" and developing new tools like eDNA.

As a long-time member of this organization, I am proud of the progress we have made in protecting our watershed and excited about our prospects as we move forward. Our board is committed to continually adapt the way we function in order to ensure our continued success in accomplishing our mission of conserving the land and waters of the Belgrade Lakes region for generations to come.

Best regards,



Peter Kallin, Ph.D.

Interim CEO and Co-chair, 7-Lakes Alliance Board of Directors

7 LAKES ALLIANCE CONSERVES LAND FOR ALL

In support of the National and State 30 by 30 Conservation Initiative, 7 Lakes Alliance's land conservation team is working diligently with many partners toward our goal of conserving a total of 20,000 acres of the 115,000 acre (180 square miles) Belgrade Lakes watershed by 2030.

Currently, we have just over 12,000 acres in conservation.

This goal reflects both federal and state guidelines supported by numerous scientific studies demonstrating compelling benefits, such as climate resilience, enhanced water quality, and the opportunity for recreation and vital wildlife habitat.

Conserved land is up to 10 times more protective of water quality than developed land as it filters and prevents runoff, a major source of green lakes. For this reason, water quality protection is the #1 criteria 7 Lakes uses to evaluate land conservation opportunities.

Recent conservation projects include:

BLACKHORSE EASEMENT: Two conservation easements totaling 800 acres in Rome. 7 Lakes Alliance partnered with conservation-minded landowners, Dwight and Jane Allison and their family trust. The Allisons wanted to ensure their property will always remain undeveloped. This significant land parcel safeguards wildlife and forever conserves the land for its natural and low-impact recreational value. Most importantly, this conserved land provides critical water quality protection for 6 miles of streams, including Robbins Mill Stream that flows into Great Pond. 7 Lakes Alliance has actively managed this stream for variable leaf milfoil since 2012. With over a mile of frontage on Little North Pond and eighty acres of wetlands, the project ensures significant water quality protection for Little North, North Pond and Great Pond. The easement also allows 7 Lakes to establish several new hiking trails.

CASTLE ISLAND: 38 acres on Route 27 and Castle Island Road. This parcel was purchased to protect water quality in an area that was at risk of development. This property includes 880 feet of water frontage on a perennial stream that flows into Great Pond and holds promise as a location for an accessible trail system. 7 Lakes is grateful to the generosity of Castle Island Conservancy for making this purchase possible.

MOSHER HILL: 85 acres off Hathaway Lane on Great Pond. This property was purchased by 7 Lakes Alliance with the support of generous donors in collaboration with the Conservation Fund. 7 Lakes Alliance now owns this property which has a steep slope and several intermittent streams that flow into Great Pond, offering significant water quality protection.

HOYT ISLAND: 50 acres with significant frontage on Great Pond. This land will be forever protected thanks to the generosity of the Witkin family who sought to keep the land in its natural state, protecting water quality and wildlife. This land will be managed as a nature preserve to protect water quality on Great Pond in its natural state.

VIENNA MOUNTAIN: 813 acres in Vienna off Vienna Mountain Road. This land was conserved in partnership with the state of Maine's Bureau of Public Lands and added to the Kennebec Highlands public lands. This acquisition encompasses forests and former Allen's commercial blueberry fields with some of the most scenic views in the region, often including the White Mountains and Mt. Katahdin on a clear day. This land is protective of water quality of several water bodies, including Long Pond and Kimball Pond, and will facilitate a wealth of recreational opportunities.

7 Lakes is actively seeking land owners to conserve their land in Mt. Vernon, Smithfield, Rome and Belgrade.

Conserving land is the #1 way to protect our lakes!

7 LAKES ALLIANCE AWARDED KEY FEDERAL FUNDING WITH **319** GRANTS

Most of 7 Lakes Alliance's funding comes from foundations and private citizens, like you, but there is one area where we receive significant government funding: 319 projects. This federal funding helps us undertake erosion control projects that are too large for our own Youth Conservation Corps.

The 319 Grant Program was established as part of the Federal Clean Water Act. It provides federal funding to designated states and tribal agencies to implement their approved nonpoint source management programs. The grant funds are awarded by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution results from erosion, stormwater runoff, poor drainage, and contaminated groundwater. It's caused by rainfall or snowmelt picking up pollutants, like fertilizer and pesticides, and carrying them into streams, rivers, and lakes. Unlike pollution from industrial sites, NPS pollution comes from many sources, such as yards, driveways, camp roads, bare ground and unstable shorefronts.

This is an important program for the 7 Lakes Alliance to reduce erosion and keep pollutants out of our lakes. Over the last 5 years, we have received approximately \$800,000 in 319 grant funding for watershed remediation. It's important to note that every dollar in a 319 grant must

be matched, dollar-for-dollar in local funding. Hence the \$800,000 in 319 grants added up to \$1,600,000 in project spending, underscoring the importance of financial support to ensure the ongoing success of this program in our community.

Most of our 319 projects involve improving camp roads and driveways, restructuring drainage and rebuilding or replacing culverts and bridges. In almost all cases, 7 Lakes Alliance partners with local contractors. 💧



Top: Before, Bottom: After

319 grants cover two years of work.

In 2023, 7 Lakes Alliance was awarded approximately \$145,000 in 319 grants for a total of \$290,000 in projects which included:

12 PROJECTS ON MESSALONSKEE,
including 9 road sites and 3 driveways.

12 PROJECTS ON SALMON/MCGRATH,
including 7 road sites and 5 driveways.

8 PROJECTS ON LONG POND,
including 5 road sites and 3 driveways.

7 PROJECTS ON GREAT POND,
including 3 road sites and 4 driveways.

2 PROJECTS ON NORTH POND,
including 2 driveways.

New 319 Grants Awarded for 2024

7 Lakes is pleased to announce that approximately \$237,000 in Clean Water (319) grants have been awarded to address erosion issues contributing to declining water quality in Great Pond and North Pond. We have funding available for new projects around Long Pond, Great Pond, and North Pond.

If your camp road, driveway, or culvert is not functioning properly and resulting in erosion, please contact Lynn Geiger, 7 Lakes Erosion Control Policy Manager, at lynn.geiger@7lakesalliance.org to arrange an evaluation for future 319 mitigation.

Funding for these projects, in part, was provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. The funding is administered by Maine DEP in partnership with EPA.

INVASIVE AQUATICS PROGRAM DIRECTOR, SHARON MANN ADVANCES CUTTING EDGE SCIENCE AT 7 LAKES ALLIANCE

Sharon Mann, 7 Lakes Alliance's leading scientist on the invasive aquatic plant front since 2018 will soon have a new title: Doctor, with the anticipated completion of her doctorate program with an environmental and ecology degree later this year. Sharon recently shared details of an exciting and newly emerging scientific tool she is focused on that will help 7 Lakes more effectively and efficiently identify and combat invasive aquatic plants that threaten our entire watershed.

Q: What is eDNA and what impact will this science have on your work at 7 Lakes Alliance?

A: "Environmental DNA, or eDNA, allows us to identify plants and animals in their environment using traces of their DNA. All living organisms shed DNA in their environment. With respect to aquatic plants, eDNA can aid in the early detection of introduced "cryptic species" (i.e. invasive species that look like harmless native species). Once an invasive species becomes established in a new habitat, it is almost impossible to eradicate, thus early detection is key to keeping introduced species at bay. Currently, invasive plants are discovered by more time consuming and labor-intensive visual surveys by 7 Lakes Alliance staff and volunteers. Ultimately, eDNA technology will allow us to take a snapshot of aquatic plant community composition without conducting laborious visual surveys. With these eDNA tools we will be able to stop infestations early (which will prevent expensive removal efforts) and will be able to collect data on our valuable native aquatic communities and how those communities may change in response to climate change.

Q: Are you currently using eDNA technology at 7 Lakes Alliance?

A: "Yes, in 2023 I was fortunate to have received a grant from the Maine Heritage Program to begin an eDNA pilot project that will benefit the work we do at 7 Lakes and other groups throughout the state. The goal of the project is to develop a genetic library for all native aquatic plants found in Maine and key invasive species that we should look out for. The biggest limiting factor with eDNA is poor reference databases (i.e. DNA sequences). This project will sequence DNA from plants that have been identified by experts and they will be collected from broad geographic regions in Maine to capture any population differences within the species. In our first year of the project, we will be developing targeted assays or tests that will detect the two invasive aquatic plants we currently have in our watershed- variable leaf milfoil and curly leaf pondweed. Once this sequencing is done, my team and I will test it in a controlled environment, such as Robbins Mill Stream, an inlet to Great Pond, or the Serpentine, the stream that connects North and East Ponds. Once we verify that the targeted assays for curly-leaf pondweed and variable leaf milfoil works, we will start testing it in a broader environment on all seven lakes."

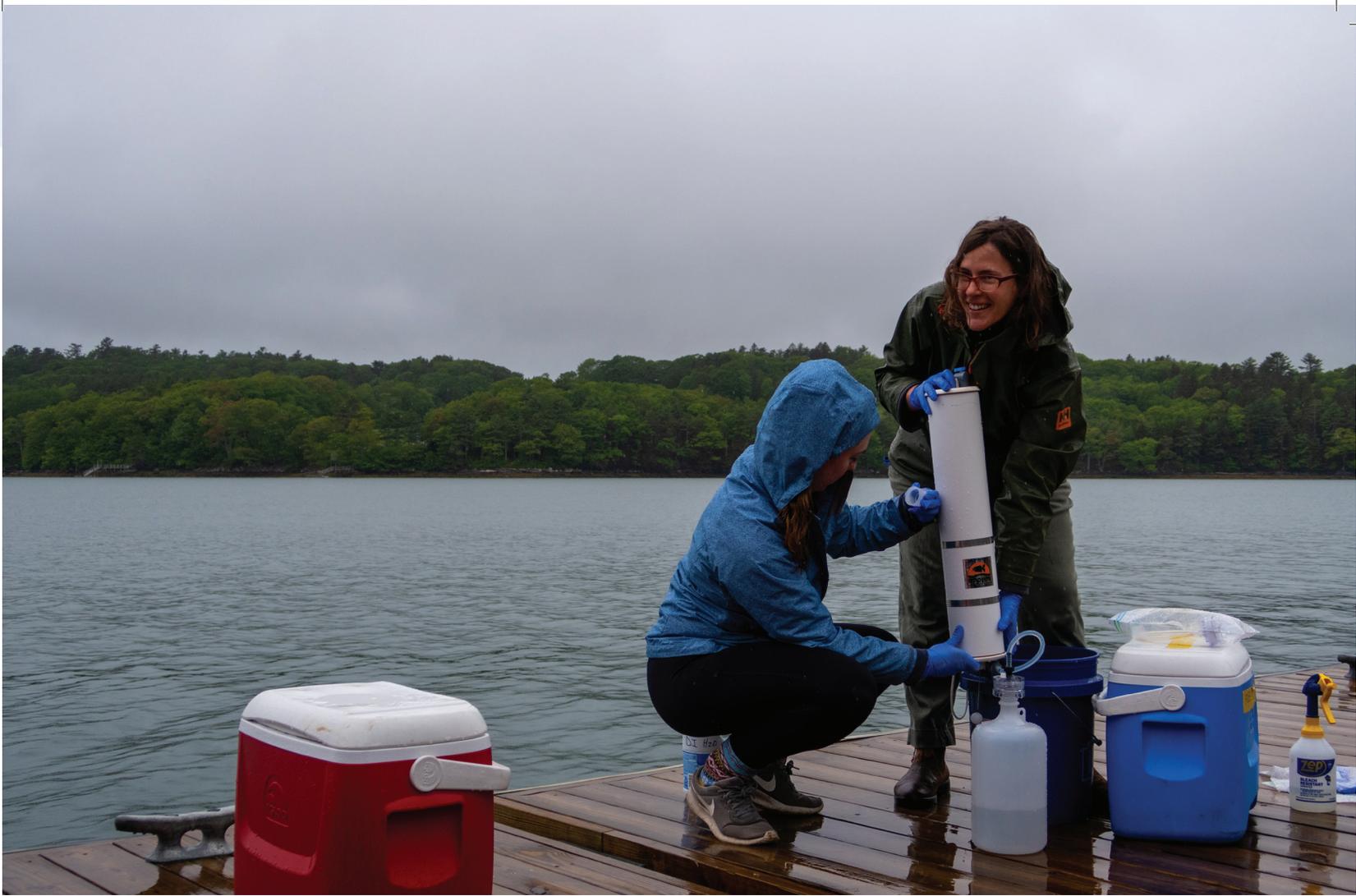
Q: Are there any particular areas of concern in our lakes where new aquatic invasives may take root?

A: "In 2018-2020, we collected extensive data throughout the watershed to create "probability maps" where aquatic invasives are most likely to be found. We consider factors such as:

WATER DEPTH – most submerged aquatic plants thrive in less than 15 feet of water.

SEDIMENT TYPE – mucky, muddy sediment is more hospitable for plants vs rocky, sandy sediment.

AREAS WITH EXISTING NATIVE PLANTS ARE GENERALLY WHERE INVASIVES CAN THRIVE – Native plants are SUPER beneficial for our lakes as they stabilize sediment and take up nutrients that would otherwise be used by algae. The same factors that help good native plants grow in certain areas are likewise beneficial for invasive aquatic plants. Native aquatic plant diversity suffers from several threats - invasive species outcompete native plants, climate change is changing the habitats of native plants, and humans often intentionally remove native aquatic plants because they do not understand their importance. It is in fact illegal to remove native plants from lakes. A small area around your dock can be



cleared to make room for swimming and recreating after obtaining the proper permit from the Department of Environmental Protection. If you are concerned that you have invasive aquatic plants along your shoreline, please send us a picture or bring a small plant sample to our building for identification.

HIGH BOAT TRAFFIC – Invasive aquatic plants often start as small fragments on boats that have been in infested water bodies. It only takes a small plant fragment to create a major infestation. This is why 7 Lakes Alliance’s Courtesy Boat Inspection program is so important!

HYDROLOGY – wind (speed and direction) and currents tend to make plant fragments move to the same

spots. You may have observed a particular cove that seems to collect a lot of water bottles, pondweeds, or other debris. All these factors were studied to map out “hot-spots” - areas where there is a higher probability of invasive aquatic plants being introduced to and successfully colonized. We survey the entire perimeter of all our lakes every year and survey “hot-spots” monthly until the plants die back for the winter.

Q: What is your relationship with Bigelow Laboratory?

A: “I am a visiting researcher based at Bigelow Laboratory, a world-renowned research institute in Boothbay, as part of my doctoral program at the University of Maine. Researchers at Bigelow will serve on

the Aquatic Plant Genomic Library Project as scientific advisors and collaborators. 7 Lakes will own this intellectual property but will ultimately be making the database “open source” so that all resource managers, conservation organizations, and state agencies in Maine can benefit from these eDNA tools. I’m confident that this new eDNA research will become a powerful new tool for us to combat the many new aquatic invasives that are heading toward our lakes at an accelerating pace.” 💧

WATER QUALITY REPORT BY LAKE AND POND

NORTH POND

2,225 acres, maximum depth of 20 feet. North Pond experienced summer algal blooms again this year, however, the blooms were shorter in duration than in 2022, likely due to the increased rainfall and cooler temperatures. The water clarity averaged two feet worse than before the lake started blooming in 2018. The algae was tested for harmful microcystins and anatoxin-a throughout the summer, but they were not detected. North Pond is currently listed as “Threatened” by the State but is being considered for addition to the list of impaired lakes.

GREAT POND

8,239 acres, maximum depth of 69 feet. Great Pond’s water clarity averaged three feet less than in 2023, compared with the previous decade. The declining water quality was likely associated with increased erosion and runoff due to climate change. This year’s results underscore the need to continue to work on watershed improvements to minimize erosion. Great Pond is listed by the State as “Impaired.”

LONG POND

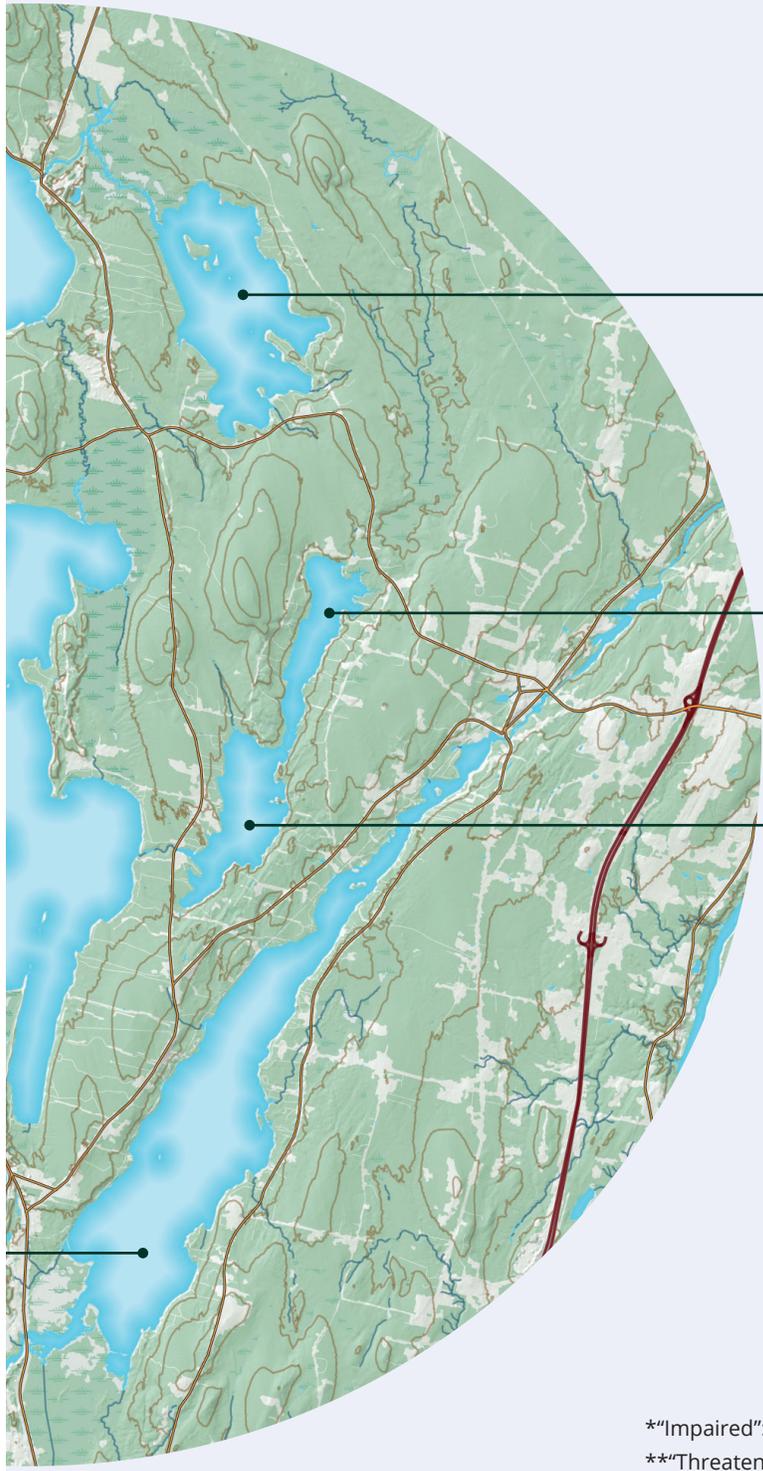
2,714 acres, maximum depth of 106 feet. Both basins of Long Pond had water clarity about three feet less than average for the previous decade—very similar to the pattern seen in Great Pond. This is not a surprise since about half of the water in Long Pond comes over the dam in the Village from Great Pond. In 2006, Long Pond was added to the state’s list of “Impaired” lakes due to declining water quality.

MESSALONSKEE LAKE

3,510 acres, maximum depth of 113 feet. This year the water clarity in Messalonskee also averaged about three feet less than in the past decade. The highest water quality this year was recorded in late November. Messalonskee Lake is also listed as “Threatened” by the State.



Each of the 7 individual Belgrade Lakes has unique characteristics and reactions to varying weather conditions. While this past summer was one of the wettest summers on record in Maine, with multiple storms each dumping over 4” of rain in our area, the effect was not universal across our seven lakes. However, increased extreme weather events are causing increased runoff and erosion which ultimately can lead to algal blooms. Here’s a lake-by-lake water quality report.



EAST POND

1,823 acres, maximum depth of 27 feet. The water clarity remained high in 2023, averaging almost five feet deeper than before the alum treatment that 7 Lakes administered with the Department of Environmental Protection and the East Pond Association in 2018. East Pond remains listed as “Impaired” by the State of Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and 7 Lakes actively monitors it.

MCGRATH POND

486 acres, maximum depth of 27 feet. McGrath Pond had high water quality this year. We are often asked why McGrath stays clear when Salmon has algal blooms, even though they are connected. This is mainly due to their depths and stratification characteristics. McGrath Pond is also listed as “Threatened” by the State because it shares a watershed with Salmon.

SALMON LAKE

666 acres, maximum depth of 57 feet. Salmon Lake typically experiences a fall algal bloom, but this year the lake bloomed much earlier starting in mid-August. We believe the early bloom on Salmon was heavily influenced by the increased rainfall and resulting erosion. 7 Lakes’ tests for both microcystins and anatoxin-a were negative. Salmon Lake is listed as “Threatened” by Maine’s DEP.

*“Impaired”: a lake whose water no longer meets the state’s water quality standards.

**“Threatened”: a lake whose water quality is in danger of becoming “Impaired.”

HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS AFFECTING THE BELGRADE LAKES WATERSHED

Recent extreme weather events in the Belgrade Lakes region are a very visible reminder of how climate change is affecting our watershed. More frequent, intense storms cause major tree damage, power outages, destruction of homes; these storms can also have a profoundly negative impact on the water quality of our lakes. Flooding and significant storm runoff from shorelines and upstream sources put dirt, pesticides and pollutants in our streams and lakes - including phosphorus, an essential nutrient driving algal blooms (which can be toxic). This erosion of sediments into our lakes is referred to as “external” nutrient loading. With extended warm weather in the summer and fall months, less oxygen is present in the lower waters, which can trigger the release of phosphorus from the lake bed. This is referred to as “internal” nutrient loading.

IMPACT OF RISING TEMPERATURES

Rising air temperatures, in addition to directly affecting water temperatures, mean less snow, later ice-in and earlier ice-out. Less ice coverage during the winter means extended periods of open water, creating the potential for more shoreline erosion and a longer growing season for many invasive plants, such as variable-leaf milfoil. The warmer lake water temperatures also create ideal conditions for cyanobacteria (“bad” algae) to bloom. Cyanobacteria are better suited for warm water than many of the “good” types of algae that we need in the lakes to sustain the food chain. Cyanobacteria can also produce toxins, which can be harmful to humans and pets. While we haven’t measured any toxins in the Belgrade lakes, it is likely only a matter of time.

According to Dr. Danielle Wain, 7 Lakes Alliance’s Lake Science Director, all seven lakes in our watershed are under threat. Dr. Wain points out that “the combination of warmer air and water temperatures, increased internal and external nutrient loading, creates a perfect storm for unhealthy lakes that are at risk for sustained algal blooms.”

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN OUR WATERSHED

A major focus of the year-round work at 7 Lakes Alliance is to reduce run-off into our lakes. In addition to the 319 Program at 7 Lakes Alliance, (described in this newsletter), the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) completes extensive projects throughout the watershed for homeowners who want to do their part to reduce erosion into our streams and lakes. Becoming LakeSmart-certified is another impactful way to ensure that your property has buffers and other measures to stop run-off. If you would like to discuss how you might partner with 7 Lakes with a YCC project or LakeSmart review, please call Stuart Cole at 207-495-6039.

SAVE THE LAND TO SAVE THE LAKES

Recognizing that conserved land in our watershed plays a vital role in saving our waters, 7 Lakes Alliance is working to conserve 20% of our watershed, up from approximately 10% today. This goal, while ambitious, is in keeping with national standards for land conservation. Undeveloped land is 10x more protective of water quality as it filters and stops run-off from entering our streams and lakes. Highlands and



wetlands are particularly effective in protecting water quality – in addition to shorefront land. Water quality protection is the #1 priority in selecting which land should be conserved. In addition, conserved land provides opportunities for recreation and connectivity with nature that fosters well-being in our community. Providing wildlife habitat, is yet another benefit. Not to be overlooked is the fact that having clear lakes and conserved land has a major economic impact that benefits our entire community.

We are honored that many local landowners have entrusted 7 Lakes Alliance with conservation easements that forever protect land that protects the lakes. 7 Lakes Alliance also conserves land that is donated or purchased, through the support of many generous donors. Please contact Noah Pollock at 207-495-6039 if you would like to discuss the opportunity to donate land or an easement with 7 Lakes Alliance, a nationally accredited land trust. 💧

PFAS (FOREVER) CHEMICALS

There has been significant coverage in the news in recent months about PFAS chemicals on Maine farms, commonly referred to as “forever” compounds because they take forever to break down. Increasingly, these chemicals are a problem on land, but they can also be present in our lakes, rivers, and streams. Earlier this year the lake science team at 7 Lakes tested water in all 7 lakes for the presence of several of the most common PFAS chemical compounds.



7 Lakes Lake Scientist team took water samples from all seven lakes on September 19, 2023 to test for PFAS (forever chemicals). A sample from McGrath showed one parameter above EPA standards for drinking water. Five of our lakes had no detectable PFAS chemicals. See article for full details.

FIRST, A LITTLE BACKGROUND ON THESE FOREVER CHEMICALS.

The per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of chemicals used to make fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. Fluoropolymer coatings can be found in a variety of products such as cleaning products, firefighting foam, water resistant clothing, non-stick cookware, food wrappers, personal care items like shampoo, and eye makeup, and staining resistant coatings used on carpeting, upholstery, and other fabrics. People are most likely exposed to these chemicals by consuming PFAS contaminated water or food, using products made with the compounds, or breathing air containing them.

Assessing the health risks of PFAS and how to deal with these forever chemicals is ongoing, but the fundamental problem is that once these chemicals get into our soil or water it takes a very long time for them to break down, if ever. And they build up in the food chain. PFAS in aquatic micro-organisms become an even bigger problem through biomagnification as they are consumed by larger organisms, then by small fish, larger fish, and by humans.

Our lake science team took water samples and tested for 27 PFAS parameters at a total of eleven sites across all seven of our lakes. On five of our lakes, the forever chemicals were not detectable. Unfortunately, in McGrath Pond, the concentration of one chemical was higher than the EPA standard for drinking water. If you are using water from McGrath for drinking water or cooking, you should consider installing a water treatment filter that is certified to remove PFAS compounds. East Pond had a measurable amount of one chemical, but it was less than the EPA standard for drinking water. 💧

If you have questions about PFAS in our lakes or would like information regarding water treatment filters, please contact our lake science team for more information.

REMEMBERING A DEAR FRIEND: BILL WITKIN

7 Lakes Alliance is grateful for the life of Bill Witkin, a dear and generous friend whose warmth, service and unwavering support for the lakes and lands of the Belgrade Lakes watershed will long be remembered.

Bill and Joan have enjoyed hosting family gatherings with their kids, grandkids and great-grandkids each summer since they bought their iconic camp on Hoyt's Island on Great Pond. Bill was a tireless volunteer and advocate for conservation and water quality in Belgrade Lakes. Bill and Joan also generously loaned their home in the Belgrade village to staff members of 7 Lakes Alliance.

A WW II B-24 bomber pilot, Bill spoke of his good fortune to be one of the "luckiest generations" because of the GI Bill which afforded an opportunity for higher education. With unwavering support for conservation of the lakes and lands in the Belgrade Lakes watershed, Bill and Joan's generosity and philanthropy will have a lasting impact on the Belgrade Lakes watershed. Most recently, Bill and Joan permanently conserved 50 acres of undeveloped land, a significant part of which is shore frontage, on Hoyt's Island on Great Pond with 7 Lakes Alliance. This pristine land is an important wildlife habitat and will forever protect water quality on Great Pond. 💧



Please join us and honor Bill's memory by protecting the waters he loved with a donation to 7 Lakes Alliance. Refer to 7lakesalliance.org/donate and make a note in the comment section that the gift is in memory of Bill.

HAPPY RETIREMENT CHARLIE!



Charlie Baeder has been around since 1999, back when we were BRCA. He served on the board of directors, as the Treasurer and later as the President. In 2012, he became the Executive Director of Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance (BRCA) until 2018, when the 7 Lakes Alliance was founded. His work at 7 Lakes, as the Director of Programs, included spearheading multiple land acquisitions, surveying every lake's watershed, writing countless grant applications, and much more. As the Project Manager for the 2018 alum treatment, Charlie played a pivotal role in turning East Pond water crystal clear after decades of annual algal

blooms. Over his tenure, Charlie has been instrumental in conserving over 9,000 acres of land and administering over a million dollars of federal funding through 319 grants.

Charlie has been a foundational member of the 7 Lakes Alliance; his work has become the backbone of what we do. Charlie played a role in hiring many of us here at 7 Lakes, so it's safe to say we wouldn't be here without him. Thank you for 25 years of service, Charlie! 💧

**"Thank you,
Charlie, for
hiring me!
I don't know
where I'd
be without
you."**

—Sharon Mann

BUILDING THE 7 LAKES ALLIANCE TEAM: NEW STAFF IN 2023



NOAH POLLOCK

Land Conservation Director

Noah has degrees in natural resources from Cornell University and the University of Vermont. He finds real satisfaction in leading 7 Lakes' collaborative conservation

projects that benefit communities, the natural world, and the waters that sustain us.



DAN WUGHTER

Stewardship Coordinator

Dan oversees the creation and implementation of management plans across 7 Lakes properties and easements. He has a master's degree in natural resource conservation from Paul

Smith's College, where he helped the college expand their trails program and implement student-led mountain bike trail construction.



GRIFFEN NORTHROP

Erosion Control Project Assistant

Griffen received his bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota-Morris in environmental science. Before joining 7 Lakes, he served two consecutive Maine Conservation

Corps service terms at Loon Echo Land Trust and the Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District. Griffen will be assisting erosion-control efforts, including the Youth Conservation Corps and LakeSmart.



MATT FARRAGHER

Lake Scientist

Matt works alongside Dr. Danielle Wain, Lake Science Director, to coordinate the year-round monitoring of Belgrade's lakes and streams. Matt received a master's degree in ecology

and environmental science from the University of Maine in 2021, where he researched phytoplankton ecology in lakes of Acadia National Park.



SALLY WHITTINGTON

Community Engagement Coordinator

Sally grew up swimming and fishing in both Long Pond and Great Pond, and is dedicated to conserving the natural beauty of the Belgrade Lakes

watershed for all to enjoy. Sally graduated in 2023 with a public health degree and a Biology minor from Arcadia University. They are dedicated to educating the community on Maine's natural wonders by providing creative outreach events at 7 Lakes.



JOSIE MILLER

Invasives Coordinator

Josie coordinates the training and scheduling of volunteers and staff for the Courtesy Boat Inspector and Adopt-A-Shoreline programs. Josie has a strong background in entomology

through her work with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry which focused on developing management tools to protect Maine's natural resources from invasive insects such as the emerald ash borer and hemlock wooly adelgid. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Maine and plans to pursue a Master's degree in applied entomology.

WHY I GIVE TO 7 LAKES

Dr. Jeffrey Poulin, West Point Graduate, Army Airborne Ranger and two-time Appalachian Trail thru-hiker.

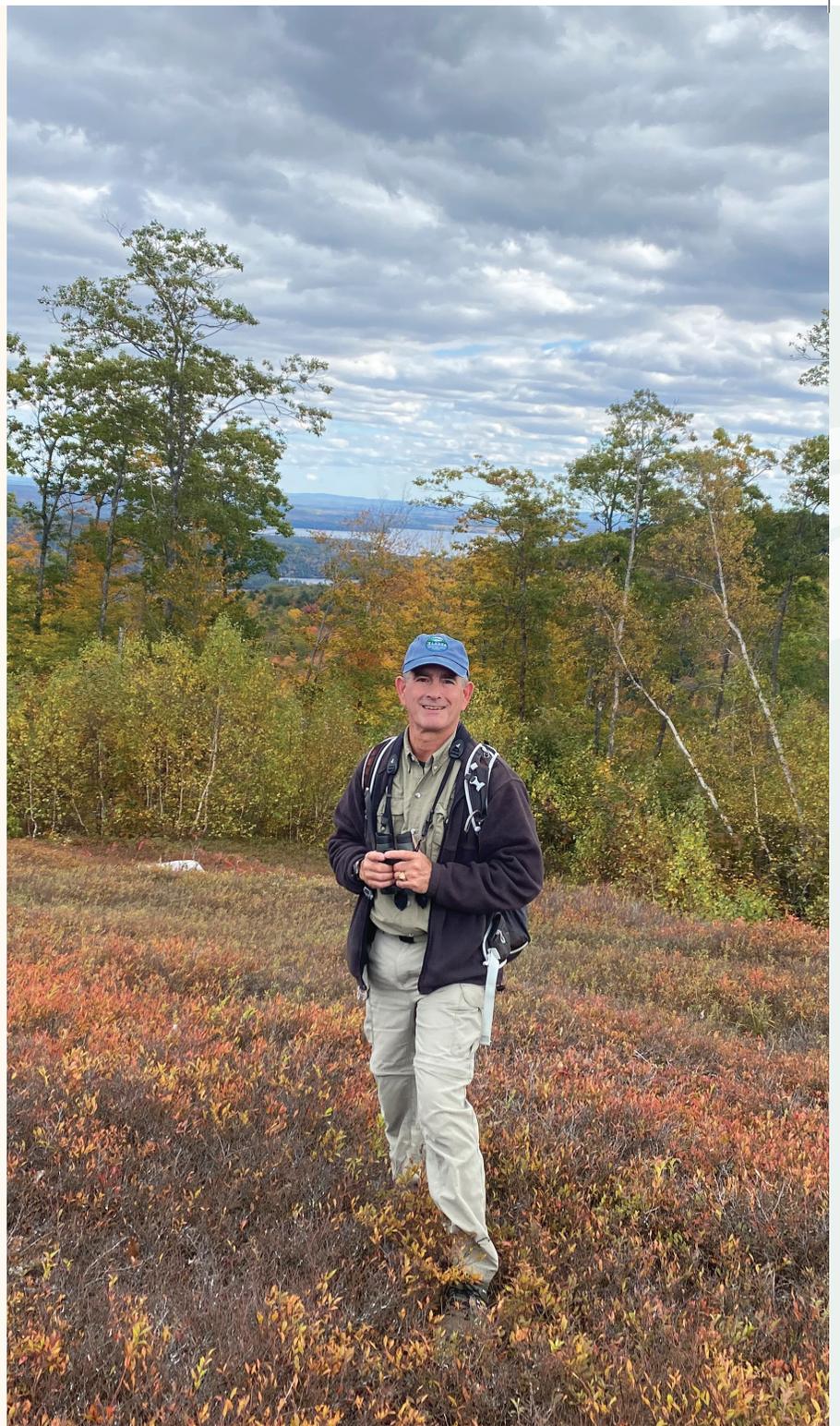
My grandparents were from Waterville and purchased their camp on McGrath Pond in the 40's. I was born in Maine and spent nearly every summer on the lake with my grandparents and brother, swimming, skiing and fishing. I've always loved the outdoors, and I think it's natural to want to take care of something that is important to you. Things just don't take care of themselves!

7 Lakes Alliance is the organization that takes care of what is important to me, so I reached out to former CEO, Laura Rose Day a few years ago to see what I could do to help. When I mentioned that I enjoy backpacking, Laura found the perfect match for me with land stewardship. 7 Lakes, a nationally certified land trust, is committed to protecting the land it has conserved forever. As a volunteer land steward, I get a nice walk in the woods on gorgeous conserved land and, at the same time, help 7 Lakes with its required annual monitoring and reporting. It's a win-win.

To date, I have helped monitor two properties, a 7 Lakes conservation easement and a 7 Lakes-owned property on McGrath Pond and Salmon Lake. Recently, I helped Noah Pollock, 7 Lakes Land Conservation Director, do an initial baseline survey on a new 800+ acre conservation easement near Little North Pond.

Annual giving to 7 Lakes Alliance is also a priority for me. Protecting this special place takes money for the professional staff and programs, so I want to do my part to support 7 Lakes. I donate through a "Donor Advised Fund," or DAF, which is like a checking account you control and use to make tax-deductible donations to a 501(c)3 organization, like 7 Lakes. DAFs are easy to set up, and after you fund the DAF, you get a tax deduction with no limit on how long you have to disperse your charitable donations.

I look forward to volunteering my time with 7 Lakes Alliance as long as I can still enjoy a walk in the woods. I appreciate the vital role that land conservation plays in protecting water quality on our lakes and am happy I can help make a difference with both my time and financial support. 💎



Jeff Poulin on Vienna Mountain

WAYS TO GIVE

There are many ways you can make an impact to save the lakes and lands of the Belgrade Lakes watershed. In addition to making an online donation or sending a check, here are some other ways to support 7 Lakes Alliance.

Gifts of Stock

Donating appreciated stock is an easy and effective way to reduce your income tax exposure while supporting 7 Lakes. If a gift of securities is something that you would like to discuss, please call Laurie Raleigh or Mary Kerwood at 207-495-6039. For more information, refer to the Donate page of our website. (See below).

Gifts from a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF)

Manage your charitable giving through this convenient type of giving program with favorable tax benefits. A DAF is a charitable gift account established by the donor at a sponsoring institution such as Fidelity, Schwab or BNY Mellon. The sponsor handles all record-keeping, disbursements and tax receipts. Since a DAF is a registered charity, it offers the same tax advantages of making direct contributions to a charity with added flexibility and convenience of the timing of disbursements to your favorite charities left to your discretion. Your financial/tax advisor can help you learn how to set up a donor-advised fund.

Gifts From Retirement Assets

If you are 70 ½ or older, you may designate up to \$100,000 per year to a charity of your choice while meeting your required minimum distribution requirement. This form of gifting is referred to as a Qualified Charitable Distribution, or QCD. A gift directly from an IRA does not qualify for a charitable deduction; however, the required distribution from your account is not included in your taxable income – a benefit regardless of whether you itemize or use the standard deduction. Consult your accountant or tax attorney to see if a QCD might be a tax-effective way to support 7 Lakes.

Legacy Gifts

Bequests are a simple, yet impactful way to support the lakes and lands for future generations. Almost any type of asset may be bequeathed, including securities, a portion or remainder of an IRA, qualified pension, real estate or cash. A charitable bequest can reduce the value of an estate and possibly reduce both state and federal estate taxes. An attorney can best advise you on the benefits of a bequest to 7 Lakes.

In Memory / In Honor

Honor the memory of someone special or recognize a milestone event for a family member or friend with a gift that helps protect our lakes and lands forever.



Scan To Donate

**7 Lakes Alliance
taxpayer ID number is
04-3047156**

7lakesalliance.org/donate



SAVE THE DATE:
SUMMER CELEBRATION

7 Lakes Alliance
137 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes
Sunday, July 14, 4-6 pm

7 LAKES ALLIANCE
P.O. Box 250
Belgrade Lakes, ME 04918