



BELGRADE REGIONAL CONSERVATION ALLIANCE



BRCA conserves the lands, water quality, and natural heritage of the Belgrade Lakes watershed.

Updates from the Executive Director

Water Quality Initiative –

BRCA is partnering with Colby College, Maine Lakes Resource Center, and lake associations to do more water quality sampling in 2015. This is a major project which seeks to better understand why our lakes have water quality problems. Current trends in several lakes are negative: water clarity is slowly declining and the threat of algae blooms is increasing. Some of the fixes we know – reducing erosion, maintaining septic systems. Other potential solutions require better information which is why we have ramped up water quality sampling and analysis in 2015. The goal is to have a Watershed Management Plan in place by winter 2016 which will address both water quality and invasive plant (milfoil) problems and which has a long-term plan and budget for fixing these problems.

BRCA and its partners will be publishing more information on the Water Quality Initiative in the coming

weeks, and will hold public information meetings this summer. If you see Colby students, MLRC and BRCA staff, and lake association volunteers water sampling on your lake this summer, this is likely to be the project they are working on. Ask them what they are up to and they will be happy to fill you in. If this is a project you want to volunteer for, please contact your local lake association to get involved.

Land Trust Accreditation –

BRCA has decided to pursue land trust accreditation and just completed the first step in the process which is to assess where we are today against national standards. During the next 18 months, we will implement the recommendations of the assessment at which time we expect to apply for accreditation. The Maine Community Foundation generously funded this initial assessment, and we are pursuing additional funding to support this effort. The benefits of accreditation include: a) recognition and certification

by the national standards organization, the Land Trust Alliance, b) increased financial security and efficiency, and c) increased marketing effectiveness.

Education –

BRCA is launching an expanded Education program in 2015. BRCA will work with local schools to implement an environmental education program to bring lake and watershed science to classrooms and to bring students outdoors to learn about the environment and to participate in science projects such as the Water Quality Initiative described above. The goals of the program are to educate the next generation of environmental stewards and to inspire students to pursue careers in science and engineering. Two generous donors are supporting the creation of a full-time Educator position. BRCA is interviewing candidates for the position now and plans to have the Educator on staff this summer.

Member SURVEY

As we take on big projects such as the Water Quality Initiative and Land Trust Accreditation, and as we hire a full-time Educator, we want to check in with our members to get your feedback on where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going. Is BRCA fulfilling its mission in a way that is consistent with why you support the organization?

This survey is available online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DWPLY7M>, or inside the back cover of this newsletter to be mailed back to BRCA.

Is BRCA reaching out to the community enough? Can BRCA do more with volunteers? Do BRCA members feel informed about BRCA operations? In an effort to answer these questions, inform the board, increase membership, and engage BRCA members and the Belgrade Lakes watershed community, we have put together a short 9 question survey.

Please take the time to share your ideas and to complete this survey. Your feedback will help BRCA focus its efforts and provide valuable information about the needs and desires of BRCA members. Thank you in advance for your participation!

President's Column: Thank You for Your Support!

This winter began with a barrage of snow that whetted my appetite for skiing and snowshoeing. I had big plans for the Christmas visit of my daughter and new son-in-law. Then to my surprise we had a warm Christmas; the snow almost completely melted and the ice on East Pond was not thick enough to ice skate. The warm weather, wet snow, and icy mix lingered into January and I became convinced that we were going to have a warm and ugly winter.

January 27 brought change; a howling blizzard dumped over a foot and a half of beautiful pure white fluffy snow perfect for skiing.

March has just arrived and I've lost count of how many snow storms we've had and how many times I've walked my dog Jasper in sub-zero temperatures. Many of my neighbors and friends tell me they are sick and tired of the snow and cold, but I commiserate with them and smile while inside I'm jumping up and down hopping the snow will continue.

The weather may fluctuate, but your support of the BRCA and lake associations remains steadfast. As president of the BRCA and as a resident of the Belgrades I thank you very much for your continued financial support and volunteer efforts. I shudder to imagine what our lakes

would look like without the oversight of the lake associations and support from the BRCA.

Presently the BRCA staff is busy planning for the 2015 summer season and taking on winter projects supporting stewardship of our land. Thanks to several large donations we are adding an Education Director to our staff; you'll be hearing more about this windfall. Without you, none of this would be possible.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the winter and are preparing for another summer in paradise!

Mel Croft, BRCA President

IS YOUR CAMP ROAD A THREAT TO THE LAKE?

As we cut pathways through the woods surrounding our lakes, we create channels for runoff. These pathways have grown to become our current camp roads. No one ever planned them. Most of them just grew – foot path (or cow path!), driveway track to one or two camps, ultimately to 10-20 camps. Or they started as tote roads, for moving logs out of the woods. Some were even planned as roads to the shore, but the designers took the shortest route – straight down the hill!

There are over 450 named camp roads around the Belgrade Lakes watershed. Each one of them a potential threat to the quality of our lakes. Many roads have little or no crown, poor (or non-existent) ditches, and failing culverts. They are often too steep.

What can we do? Ditches can be added (sometimes), culverts can be replaced. You can add waterbars to steep roads, turning the water off the road before it becomes a problem. Steep slopes can have different surface materials. Typically the best surface material is crushed gravel (not screened – crushed, it holds together better). From there you can go to recycled asphalt, "bluestone" or if the slope is extreme, paving is an option. When all else fails to curb erosion, asphalt can be an answer.

Maintaining camp roads so that they do not become an issue is very important. Support your local Road Association! Having a good camp road association, supported by the property owners, is crucial. An annual dues (or road fees) payment allows the road "czar" to practice regular maintenance and upgrading. Camp roads should be graded twice a

year (minimum) – spring and fall. New gravel should be added regularly – both rain and wind remove gravel from the road. The "average" gravel road with 200 car trips per day (that's 4 trips out and back from each of 50 camps) can lose up to **500 tons** of soil in the form of dust per year! And remember you paid to have that gravel hauled in and spread! Think about a dust control system using calcium chloride or some other binder.

The BRCA office has several booklets and pamphlets on camp roads and their maintenance. BRCA's Executive Director, Charlie Baeder, is available to talk (495-6039) to you about your roads (whether we have grant money to assist you or not). The Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District (622-7847 ex 3) is another source of information and expertise on roads.

Kennebec Highlands – Kimball Pond Campaign

In July 2014, BRCA bought a 278 acre parcel of land adjacent to the west side of the Kennebec Highlands – the “Kimball Pond” property – for appraised value – \$263,000.

BRCA needed to buy the property in 2014, before the money for the property could be raised. The BRCA board agreed to do this because:

- a) the land is important to the future of the Kennebec Highlands,
- b) the Land for Maine’s Future (LMF) program awarded BRCA \$90,000 for the project.

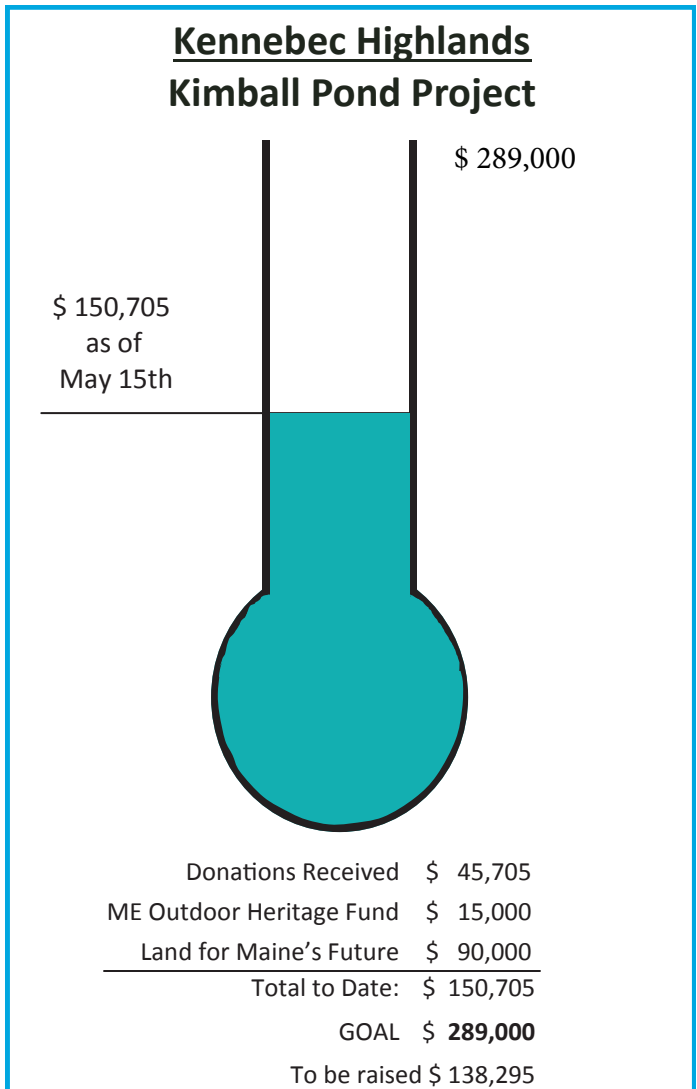
Since that time, BRCA was awarded an additional grant of \$15,000 for the Kimball Pond project from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund (MOHF) which BRCA has received.

BRCA did not have all the cash needed for this purchase and borrowed funds from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation, a conservation funder. BRCA was able to borrow the money at a great rate – 0% interest – for one year.



BRCA embarked on a fundraising campaign to raise the remaining funds needed to repay the loan, as well as the legal and appraisal fees needed to make the purchase. We also plan to add funds for long-term stewardship to be used for the management of the property, for new trail and parking area development, and for annual insurance and property taxes. We need to raise \$138,000 to repay the loan due in 2015.

We need your help! Review the Kimball Pond brochure on our website. Please give as generously as you can towards this great new addition to the Kennebec Highlands. Build the legacy. Thank you.



Town Financial Support – BRCA and its lake association partners received record support from watershed towns for our water quality and invasive plant (milfoil) prevention and removal programs. Towns gave more money to lake conservation in 2015 than ever before as a result of strong programs and successful media and outreach efforts during the last year. Most towns awarded funds in annual town meeting floor votes. Belgrade selectmen wanted to make sure that the largest number of voters had a chance to have their voice heard in a referendum vote and **78% of voters approved the lake conservation warrant article**. Thank you town leaders and residents for your support!

Governance Series: Fiduciary Responsibilities of Non-Profit Boards

There is a basic understanding of what board members responsibilities are:

1. Establish the organization's mission, vision, and core values
2. Recruit and hire the chief executive officer (CEO)
3. Support the CEO and review their performance
4. Provide adequate resources for organizational continuity through fund-raising activities
5. Oversee resource management
6. Ensure effective planning
7. Understand, articulate, monitor, and strengthen the programs and services
8. Enhance the organization's public standing at every opportunity
9. Ensure ethical and legal integrity; maintain accountability
10. Thoughtfully carry out Board recruitment, orientation, evaluation and development

Expectation of Non-Profit Board Members

- *Mission:* Directors will understand and support the mission.
- *Programs & Activities:* Directors will strive to be knowledgeable about programs and activities as well as trends and important developments.
- *Fiduciary Responsibilities:* Directors serve as legal fiduciaries of the NGO (non-governmental organization): review financial statements, oversee development and adoption of annual operating budget, set compensation for the CEO, review audits, and assure compliance with all Federal and State requirements, including review of the annual IRS Form 990 report.
- *Resource Development Responsibilities:* Directors will make personally-significant financial contributions to the NGO and additionally be involved in securing outside resources for the programs and sustainability of the organization.
- *Board meetings and Committee Involvement:* Directors will prepare for, attend, and fully participate in Board meetings. Each Director will serve on at least one committee.

BRCA Committees

BRCA has grown significantly over the last ten years. While the Board of Directors meets monthly, much of our work is done in smaller groups. Below is a list of all active BRCA committees. If you are interested in getting involved feel free to contact a committee chair or BRCA.

Conservation Corps Committee: Oversees operations and fundraising for the Belgrade Lakes Youth Conservation Corps. Chair: Mel Croft

Education Committee: Develops and directs BRCA's educational and community outreach programs. Along with the Development Committee, raises funds to support our education center and programs. Chair: Robyn LeGrand

Land Trust Committee: Responsible Handles acquisition of lands and conservation easements. Chair: Bill Swan

Stewardship Committee: Handles management of lands and easements. Chair: Toni Pied

There are also committees that would be beneficial to have that we would like to enact:

Milfoil Committee: Carries out projects like boat launch inspections to monitor, prevent and control invasive species. Sets the annual work plan and solicits funding for invasive species prevention and control.

Development Committee: Works with other committees and BRCA board to determine and meet funding needs, coordinate appeals, conduct capital campaigns as necessary, and organize and coordinate special fundraising events.

Membership Committee: Conducts membership recruitment and outreach projects like this newsletter, the Website, and brochures.

Watershed Committee: Works with the executive director to oversee the Watershed Program including contract/grant commitments.



Milfoil Program: Volunteer CBI's WANTED!

The Courtesy Boat Inspection Program (CBI) started in the Belgrade Lakes watershed in 2002. In 2014, Courtesy Boat Inspectors inspected 12,310 boats going into and coming out of the lakes in the Belgrade Lakes watershed. Each public boat launch in the watershed is staffed at various hours Sunday through Saturday, from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. There have been several "saves" throughout the duration of the CBI program. This means that there have been several instances where invasive aquatic plants have been removed from a boat or trailer either before it has entered a lake or when it is coming out of an infested

lake. Prevention is the key to winning the battle against invasive aquatic plants, and it is also a lot less expensive than removing invasive plants after they have become established.

The Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance hires 25+ seasonal staff each summer (with financial support from lake associations, towns, and the State of Maine) to staff public boat launches. Most of these seasonal staff include high school and college students. One of the most challenging aspects of the CBI program is maintaining coverage at the beginning of the season and the end of the season (when CBI's are less available due to school and extracurricular schedules).

This is why it is so important to include volunteers in the CBI lineup!

If you, or someone you know, might be interested in being a volunteer CBI, please contact BRCA Milfoil Director, Toni Pied at brcamf@belgradelakes.org.

Thank You Clark Marine!

BRCA would like to thank Rob Brown and all the staff at Clark Marine (57 Puddledock Road, Manchester) for their outstanding service and support in 2014. Clark Marine donates much of their service time to keep BRCA's fleet of Milfoil Program boats running smoothly. We appreciate the support and dedication that Clark Marine has shown to protecting the water quality of the Belgrade Lakes watershed!



Attention: Workshop

Mapping Invasive Species

Landowners, BRCA Property Stewards, and Lake Stewards!

Please come to a workshop about **mapping invasive species** in the Belgrade Lakes watershed.

iMapInvasives is a web-based mapping tool that can be used to map invasive species and keep track of treatment efforts. This tool was launched in Maine in 2014, and is already being used for invasive plant mapping projects across the state. **You are invited** to take part in this Basic iMapInvasives Workshop, presented by the Maine Natural Areas Program.

What is iMapInvasives?

iMapInvasives is a growing, collaborative partnership between several states, creating a network of shared resources to help detect and respond to invasive species.

Who uses iMapInvasives?

iMapInvasives is designed to support mapping by citizen scientists, land trusts and other non-profits, conservation commissions, government agencies, and other natural resource professionals.

Why should you learn to use iMapInvasives?

iMapInvasives is a great tool for "early detection" and "rapid response". This means that when a new species (or an invasive species new to a particular area) is detected early, a quick response can be launched to remove that species. Contributing information to this database/mapping system is also a key piece to developing priorities and strategies to battle invasive species

locally, regionally, AND statewide.

When and Where is the training?

This workshop is being hosted by the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance in partnership with the Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry's Maine Natural Areas Program. This workshop is **FREE!!!**

When: Wednesday, May 20th
4-6 pm (snacks provided)

Where:

Maine Lakes Resource Center
137 Main Street,
Belgrade Lakes, ME

Please **pre-register** by calling or e-mail Toni Pied, (207) 215-2685 or brcamf@belgradelakes.org

Youth Conservation Corps



The Youth Conservation Corps' (YCC) mission is to install Best Management Practices (BMPs) and to increase awareness of erosion issues around the Belgrade watershed (Great Pond, Long Pond, East Pond, North Pond, Salmon/McGrath, and Messolonskee). These BMPs have been designed by the Department of Environmental Protection and will reduce sedimentation and eutrophication. Impervious surfaces such as driveways, lawns, and rooftops intensify erosion by decreasing frictional resistance of the surface. This increases the amount of nutrient transfer because impervious surfaces prevent infiltration and absorption of nutrients. These excess nutrients can cause algal blooms and other water quality problems. The Conservation Corp installs a wide variety of BMPs and uses many techniques that prevent erosion.

Conservation Corps Jobs

You want to join the conservation corps if...

- ...You're a high school student over the age of 16
- ...You want to protect natural resources
- ...You are motivated and work well in a group setting
- ...You want to work outside
- ...You're willing to lift heavy materials
- ...You're comfortable working in the water
- ...You want to increase physical fitness while getting paid

As of the 2014 season, the Corps has installed more than 1000 BMPs since its establishment in 1996. Projects like the Grange in Smithfield continue to demonstrate how to prevent erosion in a developed setting. YCC works on private and public property and provides assistance to homeowners, businesses, and municipalities that wish to design their property for the benefit of the watershed. The Conservation Corps continues to be the cheapest option for homeowners. The labor is paid by the generous support of lake associations, towns, and private citizens. Homeowners pay only for materials and permitting costs.

The Conservation Corps is currently seeking candidate project sites. Contact the Conservation Corps director, Nathan D. Durant to schedule a site visit and get a free estimate for suggested BMPs. The YCCs season runs for eight weeks from Late June to Early August. Our policy is first come, first serve. So don't hesitate to give Nathan a call.

YCC Wish list:

- Heavy Duty Wheelbarrows
- Trenching shovel 4" width
- Pick Mattock
- D-Handle spade

RIP RAP SHORELINE PROJECT THAT WILL PROVIDE PROTECTION FOR EROSION CONTROL



BEFORE



AFTER

Lake Trust Corner: Reaching Out to All Our Lakes

We all spend as much time as we possibly can around these beautiful Belgrade Lakes. They provide a breathtaking and serene backdrop to some of our happiest memories...a child and then grandchild learning to dive, a cup of coffee and a sunrise, family fishing trips or hiking our beautiful trails.

However, these lakes are under great pressure from development and overuse and their future is in jeopardy. The water quality is threatened by erosion and polluted run-off entering the lakes via camp roads and lawns. For example, up to 85% of all erosion and sedimentation problems in lake watersheds originate from improper construction and maintenance of camp roads (DEP and KCSWCD, 2000). Is your camp road contributing to this? Lawns allow Phosphorus and other pollutants

found in stormwater to reach the lakes, when they could be filtered out and absorbed by beautiful, native flowers and shrubs.

Decide how much these lakes mean to you and your family and express it by making your camp as lake-friendly as possible. The Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance (BRCA) is here to help you do this. We provide **free** environmental evaluations of camp roads and shorefront property. Additionally, the BRCA has been awarded a grant through the Maine DEP 319 program that addresses Nonpoint Source Pollution problems and is able to financially assist eligible property owners and road associations. Grant money is available for improving camp roads, installing buffer gardens, fixing eroding driveways and paths, mulching areas of bare soil, etc. The money is available in a **1-1 match!**

The BRCA Youth Conservation Corps is also available during the summer months to address many of these erosion problems. A team of hard working teenagers, all personally linked to these lakes, provide labor **free of charge**. They plant buffer gardens, riprap shorelines, and mulch paths and bare soil. The Conservation Corps Director is also available to make **free** environmental assessments of your property, as well as design buffer gardens and arrange Conservation Corps projects on your property.

There are many ways that BRCA is available to help you minimize the impact you have on the lakes you love. Call our office any time (207) 495-6039 or email brca@belgradelakes.org to start the process.

ACCREDITATION: BRCA's Journey

BRCA has been doing hard work, and now it is time to receive the recognition!

Accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission provides public recognition of land trusts that are engaged in the long-term protection of the land in the public interest. It increases public awareness of, and confidence in, land trusts and land conservation.

Through the voluntary land trust accreditation program BRCA can achieve external verification that it is meeting national quality standards.

In addition to other benefits of accreditation, land trusts use the accreditation application process as a way to fine-tune their policies and streamline their operations. The Commission conducts an extensive

review of the application and grants accreditation - and the right to use the accreditation seal - to land trusts that meet the practices. The accreditation seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation. It recognizes organizations for meeting national standards for excellence, upholding the public trust and ensuring that conservation efforts are permanent. Become more efficient and gain recognition too - a win-win opportunity!

Preparing and applying for accreditation takes a significant commitment of time from the board and staff. BRCA is considering when it would be most appropriate to apply for accreditation and balance accreditation with their other program activities. This goal of incorporating accreditation is part of BRCA's long-term strategic plan. We have completed Phase I to conduct an Assess-

Goals of the ACCREDITATION Program

- Build & recognize strong land trusts
- Foster public trust
- Help ensure permanent land protection

ment. The first step in implementing Land Trust Standards and Practices and eventually applying for accreditation is conducting the required assessment against the full set of standards. Now, we are working on an action plan that charts a course to the improvements identified by the assessment.



Giving to BRCA helps protect the lakes and hills we love.

Gifts of Cash – are always welcome, and are tax-deductible. Unrestricted gifts help keep the organization running. Or you could designate a special program area (Milfoil, Watershed Protection, Land Acquisition and Management, or the Conservation Corps), or a specific project.

Gifts of Stock – A gift of appreciated stock to the BRCA can bring extra benefits to you – you get a charitable deduction, and you pay no capital gains tax. The easiest way to donate stock is to have your broker call the BRCA office for instructions – 207-495-6039.

Gifts of Life Insurance – If you have a life insurance policy that you no longer need, consider making the BRCA the beneficiary. The value of the paid-up portion of the policy is tax deductible.

Gift Memberships – Giving a gift membership in the BRCA not only helps the BRCA by expanding the number of people we reach with our message of land and water protection, but it also involves your recipient in this worthwhile effort.

Land Protection = Water Protection

The BRCA is dedicated to protecting the health of our lakes and the natural beauty and wild communities of our lands. There is no better way to protect our lakes than to preserve the land that surrounds them. Study after study shows that the greatest threat to our lakes is from development – from the very people who love our lakes and want to live next to them.

Protecting the entire shoreline of five undeveloped ponds was the crowning touch of the Kennebec Highlands project. More often what can be protected is a little bit here and little bit there. The BRCA currently owns or holds easements on approximately 1.5 miles of shoreline in the Belgrade Region. This is a tiny amount relative to the entire watershed – but we are actively seeking more land to protect for the sake of the lakes as well as for the land itself.

Sometimes the BRCA buys a parcel outright – but this usually takes a fundraising campaign since we do not have a large “war chest” or deep pockets. And sometimes we miss out on properties because we just cannot move fast enough. Currently the BRCA owns (and pays taxes

on) 1874 acres. The latest acquisition being shoreland property in New Sharon of 278 acres adjacent to the northwest corner of the Kennebec Highlands on Kimball Pond.

The other way the BRCA protects land is to hold conservation easements – in this case the property owner retains ownership but gives up the right to develop the property in ways detrimental to its conservation values. Currently the BRCA holds easements totaling 1,058 acres. This is land that is still owned by someone else, but it can never be developed and become a threat to the lakes we love. Easements can be donated or sold.

For a large land owner, a conservation easement can have several advantages. First, it will protect the land from development forever. Second, it can lower property taxes as the land can only be used for certain activities commensurate with its conservation values. Third, the donor of the easement maybe eligible for a tax deduction equal to the value of the development rights relinquished – as determined by a qualified appraiser. With the value of land around our lakes today, this can be a substantial amount of money. A fourth advantage is the reduction of estate taxes, thus helping to keep the property in the family. For these advantages to the owner, the BRCA gets to protect another parcel from development – and becoming a threat to the health of our lakes.

If you or someone you know is interested in protecting our lakes and their land through a conservation easement please call the BRCA office (207-495-6039) for more information.



1. Are you a year-round resident of the Belgrade Lakes watershed?

- Resident
- Non-resident

What town do you live in ? _____

2. What draws you to the Belgrade Lakes watershed?

3. How familiar are you with BRCA's mission?

- Very
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Not at all

4. What aspects of BRCA's mission matter most to you? (check all that apply)

- Land Conservation
- Natural Heritage
- Water Quality Protection (including invasive plant - milfol - prevention and removal)

5. Have you ever been a volunteer for BRCA?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how? _____

6. Would you consider volunteering for BRCA in the future? (check all that apply)

- BRCA Board Member
- Steward on BRCA Lands/Trails
- BRCA Committee Member
- Educator
- Courtesy Boat Inspector
- Events
- Invasive Plant Patroller
- Office work

7. How often would you like to hear from BRCA with updates about our work?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly

How would you prefer to receive information? (mail, e-mail, social media, newsletter, public meetings)

8. Have you hiked any of BRCA's hiking trails?

- Yes
- No

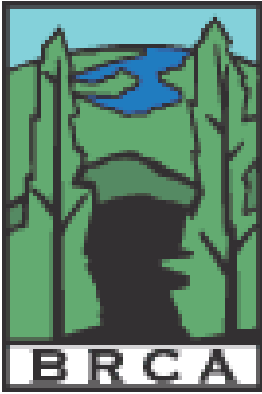
If yes, what was your overall impression of trail conditions?

9. How would you rate BRCA?

Fair Good Great

Overall Performance

Please let us know how we can improve our operations. Thanks!



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in full color with active
hyperlinks visit our website



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