



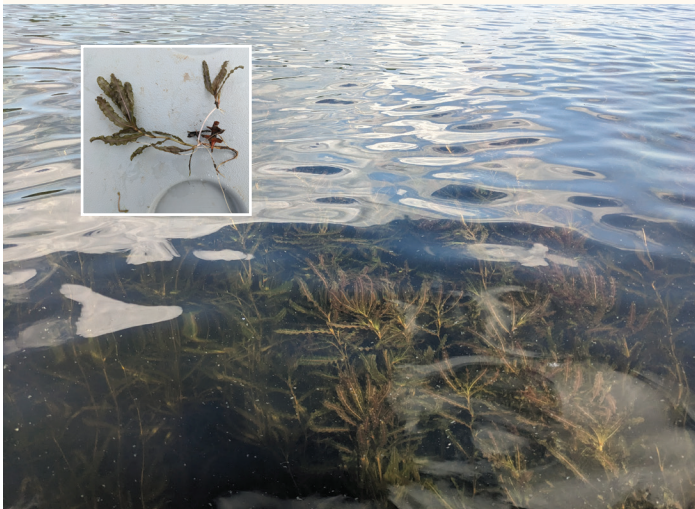
THE CONSERVATIONIST

VOLUME 16
Spring 2025



THANK YOU TO OUR LAKE ASSOCIATION PARTNERS!

The Belgrade Lakes watershed is fortunate to have five dedicated volunteer-powered lake associations who work closely with 7 Lakes Alliance across many of 7 Lake Alliance's programs—invasive aquatics, water quality monitoring, and erosion control.



PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

BELGRADE LAKES MARKET

Sundays, 8am–1pm

June 15–September 14

Visit 7 Lakes Alliance's booth at the market every Sunday

FLOATING CLASSROOM EDUCATIONAL TOURS

Tuesdays at 9am

June 17–September 2

Weather permitting, registration required

INVASIVE & NATIVE AQUATIC PLANT IDENTIFICATION COURSES

Wednesdays at 10am

June 25–August 20

CHEWONKI EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH LIVE ANIMAL AMBASSADORS

Thursdays, June 26–August 21

7 LAKES ALLIANCE ANNUAL SUMMER CELEBRATION

Sunday, July 13, 4–6pm

GRAVEL ROAD WORKSHOP

Monday, July 21, 9am–3pm

All events listed above will be hosted at the 7 Lakes Alliance building located at 137 Main Street, Belgrade

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LETTER FROM JANE EBERLE, 7 LAKES ALLIANCE BOARD CHAIR

From the moment we set eyes on the cozy rustic camp on Great Pond more than 40 years ago, we knew we had found our forever place. The sun set behind the mountains, it rose through the woods, the water was clear and the loons called. Our children grew up there, and now our grandchildren echo the same joy, exuberance, and love for the lake and woods. The intense connection I felt led me to decades of involvement with the Belgrade Lakes Association, and the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance (the predecessor to 7 Lakes Alliance). I'm proud to have been part of an amazing team of folks in forming the Belgrade Youth Conservation Corps, securing The Mountain, and the early phase of Kennebec Highlands. Now I've come full circle and am honored to be Chair of the 7 Lakes Alliance Board, partnering with all the area conservation organizations, continuing the very good work of preserving our irreplaceable resources.

Of utmost importance is assuring the health, vibrancy, and sustainability of our precious watershed for future generations. I see myself as the sunset generation of this critical work, and am incredibly grateful to have Rachel Jablonowski, the sunrise generation, as Vice Chair. It is Rachel and her children who will assume this magical legacy and carry it through to the next generation.

If you know that feeling of tender, breathtaking awe when you see the sunlight dancing off the lake into the trees, the full moon spilling showers of gold across the still midnight water, autumn's vivid hues along the trails, and the sound of a paddle gently splashing your kayak along a stream, then you know what I'm talking about. You know we need to do all we can to preserve and protect these 'amethyst jewels...of the first water'. I will continue to commit my energies and efforts to the cause and I ask you to do the same. Please, reach as deep as you can to be a part of this crucial mission.

With sincere gratitude,

JANE EBERLE

Chair, 7 Lakes Alliance

¹ Henry David Thoreau, *The Illustrated Maine Woods*



Rachel Jablonowski and Jane Eberle



Liz Koucky leading a hike on Vienna Mountain, September 2024

EDUCATING THROUGH EXPERIENCE: INTERPRETING THE WORLD AROUND US



SALLY WHITTINGTON
Community Engagement Coordinator

&

JOSIE MILLER
Invasives Coordinator



At 7 Lakes Alliance, our work is guided by an ambitious mission—“to conserve the land and waters in the Belgrade Lakes region for all.” Fulfilling this mission requires more than scientific expertise and active stewardship—it requires cultivating a deep, personal connection between person and place.

Year-round residents and lifelong visitors alike care deeply about preserving fond memories made on these lakes and trails. It can be challenging to see areas with great sentimental value change over time. Perhaps you have seen an increase in “fuzzy little balls” suspended in the water that make your skin itch after a swim, or found your favorite paddle route has become more challenging to navigate from an increase in pond weeds. While some change is inevitable, it can bring some peace of mind to understand why specific changes occur and how, in some cases, we can slow them through conservation stewardship. We all have a role to play in protecting what we love.

7 Lakes Alliance’s year-round science-based efforts to conserve our lakes and lands are most effective when rooted in community-based conservation - where local knowledge, shared stories, and collective action come together to protect what we all love. This starts with education to discover why the landscape is changing.

Our Education Team is developing interpretive learning programs that inspire people of all ages to care about and care for the watershed. These programs are based on the belief that the natural environment is our best classroom - one that nurtures curiosity, understanding and a sense of place. Once someone cares about the watershed, they are much more apt to care for



Liz Koucky leading a paddle down Great Meadow Stream; photo by Brian Rimm



Constance Woodworth hugging a large aspen tree on her guided mindfulness hike

it. To care about something is to show interest, concern, or appreciate the worth and impact of something, while to care for something is to address those concerns, provide support, and advocate for change. Through immersive, hands-on experiences in nature, we help people experience a deeper connection and move from appreciation to action.

7 Lakes Alliance is always learning from our community! Maine Master Naturalist and bog enthusiast, Liz Koucky led numerous guided trips; including leading a group of paddlers through the winding Great Meadow Stream, where she pointed out the various ecotypes (wetland, bog, stream), and highlighted the significance of undeveloped wetlands which filter water by absorbing nutrients and pollutants. On land, Constance Woodworth showed us the importance of listening to nature by fully immersing oneself into the sights and sounds of the forest without screens on her guided mindfulness hikes.

Last spring, we expanded our interpretive learning to bring more in-lake programming

by launching the Floating Classroom, a 23-foot pontoon boat designed to host all ages. On McGrath Pond, over 100 children ages 5-13 at the Alford Youth & Community Center's Camp Tracy, learned about the food web within lakes, how the land impacts water quality, and what wildlife is at stake. This is especially significant, as many of these campers have experienced algae blooms within the Belgrade Lakes watershed.

To learn more and register for our summer programming, visit: 7LakesAlliance.org/events 🍀

Have you seen big changes around the watershed over time? We would love to hear your stories. Send photos and a description to Sally:
sally.whittington@7LakesAlliance.org

ME, A POET? WHY NOT?

DOUG "WOODY" WOODSUM

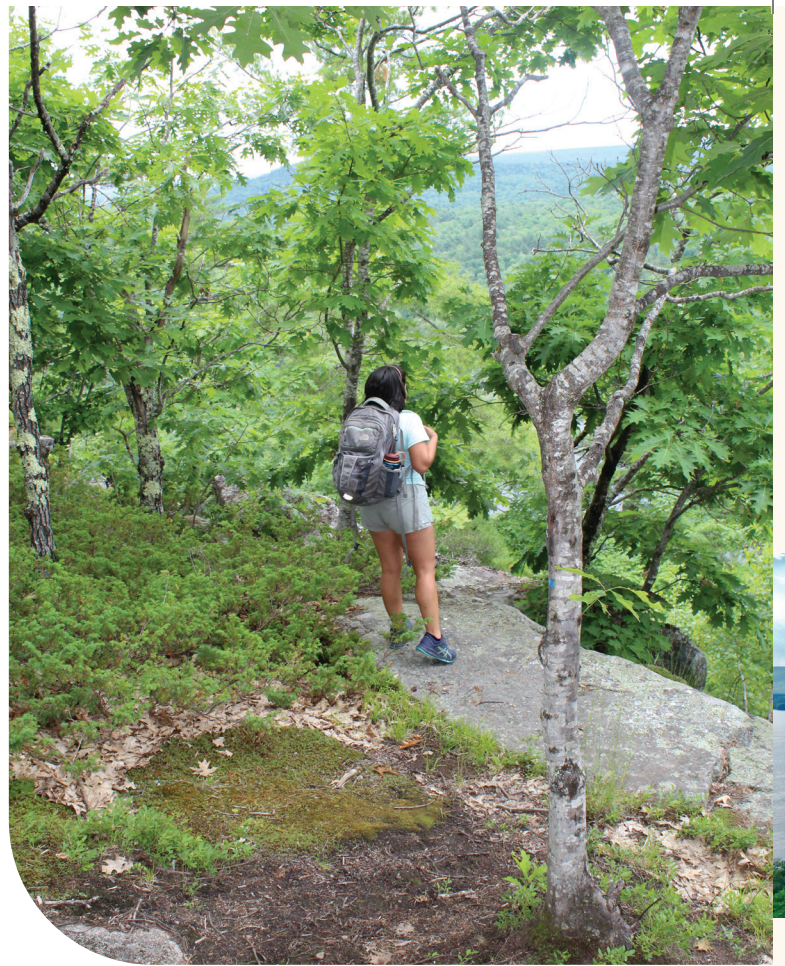
To engage both body and mind while exploring the Belgrade Lakes, you can hike, birdwatch, climb mountains, and take photographs. There is skating, ice fishing, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. There is fishing, swimming, boat picnics, and, simply, taking in the landscape, flora and fauna.

Some people write in journals: both electronic and paper. Using an app during a 7 Lakes Alliance guided bird watching boat tour, the expert ornithologist kept a lengthy detailed record of the species observed. 7 Lakes Alliance is planning more education boat programs, including one to introduce people to the relatively simple art of writing nature poetry.

While many people struggled during school lessons featuring poetry, the older you get, the more you see that poetry is part of the fabric of everyday life. Births and lives well-lived are celebrated in verse. Weddings, inaugurations, graduations, and holidays are celebrated and documented in poems.

"How 'relatively simple' to write a poem?" you ask with a pinch of skepticism. Here's how: The Japanese haiku form is often taught as three lines long. The first line is five syllables, the second line seven syllables, and the last line five syllables. For example: "six beads of water / spaced along the shallow fold / of a green grass blade."

I used poetry as my "camera" that dewy morning when I discovered a blade of grass has a fold. "Images" in poetry include all senses: smells, tastes, sounds, sights, and feelings and/or textures. Birdsong can be as poetic as a physical description of a bird. Roger Tory



French Mountain overlooking Whittier Pond

Peterson describes the song of the pintail duck as "onk-a-lik, ow owdle-ow."

A local yoga studio offers "sound baths for deep relaxation, healing, and deep presence." In Japan, shinrin-yoku or "forest bathing" is practiced for physical and mental well-being. Recording sensory information in poetry offers similar benefits. Plus, it just plain feels good to write a poem.

Poetry readings at libraries and schools are social community-building events. Like painting, prose, and photography; poetry is one more way to interpret the learning nature provides. Anthologies of nature poetry provide examples of the wide ranging topics and styles of nature poetry.

7 Lakes Alliance is partnering with a Maine poet to invite budding poets out on their Floating Classroom for the opportunity to learn about the basics of nature poetry on July 8th and September 2nd. Keep an eye on the events page of the website for your chance to claim the title, bard. 💧

NEW CONSERVATION PROJECTS PROTECT LAND AND WATER, AND OFFER NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

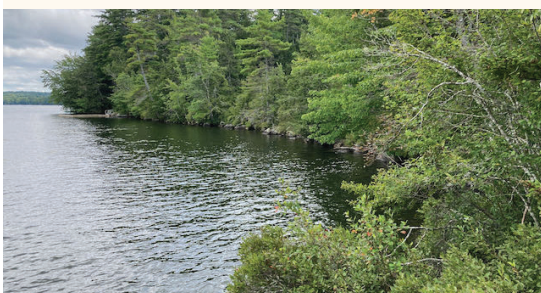
7 Lakes Alliance continues to make significant progress in conserving the land and waters of the Belgrade Lakes watershed through property acquisition and conservation easements. These protected lands open new possibilities for community engagement while safeguarding critical habitats. Recent projects include:



Photo by Jodi Franklin

LONG POND EAST SHORE PRESERVE: This remarkable 170-acre property is home to 1,250 feet of undeveloped shoreline, old growth hemlock and pine forest, 25 acres of wetlands, and a series of vernal pools. Extensive community support allowed us to leverage a grant from the state's Land for Maine Future program to protect this special place. Its unspoiled nature will help safeguard the water quality of Long Pond, as well as preserve peace, quiet, and the dark night sky for all. The property is already serving as a learning laboratory for Colby classes, who are cataloging the forest and exploring the climate signals that the property's 200+ year-old trees provide. 7 Lakes Alliance is now raising funds to support long-term site monitoring and forest stewardship as well as to facilitate minimal impact, nature based recreation. Our goal is to ensure that the property remains a protected haven for learning and exploring while serving as a model for outstanding stewardship for years to come.

DENNIS PHILLIPS LEGACY FOREST (PHASE 1): 7 Lakes Alliance acquired a 54-acre parcel off Route 27 in Rome, creating a direct connection to the Kennebec Highlands. This land had previously been purchased by Sandy and Dennis Phillips for conservation purposes. Dennis, one of the founders of the Belgrade Lakes Regional Conservation Alliance, played a pivotal role in establishing the Kennebec Highlands, a lasting legacy that we continue to honor. We are now advancing into phase two of this effort, working to conserve an additional 150 acres on the east side of Route 27. The property includes the headwaters of Whittier Brook and a beautiful upland forest with strong potential for a recreational trail network. It also includes an historic farmhouse that could provide seasonal staff housing and a barn for storing equipment and supplies. This work is part of a broader initiative to create a conservation corridor connecting the Kennebec Highlands to other 7 Lakes Alliance conserved lands to the east, building a landscape of protected lands for future generations, just like Dennis did with his visionary conservation work.



FROG ROCK CONSERVATION EASEMENT:

This 41-acre easement protects a mosaic of habitats and over a quarter-mile of shoreline along East Pond's western shore. Generously donated by the landowner, the easement ensures much of the property and its pristine shoreline will remain forever wild and undeveloped. 💧

THANKS TO ALL WHO SUPPORT THE LAND CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP WORK OF 7 LAKES ALLIANCE. WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU.

IT'S ALL CONNECTED— A REGIONAL APPROACH TO INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT



SHARON MANN

Invasive Aquatics Program Director

Maine's iconic lakes and ponds are more than just picturesque landscapes—they are vital ecosystems, economic drivers, and cultural treasures. Yet, these water bodies face increasing threats from invasive aquatic species, which can disrupt the ecological balance, damage infrastructure, and significantly impact recreational and commercial water uses. While many efforts to manage invasive species focus on local actions, there is growing recognition that a regional-based approach offers a more effective and sustainable path forward in Maine.

Invasive species, such as curly-leaf pondweed, variable-leaf and Eurasian milfoil, and swollen bladderwort, are increasingly appearing in Maine's freshwater systems. These species often spread via interconnected water bodies by recreational boat traffic and by clinging to equipment moved between locations. Once established, invasive species are incredibly difficult and expensive to eradicate. For example, fragments of variable-leaf milfoil introduced to Great Pond in the early 2000's, quickly expanded into nearly 19 acres of monoculture in Great Meadow Stream. To date, nearly \$2 million has been spent on efforts to eradicate variable-leaf milfoil in Great Pond alone. This infestation could have been avoided if everyone followed proper Clean, Drian, and Dry practices.

A regional approach to invasive species management; working across entire watersheds or lake regions, rather than piecemeal by town, municipality, or individual waterbody is critical to sustainable management of invasive species. This approach mirrors the way invasive species actually spread across physical and ecological boundaries and fosters more cohesive prevention and response strategies.

Why Regional Management Makes Sense

1. NATURE DOESN'T RESPECT TOWN

LINES Many of Maine's lakes and rivers span multiple towns and counties. Invasive species introduced in one part of a watershed can easily spread downstream or through connected tributaries. A regional management structure facilitates coordination across jurisdictions, ensuring consistent monitoring, reporting, and mitigation strategies.

2. SHARED RESOURCES, SHARED

RESPONSIBILITY A regional framework encourages pooling resources—from funding and equipment to personnel and expertise. Small towns or individual lake associations often lack the capacity to act alone, but through collaboration, they can leverage grants, share surveillance tools, and coordinate volunteer training. This collective approach enhances overall resilience and efficiency.

3. CONSISTENT MESSAGING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public education is one of the most powerful tools in preventing the spread of invasive aquatic species. A regional strategy enables unified messaging about best practices such as "Clean, Drain, Dry" for boaters or how to identify specific species. Consistency in outreach materials, signage, and community programming builds stronger public understanding and compliance.

4. RAPID RESPONSE AND CONTAINMENT

When an invasive species is detected, rapid response is crucial. A regionally organized network allows for quicker mobilization, communication, and containment efforts. Pre-established protocols and cooperative agreements streamline decision-making and reduce bureaucratic delays that can make the difference between containment and infestation.



7 Lakes Alliance and our predecessor organizations have been working with local partners in a regional-based framework for decades. Our collaboration with the Belgrade Lakes Association on the “Stop Milfoil” project (updated to “Stop Invasive Aquatics” in 2024), is a shining example of how regional approaches work.

Through this model, a regional hub coordinates with local partners to share resources, unify communication materials, and establish clear functional roles. The recent discovery of curly-leaf pondweed in North Pond and East Pond has further reinforced the need for a regional strategy. Because 7 Lakes Alliance had an existing dive team assembled and trained, we were able to respond quickly and contain the infestation.

These partnerships have successfully launched early detection programs, rapid response initiatives, and public education campaigns across multiple lakes. Our collaborative work demonstrates how regional coalitions can harness local knowledge while implementing science-based strategies to

effectively manage invasive aquatic threats. In recent years, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been moving towards a regional model similar to the Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management model adopted in New York State. In both cases, the idea is to establish regional hubs, which act as extensions of the larger statewide invasive species programs.

As part of this initiative, Maine DEP has facilitated the consolidation of all invasive aquatic management in the Belgrade Lakes Watershed; this means that, starting in 2025, 7 Lakes Alliance will be adding Messalonskee Lake and connected streams to our management responsibilities.

As with all of our local lake associations, Friends of Messalonskee will join our hub and provide valuable local knowledge and other resources. The infestation in Messalonskee Lake is one of the oldest (and well established) infestations in the state and will require many years of physical removal and targeted herbicide intervention.

To expand the regional approach, support is needed from state agencies, funders, and the public. Policies should incentivize regional collaboration, fund cross-jurisdictional projects, and support the development of watershed-based management plans. Increased investment in regional management plans will empower more communities to act together rather than in isolation.

Protecting our lakes from invasive aquatic species will only be successful with strong regional partnerships with 7 Lakes Alliance and all of our local lake associations: Belgrade Lakes Association (the lake association for Great Pond and Long Pond), East Pond Association, North Pond Association, McGrath Pond & Salmon Lake Association, and Friends of Messalonskee. With continued regional collaboration, early detection, rapid response, and public education, we can stay ahead of the ever increasing new threats and safeguard the health and beauty of the entire 7 Lakes Alliance watershed. Thank you to all of our local partners for contributing to this valuable work! 💧

INVASIVE AQUATICS REPORT BY LAKE/POND

NORTH POND

2,225 ACRES, MAXIMUM DEPTH OF 20 FEET.

Curly-leaf pondweed was found in Old Mill Stream (i.e. the North Pond side of The Serpentine) in July 2021. In May 2024, large patches of curly-leaf were found in open water between Pomleau Island and the northeast shore of North Pond. No curly-leaf has been found in Bog Stream, where boats coming from the public boat launch pass through to North Pond, however, given the size of the infestation it is likely to spread. Boaters should stick to the channel markers to avoid contact with curly-leaf pondweed.



GREAT POND

8,239 ACRES, MAXIMUM DEPTH OF 69 FEET.

Variable-leaf milfoil found south of the Route 225 bridge in Great Meadow Stream in 2010. By 2012, variable-leaf milfoil had spread downstream and into North Bay and three small streams: Swan Brook, Robbins Mill Stream, and Rome Trout Brook. After 10 years of manual removal efforts, Great Meadow Stream received an herbicide treatment. Since the herbicide treatment in June, 2022, minimal variable-leaf milfoil growth has been found, allowing native plant species to thrive. Manual removal efforts continue in the three small streams. In 2023, we found rooted variable-leaf milfoil plants in 2 new areas: Finger Reef and Richard's Point.



LONG POND

2,714 ACRES, MAXIMUM DEPTH OF 106 FEET.

No invasive aquatic plant species have been found in Long Pond as of September 2024. Native milfoil is found in Beaver Brook, the Lost Pond, and Ingham Stream. Long Pond drains into Messalonskee Lake through Belgrade Stream, which is heavily infested with variable-leaf milfoil. Anglers frequently cast fishing lines on both sides of Wings Mills Dam, which separates Long Pond from the infestation in Belgrade Stream.

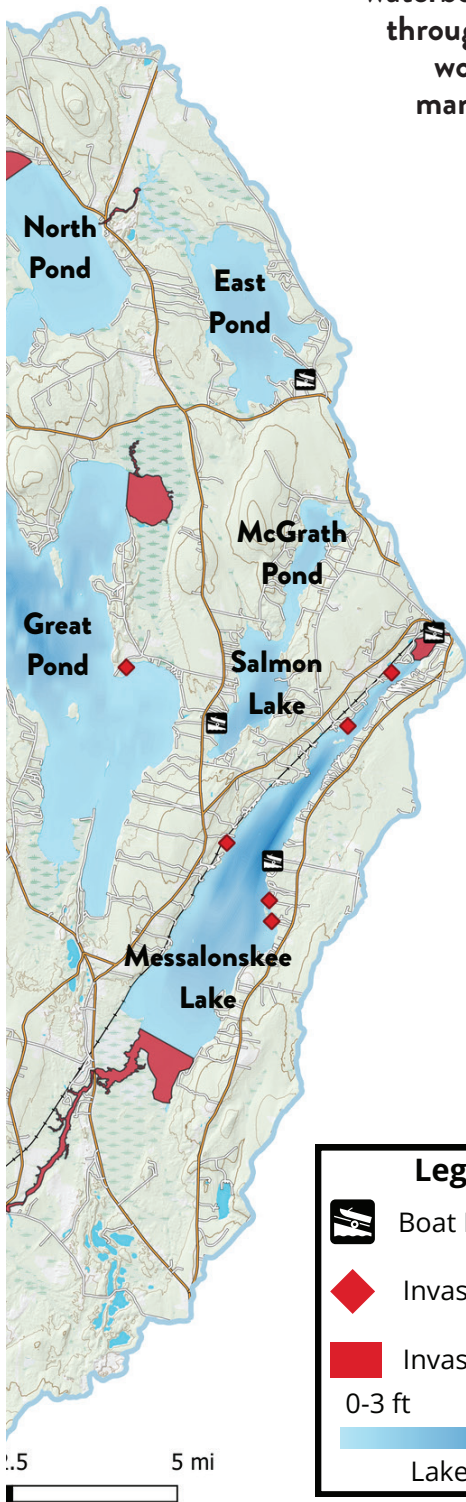
MESSALONSKEE LAKE

3,510 ACRES, MAXIMUM DEPTH OF 113 FEET.

Variable-leaf milfoil has been in Messalonskee Lake since at least the 1990's. Milfoil is found in 14 areas throughout Messalonskee Lake, including Messalonskee Stream and Belgrade Stream. Beginning in June 2025, 7 Lakes Alliance will be responsible for all invasive aquatic species management in Messalonskee Lake.



7 Lakes Alliance and our lake association partners survey the perimeter of each waterbody for invasive aquatic plants annually. Invasive fish and snails are found throughout the Belgrade Lakes and are unfortunately well established. 7 Lakes works with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to develop management plans to minimize the spread of all invasive aquatic species and remove established aquatic plants from their non-native habitats.



EAST POND

1,823 ACRES, MAXIMUM DEPTH OF 27 FEET.

Curly-leaf pondweed was found in the East Pond Serpentine by a 7 Lakes Alliance-trained volunteer in July 2021. Immediate action to contain curly-leaf pondweed was taken. Since 2021, we have seen an 89% reduction in curly-leaf biomass, due to our persistent SCUBA surveys and plant extraction. The Serpentine flows from the northwest end of East Pond into North Pond.

MCGRATH POND

486 ACRES, MAXIMUM DEPTH OF 27 FEET.

No invasive aquatic plant species have been found in McGrath Pond as of September 2024. McGrath Pond is connected to Salmon Lake.

SALMON LAKE

666 ACRES, MAXIMUM DEPTH OF 57 FEET.

Eurasian water-milfoil was found near the Salmon Lake public boat launch in 2011. The infestation was treated with herbicide in 2012 and it has not returned. Salmon Lake was removed from the infested waterbody registry in 2015. Salmon Lake flows into Great Pond.



LOOKING UPSTREAM TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE LAKES



MATT FARRAGHER

Lake Scientist, Lake Science Program

Spring is a dynamic time for lakes. When lake ice melts, the water is reconnected to the atmosphere after several months of separation. The water mixes and regains oxygen while releasing other gases that have built up during the winter. At the same time, a surge of rain and snowmelt flushes downstream, causing erosion and bringing sediments into the lake. These processes kickstart the physical, chemical, and biological cycles that drive lake ecosystems during the open-water season. Our lake monitoring program is well established, and we frequently survey each lake basin

year-round. In recent years we have greatly expanded our stream monitoring to better understand what is flowing into the lakes.

Streams are a crucial piece of the lake science puzzle. They contribute a large portion of the water budget for each lake (along

with surface runoff, groundwater infiltration, and precipitation). Each of these water sources can introduce nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen, which increases the growth of algae. While some nutrient inputs are natural and unavoidable (fish and wildlife waste, detritus, etc.), an excessive amount of nutrients comes from anthropocentric pollution such as development, septic systems, and runoff. This is why we recommend best management practices even on properties far from the lakes. Updating septic systems and stabilizing shorelines prevents phosphorus loading no matter how far upstream you are.

With so many components to consider, the Lake Science team's major focus is of course the weekly or twice-monthly sampling at eleven monitoring stations across the seven lakes, which alone requires daily field work. But giving extra attention to our streams has been a worthy undertaking as we aim to better understand what is driving algae blooms in our lakes. This spring, we captured runoff and snow melt dynamics on several streams throughout the watershed. We accomplished this by collecting flow measurements and water samples by hand, and with the help of five autosamplers. These autosamplers have simple robotics that take water samples at a specified time interval (i.e: 12 or 24 hours). A generous donor provided the autosamplers in 2021 and since then we have gathered hundreds of samples each year. In addition, we installed pressure gauges that measure water levels in streams in order to calculate not just the contents of each water sample, but also the rate of influx of phosphorus and other nutrients coming downstream into the lakes. Although conditions on the lake can vary fairly quickly, streams are especially sensitive to large pulses of rainwater. When storms happen in the spring before vegetation has grown in to slow the surface flow of water or to lock down the soil with fresh roots, we can see major pulses of nutrient-laden sediment entering the lakes. Having the autosampler data and pairing that with hourly water-level measurements has been invaluable to understanding these dynamics.

These efforts would not be possible without the great communication and cooperation of several landowners whose permission we gained to access the streams from their residences,



Matt
setting up an
autosampler
on Leech
Brook in
Smithfield



24 bottles for water samples
inside an autosampler

via their woods or their driveways. Many community members help us capture these valuable data by collecting water samples or checking in on our gear on a regular basis. We have also gained a good deal of anecdotal knowledge about the stream dynamics by talking with community members about historic floods and culvert remediation and maintenance. If you have property adjacent to a stream and would like to get involved in monitoring, please contact our Lake Science team. The streams are a major point of connection between the land and the lakes that 7 Lakes Alliance aims to steward, and these monitoring efforts are helping us form new connections between the community and the Lake Science team in our shared goal to better protect the lakes and the land. 💧



Summer research student Miles Hagedorn collecting scum samples for toxin testing on North Pond in summer 2024

Harmful algal blooms are on the rise across the Northeast due to warming temperatures and increased phosphorus levels. North Pond, within the Belgrade Lakes watershed, has experienced frequent blooms in recent years, including a severe one last summer. The lake has reached its tipping point, with high phosphorus levels—mainly from internal loading, where phosphorus stored in lake sediments is released back into the water.

This phosphorus buildup stems from decades of erosion, often linked to intense rainfall, lakeside lawns without vegetative buffers, and outdated septic systems. Warmer summers, combined with excess phosphorus create ideal conditions for cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), which can be toxic to people, pets and wildlife.

To address the problem, the EPA-approved North Pond Watershed-Based Management Plan recommends erosion control and an alum treatment to bind phosphorus in sediments,

following a successful model used on East Pond in 2018. The cost of the project is over \$3 million. Through Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS), Senator Susan Collins requested \$2.3 million in federal funding for the project. Due to a continuing resolution in Congress, no grants were awarded in 2025. 7 Lakes Alliance has resubmitted the request for FY2026.

Meanwhile, the North Pond Association has been actively raising the 20% required matching funds, now held in a dedicated account. If funded, the first phase of treatment could begin in June 2026.

To make the alum treatment last, external phosphorus sources must be reduced. 7 Lakes Alliance is tackling this with Clean Water Act (319) grants, targeting erosion from camp roads and culverts. Every resident can help by maintaining shoreline buffers and checking their septic systems. Contact North Pond Association for a LakeSmart evaluation. 💧

7 LAKES ALLIANCE LAUNCHES A NEW PADDLER'S TRAIL FOR THE BELGRADE LAKES WATERSHED

This summer, 7 Lakes Alliance is launching a pilot paddler's trail connecting many of the lakes and streams in our watershed. We are developing a 32-mile route traveling through McGrath Pond, Salmon Lake, Great Pond, Long Pond, Belgrade Stream, and Messalonskee Lake.

While the Belgrade Lakes watershed offers a variety of excellent paddling opportunities, limited public lands can make trip planning difficult. Our goals include providing trip-planning resources, establishing formal stopping points, and promoting an ethic of safe and responsible use. We hope the trail will foster a greater appreciation of the watershed while furthering our mission of conserving the lands and waters of the Belgrade Lakes region for all.

As part of this trail effort, we have developed a waterproof map and guide that showcases the unique paddling opportunities in our watershed. The map provides a detailed description of the proposed Paddler's Trail route and highlights a variety of day trip opportunities. The map is available for purchase at our office.

To celebrate the launch of the Paddler's Trail, 7 Lakes Alliance is organizing a "Paddle Sojourn" (July 18–20). During this event we will enjoy day trips, explore, and stop at 7 Lakes Alliance conservation areas throughout the watershed. We hope this event helps to introduce the Paddler's Trail to the community and deepen participants' connection with the Belgrade Lakes. 💧

For more information on the Paddler's Trail, or to RSVP for the Paddle Sojourn, visit:

7LakesAlliance.org/trail-systems

or contact:



DAN WOUGHTER

7 Lakes Alliance Stewardship Coordinator
dan.woughter@7lakesalliance.org



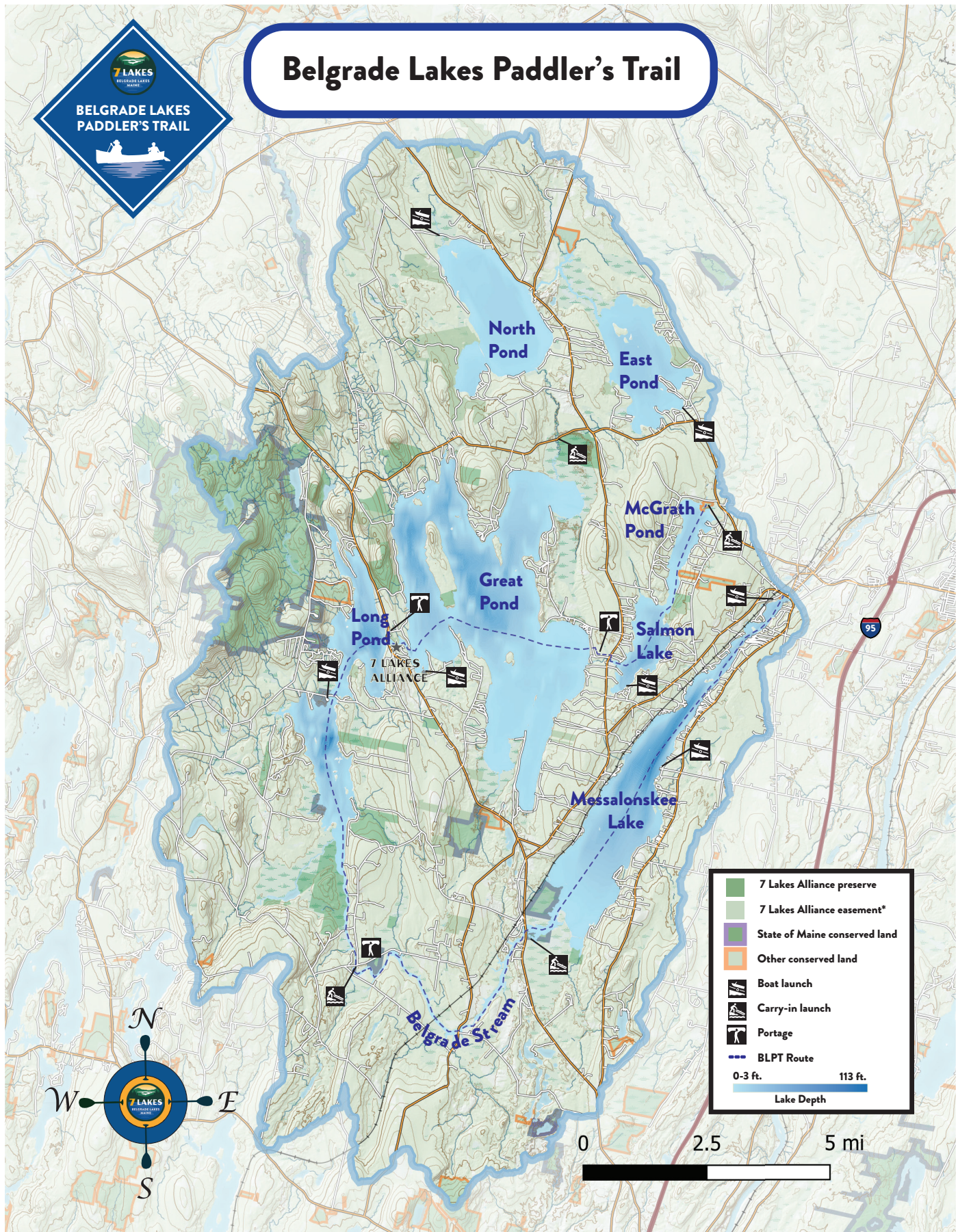
Paddle Sojourn July 18–20

Explore the entire Paddler's Trail on trips ranging from 10 to 15 miles per day. Participants are encouraged to join us for one, two, or all three days.





Belgrade Lakes Paddler's Trail



GENERATIONS ON GREAT POND

A look back to “the Old Days”
with Diana Fenn and Jack Schultz

There is something about each of our seven lakes that roots itself deep in the heart—a feeling, special memories, a family legacy. For many families, like Diana Fenn and Jack Schultz, those roots go back generations. Reminiscing with Diana and Jack recently brought back a flood of memories from a time when life was simpler and summer days seemed to stretch on forever. We are delighted to share a bit of their history here.

Jack’s connection to Great Pond began in 1932, when his grandmother, after first renting at Hillside camps, purchased the family camp on Starbird Lane. Fishing lured Diana’s great-grandparents and grandmother to spend summers at Jamaica Point, starting in 1916. Diana’s grandmother bought a camp on Great Pond in 1944 and her family joined the lakeside community just down the same road from Jack’s family when her father returned from World War II. Jack and Diana grew up as summertime friends - Jack returning to New Jersey and Diana heading back to Bath, Maine each fall. Now, Diana’s great grandchildren are the 7th generation coming to Great Pond.

Jack’s summer journey began in grand fashion: starting at the age of six, his father would place him in pajamas aboard a sleeper train at Grand Central Station with a tag that read, Belgrade Depot. His grandmother would be waiting early the next morning at the train station, not far from the present-day Hammond Lumber.

Sundays meant dressing in your best and heading to the Catholic church in Belgrade Lakes Village, followed by lunch at the elegant



Diana Fenn and Jack Schultz

Belgrade Hotel—a grand 100-room resort that sadly burned down in 1956. A family favorite outing was “Chicken in the Rough” on Route 27, famous for its golden batter-fried chicken and onion rings.

Wednesdays were reserved for roller skating at the rink in Smithfield overlooking North Pond. Everyone from their end of the lake joined—young and old, visitors, waitresses and cabin boys from Joyce’s Island and the Boomer Fishing Camp on Hoyt’s Island. Often, parents and grandmothers went to see a show at Lakewood Theater in Madison (then in its prime drawing movie stars) and younger folks would tag along, hoping for an autograph by the stage door.

Summer days weren’t all play—Jack, brother Peter, and their cousins pitched in at camp: lugging firewood, sweeping porches and cobwebs, and washing dishes. Chores always came first—swimming and boating only after the work was done. Jack, Diana and the other children all learned to hunt for nightcrawler worms with a flashlight after dark. They still have photos of unbelievable strings of fish that were caught in the lake in those days. Chowder was frequently made with the daily catch, which was a real treat.

Along with friends like Maggie Standler-Shannon, Mitzi Curtain-Cushing, Ted Probert, and Dick Keeler, Jack and Diana spent endless hours on the water, learning to waterski with Freddy Weston on his little 25 horsepower boat and put on ski shows for the adults, sometimes with jumps that the boys had built. Another fun adventure was hiking Mount Phillip (later in life, Jack was instrumental in conserving this land). Diana remembered how they

would flash mirrors from the summit, just to say, "We made it!"

The girls—Diana, Mitzi, and Maggie—would head off in their little five horsepower boats bound for Bartlett's (now Day's Store) for penny candy and comic books, with instructions to head for someone's dock for safety if a storm was blowing towards them on the lake.

Back then, Hoyt's Island was nearly untouched, and the girls would camp overnight on the western shore or the north end of what is now Mountain Drive. With only party lines for phones, secrets were hard to keep—especially from the boys, who were always up to something. One summer, they towed the ferry away from Joyce's Island, making it impossible for the waitresses (the young girls they had their eyes on) to report on time for dinner. Mrs. Joyce was not amused but the teenagers were still often invited to the island for activities.

After college, Jack and Diana lost touch, but life had a way of bringing them back together, reuniting at a funeral in 2002, both divorced and living in Maine. They married in 2005, celebrating later that summer with friends and family at the Village Inn. It was only fitting that the lake, which brought them together as kids, would bring them back together for good.

Now, as they watch the next generations create their own memories on these familiar shores, Jack and Diana are reminded that this place is much more than just a beautiful lake—it's a way of life, a keeper of stories, and in the hearts of many families that often spans a lifetime. 💧



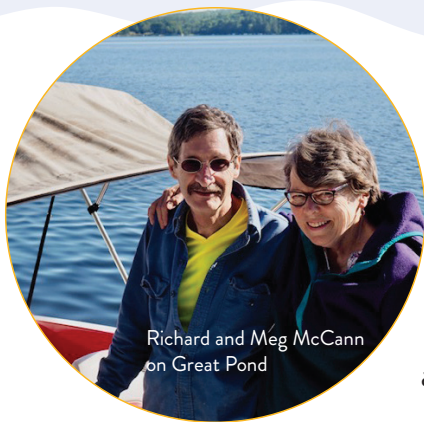
7 LAKES ALLIANCE AWARDED FEDERAL GRANT FOR EROSION CONTROL PROJECTS

7 Lakes Alliance is pleased to announce that we have been awarded Clean Water Act Section 319 funding to support watershed restoration projects on Long Pond and Messalonskee Lake. This generous funding will be available through December 2026.

If you live in the watersheds of Messalonskee Lake and Long Pond and have a gravel road or driveway that is eroding or washing out, we are here to help! Projects eligible for funding include culvert upgrades, drainage improvements and other erosion control measures. Please contact lynn.geiger@7lakesalliance.org to discuss potential projects.

This federal funding also supports the work of the 7 Lakes Alliance Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), which helps landowners' complete erosion control projects such as shorefront vegetated buffers, infiltration steps and pathways, and rain gardens. To learn more about YCC projects, visit 7lakesalliance.org/what-we-do/erosion-control/youth-conservation-corp/.

7 Lakes Alliance has two ongoing 319 grants: Great Pond Phase III and North Pond Phase IV, both of which will wrap up this September. While this year's funding has already been allocated, we are actively pursuing opportunities for another round. 7 Lakes Alliance is also currently working on future grants for Salmon, McGrath, and East Pond for the 2026-2027 funding cycle.



Richard and Meg McCann
on Great Pond

WHY WE GIVE

Meg McCann

My late husband, Richard McCann was a beloved and dedicated surgeon at Duke Hospital, known for his compassionate spirit and tireless commitment to service. For several years, he traveled to Haiti to provide life-saving medical care to communities in need. Closer to home, Richard also devoted his heart to a place that held deep meaning for him and his family – Great Pond.

When we purchased a camp on Hoyt's Island in 1988 it was a homecoming of sorts for Richard, who in his youth had attended Camp Bomazeen on Great Pond. For 35 years, we spent time together with our children, Jen and Josh, and later, grandchildren, on Hoyt's Island. We enjoyed sharing this idyllic place with many family members and friends over the years.

Whether windsurfing, paddling, fishing or running on the local landscape, Richard immersed himself in the natural beauty of the area. As a recreational pilot, he had a birds-eye view of the Belgrade Lakes region and a deep understanding of the connection between conserved land and clean waters.

On Hoyt's Island, Richard became a different person – one not defined by the demands of being a busy doctor, but by the joy of being present with his family. He was always on the move with nonstop activity and fun on the lake. We rarely sat still, except at mealtime gathered around the picnic table on our screen porch, soaking in the view of the lake.

I remember one January, we were walking on a beach in the Caribbean, where he was attending a medical conference. He turned to me and said that he couldn't wait to get back to the cabin in Maine. I laughed, commenting that he was probably the only person on that beach who was wishing he could be somewhere else! That's who he was – someone who worked hard, played hard, and came fully alive in Belgrade Lakes.

That deep connection to the Belgrade Lakes region inspired our family to make a meaningful donation to 7 Lakes Alliance in Richard's memory after he died in 2021. This legacy gift helped conserve the 119-acre Blaisdell property in Rome, overlooking Great Pond. This beautiful undeveloped land forms a critical link in the protected corridor from The Mountain to Mount Phillip and plays an important role in protecting water quality. My grandkids love looking up at

that unspoiled hillside, knowing that it's their grandfather's gift. We are honored that it now stands forever protected in Richard's memory.

Through my involvement with this Blaisdell conservation project, I became deeply connected with 7 Lakes Alliance and saw firsthand the vital work they do to conserve a place that is so dear to me and my entire family. We can't take this place for granted - these lakes can't save themselves. They need 7 Lakes Alliance and they need all of us. That's why I am honored to serve on the board at 7 Lakes Alliance so I can continue to give back to a place that has given so much to my family.

Now it's the happy place for my grandchildren, and I want to do all I can to assure that they have the same opportunities for cherished time here. That's why, several years ago Richard and I chose to make 7 Lakes Alliance one of the beneficiaries of our IRA. When I pass on, this portion of my IRA which would be taxed if left to my children, will be received without taxation by 7 Lakes Alliance. And it's so easy to do! Just contact your IRA custodian or your financial adviser to amend your beneficiary designation. This is our legacy gift that Richard and I will make to keep the memories going for future generations. 💧

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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BECOME A MEMBER

7 Lakes Alliance Leadership Circle members provide critical annual support for all of 7 Lakes Alliance programs to safeguard and restore the waters and lands of the Belgrade Lakes watershed. Members who give \$1,000 and above annually will be recognized at a yearly event.

WAYS TO GIVE

Donations

Make a tax-deductible contribution to 7 Lakes Alliance in the form of cash, stocks, mutual fund shares, or donor-advised funds for annual operating support, tributes, or memorials.

Endowment and Estate Planning

One simple and possibly tax-wise option is to name 7 Lakes Alliance as a beneficiary of your IRA by having your IRA custodian amend your beneficiary designation.

Real Estate

Make a contribution of land or an easement to 7 Lakes Alliance through an outright gift, as a legacy gift, or by naming 7 Lakes Alliance as a beneficiary of a remainder or charitable lead trust.

Donate Online:

7lakesalliance.org/donate



Corporate or Employer Matching Gifts

Many companies will match your donation. Please include your employer's matching gift form with your donation.

Transfer Shares Directly

7 Lakes Alliance maintains a brokerage account at LPL/Golden Pond Wealth Management at 129 Silver St. Waterville, ME 04901. LPL Financial, DTC Clearing, Credit to 7 Lakes Alliance, #11587085 taxpayer ID # is 04-3047156.

For more information, please contact:

LAURIE RALEIGH

7 Lakes Alliance Development Director

(207) 931-8806, laurie.raleigh@7lakesalliance.org



7 LAKES ALLIANCE SUMMER CELEBRATION



Sunday, July 13, 4-6 pm
137 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes

Sponsored by: **Hammond
Lumber Company**

Please join us for our annual summer gathering to learn about the important work being done by 7 Lakes Alliance to conserve the lakes and lands we all love. Together, we'll celebrate the wonderful supporters and volunteers who make this work possible.

Thanks to our generous sponsor, there is no fee for this event.
Kindly **RSVP** at 7LakesAlliance.org/events so we may have an accurate head count.

7 LAKES ALLIANCE

P.O. Box 250
Belgrade Lakes, ME 04918