



# THE CONSERVATIONIST

VOLUME 17  
Fall 2025



## OUR TEAM

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<b>Jane Eberle</b> <i>Chair</i>	<b>Pat Donahue</b>	<b>Meg McCann</b>
<b>Rachel Gaddes Jablonowski</b> <i>Vice Chair</i>	<b>Ron Fluet</b>	<b>Lenny Reich</b>
<b>Chris Cook</b>	<b>Peter Kallin</b>	<b>Carol Rosa Sabia</b>
<b>Matt Craig</b>	<b>Whitney King</b>	<b>Dick Schmaltz</b>
<b>Mel Croft</b>	<b>Lynn Matson</b>	<b>Bill Swan</b>
	<b>Tom McCandlish</b>	<b>Alex Wall</b>

### STAFF

<b>Stuart Cole</b> <i>Erosion Control Project Manager</i>	<b>Chris Monz</b> <i>President &amp; CEO</i>
<b>Laura Rose Day</b> <i>Chief Conservation &amp; Special Initiative Officer</i>	<b>Noah Pollock</b> <i>Land Conservation Director</i>
<b>Matt Farragher</b> <i>Lake Scientist</i>	<b>Laurie Raleigh</b> <i>Development Director</i>
<b>Lynn Geiger</b> <i>Erosion Control Policy Manager</i>	<b>Danielle Wain</b> <i>Lake Science Director</i>
<b>Jean Hazelwood</b> <i>Communication</i>	<b>Jennifer Warriner</b> <i>Development Associate</i>
<b>Mary Kerwood</b> <i>Executive Office Manager</i>	<b>Sally Whittington</b> <i>Community Engagement Coordinator</i>
<b>Sharon Mann</b> <i>Invasive Aquatics Director</i>	<b>Dan Woughter</b> <i>Stewardship Coordinator</i>
<b>Josie Miller</b> <i>Invasive Aquatics Coordinator</i>	

## 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 programs—invasive aquatics, water quality monitoring, and erosion control.



The Conservationist is printed on Sustana Opaque 30% paper.

Printed by Franklin Printing in Farmington, Maine.

Designed in Maine by All Over It LLC.

Cover: Colby Research Bog, fall 2025. Photo by Sally Whittington  
All photos by 7 Lakes Alliance unless otherwise noted.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Living Classroom of the Belgrade Lakes Watershed	4
7 Lakes Builds First Accessible Trail	5
Stopping the Spread: Defending Maine's Lakes from Aquatic Invaders	6
Thank You Volunteers & Sponsors	7
Why Didn't North Pond Have a Bloom this Year?	8–9
Engaging Students in Hands-On Learning at the Long Pond East Shore Preserve	10–11
Clean Water Act Section 319 Grant Update	12–13
Innovation Plays Key Role in Combating Erosion	14
Building a Community of Trail Stewards	15
Farewell and Gratitude to our Inaugural CEO, Laura Rose Day	16
7 Lakes Alliance Hosts First Leadership Circle Event	17
Why We Give	18
Your Support Matters	19

## A LETTER FROM CHRIS MONZ

---

The renowned environmental author, Edward Abby, begins his classic book *Desert Solitaire* with these words: “This is the most beautiful place on earth. There are many such places.” These words speak to the power of place, the importance of the environment to the human experience, and the diversity of perceptions of nature. Important ideas for 1968 when they were first written, perhaps even more important now.

This past summer Wyatt and I celebrated our own love of wild places by returning to the landscape where we first met—Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. Although many things have changed there over the years, much remains: the mountains, lakes, trails; the open spaces and dark skies. We connected to our past with the assurance that much endures. I am left with optimism for the future, especially for those yet to receive the gifts of this iconic landscape.

Our travels led us back home to the Belgrade Lakes region, a landscape every bit as inspiring and where we are fortunate to find similar enduring gifts. At 7 Lakes Alliance, our work is dedicated to honoring the past and rich history of this region while safeguarding its present and the future. By working diligently throughout the year, we conserve and protect the natural landscape, allowing a connection with memories of the past and optimism for the future—that this place and the experience will remain for the present and future generations.

Many of these themes are presented throughout this autumn issue of *The Conservationist*. We have had a busy and productive summer, monitoring water quality, remediating outbreaks of invasive plants, maintaining our lands and trails, and minimizing erosion. Our expertise places 7 Lakes Alliance at the forefront of watershed conservation in Maine, across the Northeast, and beyond.

As always, we are grateful for your partnership. Your support makes our work possible, season after season to assure that this place—our place—endures.

### CHRIS MONZ

*President & CEO, 7 Lakes Alliance*



Chris Monz and  
his wife Wyatt on  
Table Mountain in  
Wyoming.





Maine Master Naturalists Sarah Carlson and Liz Koucky leading a nature journaling exercise.

## THE LIVING CLASSROOM OF THE BELGRADE LAKES WATERSHED



**SALLY WHITTINGTON**

*Community Engagement Coordinator*

**Loons calling, cicadas buzzing, the scent of pine and wildflowers in the breeze. Step into the living classroom of the Belgrade Lakes watershed and every sense comes alive.**

Whether on a guided hike through conserved land, patrolling the waters on a plant paddle, or learning from our lake scientists aboard the Floating Classroom, this watershed offers a unique environment that fosters a relationship with the land and lakes. From mushrooms on the forest floor to great blue herons flying above, this watershed has endless wonders to fuel your curiosity and inspire a sense of stewardship.

Making these experiences accessible to our community is a top priority for 7 Lakes Alliance. That's why we expanded our Floating Classroom programs this summer, and why we plan to offer even more next year. 7 Lakes Alliance is also creating new opportunities for outdoor learning at the Homestead property, located on Watson Pond Road in Rome.

This wonderful new outdoor education center will be unveiled next summer.

By opening doors to nature, 7 Lakes Alliance is giving future generations the opportunity to explore, learn, and connect with the watershed. Building a relationship with this special place is how we make conservation a tradition. 💧



Capt. Sal explaining geography of the watershed.

To register for our year-round programming, visit **[7LakesAlliance.org/events](https://7LakesAlliance.org/events)**.



## 7 LAKES BUILDS FIRST ACCESSIBLE TRAIL



**SALLY WHITTINGTON**  
*Community Engagement Coordinator*

&

**DAN WOUGHTER**  
*Stewardship Coordinator*



**7 Lakes Alliance is thrilled to announce the newest addition to our trail system, the Homestead Trail—our first wheelchair-accessible trail.**

This 0.3-mile loop winds through woods, offering an easy and relaxing walk for people of all ages and abilities. Whether you use a wheelchair or cane or simply want a gentle stroll in nature among beautiful mature trees and rambling old stone walls, the Homestead Trail creates a peaceful and safe space for everyone to enjoy the beauty of the Belgrade Lakes watershed.



View of smooth crushed gravel trail surface.

The Homestead property will soon offer even more opportunities for outdoor learning and gathering. A timber-frame pavilion is being constructed using a 200+ year-old original wood frame from the Old South Church in Belgrade. The frame was preserved for over a decade by Bruce Hazard, who hoped to connect the town's rich history with the region's future.



Visitors enjoying a hike on the accessible trail.

Early feedback for the Homestead Trail has already been heartwarming. After visiting with 7 Lakes Alliance supporter and board member, Meg McCann, Amanda Smith shared, "Walking with a cane, I particularly appreciated that it was wide enough for two people to walk abreast. So much more companionable!"



Amanda Smith and Meg McCann  
Photo by Amanda Smith

This project has been made possible through both community generosity and significant grant support, including a \$30,000 Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund grant for the pavilion and a \$50,000 Maine's Recreational Trail Program grant for the trail and parking area. Individual donations have also been essential to bringing this long-awaited vision to life. We will have an official unveiling celebration in the summer of 2026. 🍀

To learn more about the Homestead property and all 7 Lakes Alliance trails, please visit us online at **[7lakesalliance.org](https://7lakesalliance.org)**.

# STOPPING THE SPREAD: DEFENDING MAINE'S LAKES FROM AQUATIC INVADERS

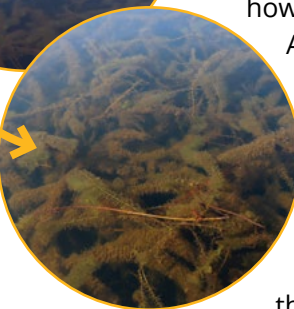
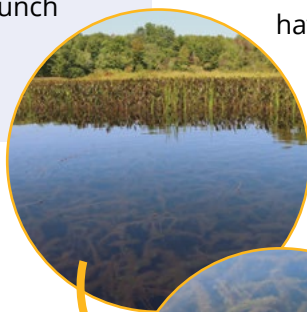


**JOSIE MILLER**  
*Invasive Aquatics Coordinator*

**The first record of an invasive aquatic plant in Maine was variable-leaf milfoil in Sebago Lake in 1970. Since then, eight invasive aquatic plant species—including variable-leaf milfoil and curly-leaf pondweed—have spread to 38 Maine waterways.**

Variable-leaf milfoil was introduced to the Belgrade Lakes watershed in the early 1990s in Belgrade Stream, which connects lower Long Pond to Messalonskee Lake. To address this important issue, 7 Lakes Alliance, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and Friends of Messalonskee have recently partnered to expand and intensify remediation efforts—work that will continue over the next several years. Already this work is showing success. Since the increased effort began in June 2025, the number of milfoil fragments leaving boats from the Oakland boat launch on Messalonskee Lake has dropped substantially.

These invasive plants harm native species, reduce water quality, hinder recreation, and lower property values. Thick milfoil mats make swimming, fishing, and boating difficult—and they are costly to manage. In dense infestations such as Belgrade Stream, herbicide applications are often the only viable control method as hand removal is not sustainable for large infestations.



Variable-leaf milfoil in  
Belgrade Stream.



Camp Golden Pond campers learn how to identify aquatic plants.



1-inch of  
milfoil with  
a whorl is all  
it takes to  
start a new  
infestation.

The primary pathway of spread is plant fragments hitchhiking on boats and gear. To combat this, Maine launched the Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) Program in 2001. The numbers of inspections statewide have grown from 2,848 in 2001 to 91,612 in 2024. 7 Lakes Alliance manages the CBI program at all motorized boat launches in the watershed from May to October; in 2025, a team of about 50 inspectors checked 14,680 boats. Over the last five years, CBIs in the Belgrade Lakes watershed have prevented 64 potential infestations, including 61 fragments intercepted from boats leaving Messalonskee Lake alone.

Because CBIs cannot inspect every boat, education is essential. Inspectors teach boaters how to check their own gear, and 7 Lakes Alliance hosts workshops to train volunteers to identify invasive plants and survey for new threats through the Adopt-a-Shoreline program. As invasive species continue to spread in Maine, prevention and education remain our strongest tools for protecting the Belgrade Lakes watershed. 💧

## THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

First Last	Jane Eberle	Mary Leunig	Lenny Reich
Dwight Allison	Cynthia Eccher	Don Magioncalda	Chau Reidy
Gary Allison	Stephen Eccher	Don Mairs	Kaethe Rice
Pam Ancheta	Cynthia Esthimer	Camp Manitou	Stacey Richard
Pixie Angelo	Paul Feinberg	David Manke	Richard Riker
Jan Arminio	John Fitzgerald	Bob Manning	Alison Riker
Thomas Arminio	Ron Fluet	Kelly Marshall	Peter Roderick
Karen Ashton	Liz Fontaine	Paul Marshall	Russ Sabia
Tanya Athanus	Rachel Gaddes	Dick Martin	Susie Sampson
Charlie Baeder	Jablonowski	Randie Martin	Richard Samson
Margaret Barnes	Jo Gargaly	Angela Marzilli	Charles Sandmel
Anne Berlind	Paul Giguere	Avi Marzilli	Donald Schassberger
Andrew Bertolini	Ed Glasheen	Deborah Massey	Dick Schmaltz
Pam Bessey	Mike Grant	Anthony Mastromarino	Richard Sharf
John Biddiscombe	Scott Guay	Doug Mather	Patrick Sheehan
Roy Bouchard	David Hallee	Lynn Matson	Maryjane Shiverick
Brett Boulette	Kim Hallee	Mark "Mac" McAfee	Sherrilynn Smith
Chris Bradley	Thomas Hardy	Cam McCafferty	Camp Somerset for Girls
Jessica Brann	Ted Harlow	Tom McCandlish	Everett Sparks
Eric Brown	Caroline Harlow	Meg McCann	Chris Stevens
David Burgess	Sally Harwood	Doug McCartney	Sally Stothoff
Elaine Burgess	AJ Held	Kim McCartney	Bob Sullebarger
Sarah Carlson	Katherine Hennessy	Dianne McDermott	Mike Sullivan
Nicholas Charles	Susan Hillson	Linda McElhinney	Bill Swan
Lindsay Clarke	Kate Hollister	Sue McMorrow	Makda Tadess
Connor Cobean	Blaine Horrocks	Chris McMorrow	Bill Tiernan
Maya Cohen	Nathalie Horrocks	Julie Mecham	Richard "Richie" Tory
Greg Coniff	Steve Hubbard	Katie Meikle	Janna Townsend
Mary Beth Coniff	Charles "Chuck" Hulse	Bob Merrill	Emilie van Eeghen
Roland Constable	Bonnie Jones	David Miller	Tobias Verville
Chris Cook	David Jones	Ray Mims	Alex Wall
Andy Cook	Mary Jordan	Lynn Mitchell	Jonathan Wells
Edie Cornwall	JJ Jurdak	Will Mitchell	Forrest West
Ed Cornwall	Peter Kallin	Kathy Moore	Charlie Wheeler
David Cottrell	Diane Kew	William Morris	Nancy Whyte
Mary Coyne	Kevin Kilbourn	Judy Muller	Lisa Wildman
Matt Craig	Whitney King	Bob Nardi	Anthony Wilson
Mel Croft	Liz Koucky	Sean O'Connor	Shaun Wolf
Bob Crowell	Pam Kriegel	Dierde O'Rourke	Doug "Woody" Woodsum
Robyn Deveney	Charlie Kriegel	Kay Overfield	
Kate DiBerardino	Sarah Krizo	Norb Overfield	
Ann Dolbear	Brent Krizo	Jim Peacock	
Pat Donahue	Kurt Lakin	Jeff Poulin	
Beth Drummond	Sheila Leavitt	Patricia G. Ramsey	
Paul Duggan	Paul Lenfest	Normarie Rebenack	
Beth Dyer	Jack Leunig	Paul Rebenack	

We are grateful for all of our volunteers. If we missed listing your name, we sincerely apologize and ask that you please contact us directly at (207) 495-6039.

**THANK YOU TO OUR  
EVENT SPONSORS!**

**Hammond  
Lumber Company**







## WHY DIDN'T NORTH POND HAVE A BLOOM THIS YEAR?

Lake Scientist Matt Farragher and assistant Miles Hagedorn working on North Pond.



**MATT FARRAGHER**  
*Lake Scientist*

**For five of the last eight summers, including 2024, North Pond water clarity dropped below two meters, indicating a severe algae bloom. However this summer the lake remained clear to the bottom. What has changed since last year, and what might we expect in the future?**

### A SUMMER OF DROUGHT

Between June 1 and August 31, 2025, Kennebec County received only 5.6 inches of rain, about half the 30-year average of 11.1 inches over the same period. This was also far less than in 2024 (10.7 in) and 2023 (17.7 in). While drought conditions brought many hardships, they also contributed to improved water clarity in five of the seven lakes we monitor, including North Pond. With fewer intense rainstorms this summer, we saw less runoff and thus less sediment erosion and fewer nutrient inputs, leading to clearer water. Lakes in the same region can respond differently to the same weather conditions though; physical characteristics of lakes (size, depth) influence their water quality, and lakes are sensitive to many external pressures, including development, land use changes and climate conditions.

### SCIENTIFIC INSIGHTS FROM NORTH POND

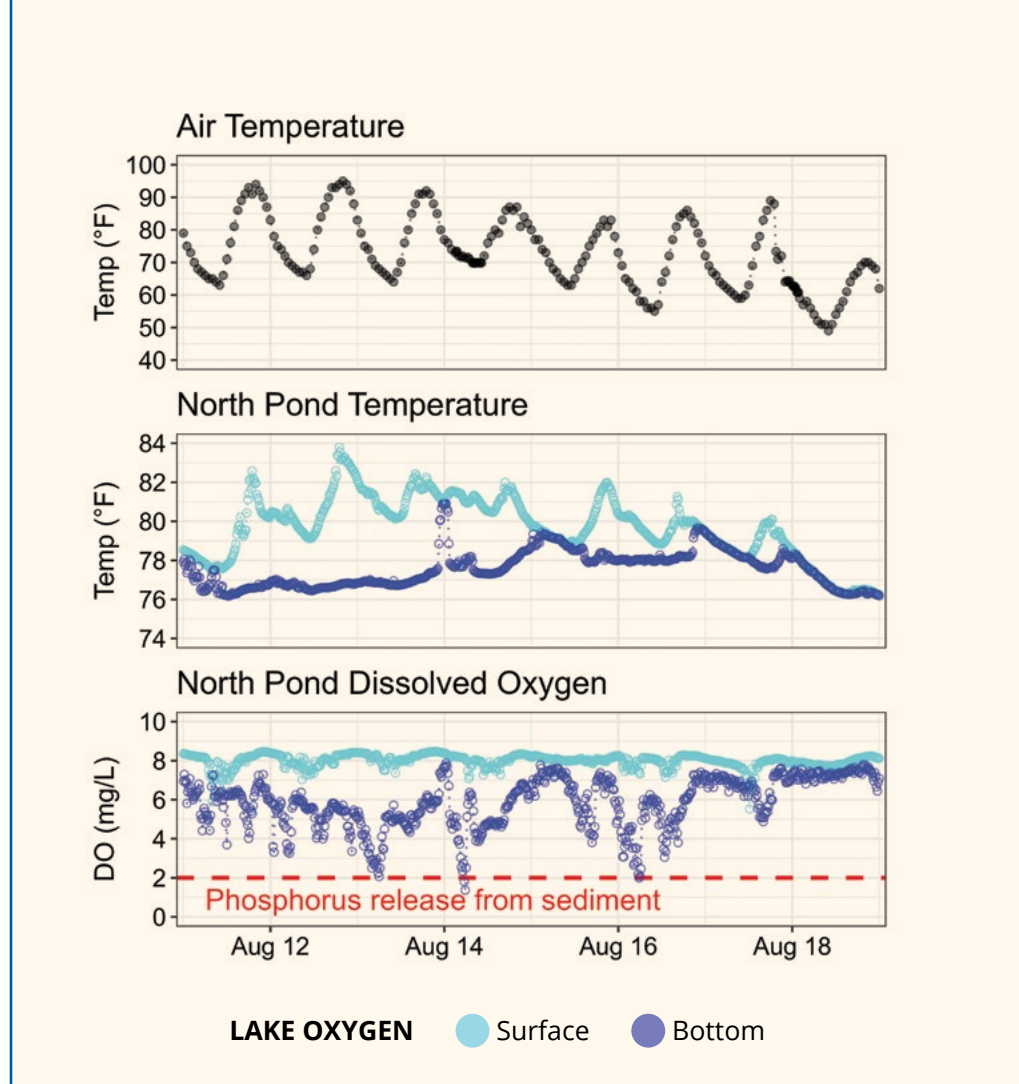
Through a cost share with North Pond Association, we deployed a new water quality buoy equipped with temperature and oxygen sensors at the surface and near the lakebed that provided real-time, data-driven insights into lake dynamics. With buoy measurements in 15-minute intervals to supplement our weekly fieldwork, we were able to monitor conditions more closely and better understand the factors influencing water clarity and blooms.





During the hot summer months, many lakes stratify; the surface water warms and stops mixing with the colder bottom water. When lakes remain stratified for long enough, oxygen in the cold bottom water is gradually depleted as organic matter decomposes. Once oxygen is gone, phosphorus is released from the sediment in a process called internal loading, which fuels algae growth.

In 2025, North Pond displayed a remarkable pattern. The lake repeatedly stratified and then mixed twenty-one times between May and September. These shifts often occurred over just a few days, with stratification triggered by hot air temperatures, and mixing caused by cold nights or strong winds. Each mixing event restored oxygen to the bottom water before phosphorus could be released,



Air temperature (top panel), North Pond temperature (middle panel) and North Pond oxygen (bottom panel) during a heatwave between Aug 11-19, 2025. Dissolved oxygen concentration (DO, milligrams per liter) measured with buoy at the surface (light-blue) and near the bottom (dark-blue). Red dashed line indicates threshold for phosphorus release from sediment.

helping to prevent an algae bloom. We know our deep lakes only mix twice per year in the spring and fall, and that our shallow lakes (North, East, McGrath) mixed more frequently during the summer, but the high-resolution buoy data revealed just how often and quickly North Pond loses oxygen when stratified.

While North Pond was clear to the bottom this year, without intervention and remediation it will likely bloom again. As we plan to administer an alum

treatment on North Pond to reduce internal phosphorus loading, we will continue our year-round work to collect data and refine our understanding of water quality dynamics across the seven lakes. This scientific approach is central to 7 Lakes Alliance's mission to protect and restore lake water quality throughout our watershed. We can't predict next summer's weather, but we can still work to reduce erosion and excess nutrient inputs into the lakes to safeguard them all for generations to come. 💧



Noah Pollock addresses a gathering of friends and neighbors at the conserved 172-acre parcel.

## ENGAGING STUDENTS WITH HANDS-ON LEARNING AT THE LONG POND EAST SHORE PRESERVE



**NOAH POLLOCK**  
*Land Conservation Director*

**This year, 7 Lakes Alliance conserved a 172-acre parcel on the shore of Long Pond. With 1,250 feet of undisturbed shoreline, a mature forest, wetlands, and vernal pools, the property has already provided a unique opportunity to engage Colby students studying past climate through environmental archives.**

Prior to this acquisition, students in Colby College's "Earth's Climate" course led by Professor Bess Koffman, an Associate Professor of Earth Sciences, used increment borers to core nine trees along the western side of the property. The students used digital calipers and microscopes to count the annual growth rings and measure ring widths. Students found the sampled trees to be an average of 188 years old, with one red pine determined to be 250 years old! Their findings were instrumental in helping 7 Lakes secure funding from the state's Land for Maine Future program which funded approximately 50% of the purchase, matching contributions from individual donors.

One of the reasons Koffman is excited to bring Colby students to the property is the potential to develop multi-century records of past climate variability. According to Koffman, tree coring is a great way for students to learn about past climate changes, because students can collect and analyze data and correlate their findings to climate records.

For example, trees are sensitive to extremely cold summers which can be caused by large volcanic eruptions. Indeed, the tree core records taken by the students show low growth years associated with a massive eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia in 1815. According to Koffman, finding the evidence of the eruption was exciting as it provided a tangible example of past volcanic impacts on the climate.

Professor Koffman plans to return with future classes to do a more comprehensive survey and develop a paleoclimate history from this site. The property also contains massive glacial





Colby College students collect tree cores. Photos by Bess Koffman

erratic boulders deposited during the last Ice Age about 20,000 years ago—a nice bonus for geology students learning about past climate changes.

Koffman is not the only professor with interest in taking students to the property. Justin Bicknell, an Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at Colby, believes the property will be an excellent location for his classes. For Bicknell, the unique mix of an old-growth-like forest, a wetland forest, and two younger regenerating forest stands of differing ages presents the ideal site for ecology education. He envisions having students making comparisons between the undisturbed forest and the wetland site during lessons and experiments around the question of how soil and topography determine tree composition and forest structure.

The development of a management plan for the property was also a hands-on experience for University of Maine senior Andrew Bertolini this summer. As part of his stewardship internship, Andrew spent days exploring the property, documenting its conservation values and identifying potential management actions. For example, one management plan challenge is determining how to balance public access to property while minimizing ecological disturbance and social impacts.

By studying on land conserved by 7 Lakes Alliance, these students experience the living laboratory of the natural world. They gain real-world skills in ecology, geology, conservation and environmental stewardship. Through this hands-on approach, students leave with knowledge and a sense of impact, seeing firsthand how their efforts help safeguard our lands and lakes. 💧



# CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 319 GRANT UPDATE

It's been a busy year, and we are pleased to share the progress of our four active Clean Water Act Section 319 Watershed Protection and Restoration Grants (319).



**LYNN GEIGER**  
*Erosion Control Policy Manager*

Gravel Road Workshop attendees at the stream crossing on Pond Road in Mercer.



## **PROTECTING OUR LAKES, ONE ROAD AT A TIME**

Great Pond Phase II and North Pond Phase IV (2024-2025) will have helped fund 44 road improvement projects, reducing erosion to keep sediment and nutrients out of our lakes. With 13 completed road projects, Long Pond Phase VI and Messalonskee Lake Phase III (2025-2026) have already made an impact.

## **LAKESMART LEADERSHIP**

7 Lakes Alliance continues to serve as the Belgrade Lakes LakeSmart Regional Hub, funded in part by Section 319 grants. This year, LakeSmart Coordinator & Erosion Control Project Manager, Stuart Cole, reviewed over 40 evaluations, resulting in 24 LakeSmart awards across the watershed.

## **HANDS-ON LEARNING**

319 Grant funds also supported education and outreach events, like the Messalonskee Buffer Workshop, the Gravel Road Workshop, and the LakeSmart Boat Tour - part of the Great Pond Buffer Better Campaign. These programs help our community learn how to be better lake stewards.

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT DOUBLES IMPACT**

We would not be able to do this work without the support of the community. Federal grants, like Section 319, require a local match, i.e. community investment





Gravel Road workshop attendees learn about improvements made last year to Long Pond Drive.

in the project. This year alone, our community contributed over \$260,000 of local matches through volunteer work, construction project cost-share, and in-kind donations (including a new foot bridge on Messalonskee Lake).

The 2025 Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) crew, comprised of 17 high school and college students, completed 60 projects for landowners across all seven lakes. Their work on Messalonskee Lake, North, Great, and Long Ponds totaled over \$71,000 of local matches for our grant budget.

Thank you to everyone who has helped contribute to a healthier watershed, from the volunteer LakeSmart evaluators, property evaluators, and property owners who hired the YCC to solve erosion problems, to the curious minds who attended our events and learned about being good stewards. Together we are turning knowledge into action to protect the lakes and lands of the Belgrade Lakes watershed. 💧

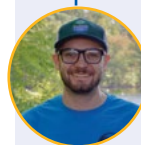
*\*Numbers as of 9/23/2025*

*Funding for this project is, in part, provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. The funding is administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection in partnership with EPA.*



YCC crew members build an infiltration path.

**“The 7 Lakes Alliance YCC crew installed over 110 shoreline buffer gardens across more than 60 different projects. Shoreline buffer gardens have become the most popular Best Management Practice. Shoreline buffers protect against erosion, filter runoff and provide ecosystem services for the local critters.”**



**STUART COLE**  
*Erosion Control Project Manager*



# INNOVATION PLAYS KEY ROLE IN COMBATING EROSION



**DANIEL SYLVESTER**  
*Shore Corps Steward*

**In response to the devastating effects of extreme weather, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) awarded the state of Maine a \$69 million grant as part of the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge in 2024.**

These funds, appropriated through the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, are being used to reduce the impact of climate change. One program funded by the grant is the Shore Corps program, a new branch of the Maine Conservation Corps.

Shore Corps' efforts focus on the boundary of water and land, the area most vulnerable to flooding. Belgrade Lakes communities are already benefiting from this program. Shore Corps Steward, Daniel Sylvester, joined 7 Lakes Alliance this past May and has since conducted multiple erosion control assessments and hosted several demonstrations to educate private landowners and public land managers on newer green infrastructure standards.

Camp Somerset for Girls volunteer event at Haynes Park in Belgrade Lakes.

## MEET YOUR LOCAL SHORE CORPS STEWARD, DANIEL SYLVESTER



Photo  
by Alina  
Allger

### **What prompted you to join the inaugural class of Shore Corps Stewards?**

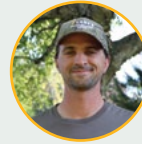
I have degrees in both biology and environmental science, and my professional experience ranges from medical device chemistry to nature-based education in a Montessori setting. I also worked as an invasive species field tech for Mass Audubon. And so, those experiences combined are a natural fit with the Shore Corps opportunity.

### **Are there any standout experiences thus far and what are you looking forward to for the remainder of this term?**

The Camp Somerset for Girls volunteer event at Hayden Park, where over 100 campers and staff helped remove Japanese Knotweed, was a standout experience. Seeing the excitement of the campers for the project helped me realize the direct impact of Shore Corps Service. I look forward to hosting more demonstrations throughout the rest of the year. 💧



## BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF TRAIL STEWARDS



**DAN WOUGHTER**  
*Stewardship Coordinator*

**Trail Adopters perform crucial tasks such as continuous monitoring, reporting issues, and trail maintenance. This important work increases 7 Lakes Alliance's capacity to accomplish more projects resulting in a better experience for all trail users. After about two years of the program, our Trail Adopter network is 12 volunteers strong.**

Trail work can be intimidating, and you may think that the job is too big, or that you don't have the skills required to be an adopter. Not true! Find out more about the volunteer experience from co-trail adopters Scott Guay and Beth Dyer.

### **Why did you choose to adopt the Quill Hill Trail System (Rome, ME)?**

**SCOTT:** I like the natural variety the network offers. Combined with The Mountain's Outer Loop, a hike on Quill Hill offers a little bit of everything.

**BETH:** I run the Quill Hill & Mountain loop frequently, and I'm new to this work so there are lots of opportunities to learn.

### **What changes have you noticed since you adopted a trail?**

**SCOTT:** It's getting more use, which is great!

**BETH:** It's exciting to see improvements and that keeps me motivated to get out there and do the work.

### **What advice do you offer to potential trail adopters?**

**SCOTT:** Do it! Trail work can be as simple or as complicated as you want to make it. Dan is a great teacher and very supportive.

**BETH:** Don't get overwhelmed...even if it's just 30 minutes. That time adds up and next thing you know you see real progress, and you start to know the trail by heart. 🍓



Trail Adopters, Scott and Beth. Photo by Scott Guay



Volunteers rebuilding an eroded trail section.



Impressive new staircase on the Lambert Trail, built by Scott and Beth.

To inquire about becoming a 7 Lakes Alliance Trail Adopter, contact Stewardship Coordinator Dan Woughter at [dan.woughter@7lakesalliance.org](mailto:dan.woughter@7lakesalliance.org).

## FAREWELL AND GRATITUDE TO OUR INAUGURAL CEO, LAURA ROSE DAY

---

After eight years of dedicated service, Laura Rose Day is transitioning to a leadership role in Passamaquoddy Tribe-led efforts to restore the Skutik (St. Croix) River. An internationally recognized fish passage and river restoration expert, Laura led the non-profit Penobscot River Restoration Trust before joining 7 Lakes Alliance and continues to serve on the Board of the Klamath River Renewal Corporation. As an attorney, Laura spent several years working on Great Lakes management, law and policy. Closer to home, Laura has long advocated restoring the Kennebec River.

During her tenure at 7 Lakes, Laura served as inaugural President and CEO from 2018-2023, when she resigned to return to help lead Skutik River restoration efforts while continuing to serve 7 Lakes in a new role as our Chief Conservation and Special Initiatives Officer. During her tenure as CEO, Laura guided the organization with vision, passion and tireless dedication, and under her leadership, the organization grew to 14 year-round employees, greatly expanding our capacity to protect the lakes and lands of the Belgrade Lakes region. Her deep expertise in watershed conservation broadened the impact of 7 Lakes Alliance far beyond our watershed. By forging lasting partnerships, advancing funding, and expanding programs, she positioned 7 Lakes for long-term success.

During her time as CEO, Laura focused 7 Lakes' organizational lens on the whole inter-related watershed, urging people not to think of themselves as either "water people" or "land people". Under her leadership, 7 Lakes staff advanced key programs. Water quality



Laura Rose Day, 7 Lakes Alliance President & CEO (2018-2023).

monitoring expanded to monitor nutrients from tributaries and test for toxins during algal blooms. To meet the growing threats in our lakes, the former milfoil program became the "Invasive Aquatics" program; plant genetics testing and research enhanced our understanding and detection. Erosion control programs leveraged millions of dollars and hundreds of partners. Laura's legacy will certainly include the addition of thousands of acres of conserved land, including the acquisition of over 800 acres of former commercial blueberry lands at the top of Vienna Mountain that remained unprotected in the center of the Kennebec Highlands. Laura noted that "The view of the entire Belgrade Lakes watershed from Vienna Mountain is both exhilarating and humbling and reminds us of our place in the watershed and beyond. I'm profoundly grateful that it will be forever conserved."

Board Chair Jane Eberle expressed this sentiment on Laura's departure, "Laura's leadership has left an extraordinary imprint on 7 Lakes Alliance. She not only advanced our mission with vision and determination but also built an incredible team whose passion and talent will carry this work forward for the years ahead. In addition, she connected a wide network of stakeholders to the work of 7 Lakes Alliance, deepening and strengthening its impact locally and statewide. On behalf of the Board, staff and our entire community, we are deeply grateful for all Laura has accomplished to protect the lakes and lands of the Belgrade lakes region that we all cherish."

We wish Laura the very best in her important new endeavor and hope she will remain a familiar presence in the Belgrade Lakes community. 💧



## 7 LAKES ALLIANCE HOSTS FIRST LEADERSHIP CIRCLE EVENT



2025 Leadership Circle celebration.



Donors visit with 7 Lakes Alliance President & CEO, Chris Monz.

To learn more about joining the Leadership Circle, please contact Laurie Raleigh at [laurie.raleigh@7lakesalliance.org](mailto:laurie.raleigh@7lakesalliance.org) or 207-931-8806. You may also visit us at [7lakesalliance.org/donate](https://7lakesalliance.org/donate)

This summer, 125 guests gathered at the Belgrade Lakes Golf Club for 7 Lakes Alliance's first annual Leadership Circle event. On a perfect summer evening, members, friends and neighbors came together to celebrate their shared commitment to protecting the lakes, land, and scenic beauty of the Belgrade Lakes watershed.

The event was generously sponsored by Golden Pond Wealth Management and graciously hosted by the Belgrade Lakes Golf Club. Guests enjoyed a stunning setting, overlooking the conserved lands of the Kennebec Highlands and Vienna Mountain, as well as several of the lakes that 7 Lakes Alliance works tirelessly to protect.

The evening began with a brief update on the important work of 7 Lakes Alliance made possible by Leadership Circle members and concluded with warm remarks from Board Chair, Jane Eberle, and Vice-Chair, Rachel Jablonski.

Leadership Circle members provide critical annual support for 7 Lakes Alliance's year-round professional staff and programs, which include:

- Water Quality Monitoring, Research, and Remediation
- Invasive Aquatic Prevention and Remediation, and Courtesy Boat Inspectors
- Land Conservation and Stewardship
- Erosion Control (Youth Conservation Corps, Major 319 Grant Projects and LakeSmart)
- Education and Outreach

All donors who give \$1,000 or more annually are recognized as Leadership Circle members, invited to this special event and listed in our annual report. Members may contribute in flexible ways: \$84 monthly or \$250 quarterly make it possible to reach the \$1,000 annual level. 💚

## WHY WE GIVE

Lynn Matson

**Phyllis and I give a five-figure donation every year to 7 Lakes Alliance. When we bought our home on Long Pond in 2007, it was the lakes that drew us here, and they are what keep us here. Like any homeowner, we invest heavily in our property through taxes, maintenance, and improvements. To us, investing in the lakes themselves is just as important.**

Our lakes and lands face threats: invasive aquatic plants, excess phosphorus that fuels algal blooms, erosion and runoff, and the impacts of climate change.

Fortunately, 7 Lakes Alliance, a highly professional, science-based conservation organization right here in Belgrade Lakes Village, is tackling these challenges with 14 year-round staff and over 90 summer employees, their track record speaks volumes:

- Remediating aggressive invasive aquatic plants, like variable- leaf milfoil and curly leaf pondweed that threaten to choke our lakes
- Restoring East Pond with an alum treatment and planning another one for North Pond, with North Pond Association, one of five wonderful lake association partners
- Conserving 5,000+ acres of land for water protection and recreation
- Stewarding conserved land and improving and building new trail systems, including a new universally accessible trail
- Taking over 2,000 water samples annually to keep our lakes healthy
- Completing 600+ erosion control projects since 2021
- Annually managing over 70 Courtesy Boat Inspectors
- Running the regional hub for LakeSmart



Photo by Lynn Matson

- Organizing 80+ educational and outreach programs annually, and
- Advocating in Augusta and Washington DC for funding and stronger watershed protection.

7 Lakes Alliance deserves not only our thanks, but our financial support. If our lakes decline, so does the value of our properties and the quality of our lives here.

With an annual budget of about \$3 million, every dollar you contribute supports one-third of their programming and is essentially tripled with two-thirds coming from grants, foundations, state and federal funding.

We all love these lakes and want future generations to enjoy them as much as we have. That's why Phyllis and I support the work of 7 Lakes Alliance each year and hope many others will join us with a generous annual gift and consider putting 7 Lakes in your will. What an extraordinary legacy: ensuring that the lakes, lands and natural beauty of the Belgrade Lakes are protected for today and for all who come after us. 💧



# YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

---

## WAYS TO GIVE

Annual giving provides vital support for 7 Lakes Alliance, helping us meet the greatest needs for our lakes and lands. You can make a tax-deductible donation in the form of cash, stocks, mutual fund shares, or donor-advised funds. Tribute and memorial gifts are a special way to honor and celebrate a milestone event or the legacy of a loved one.

### Scan to Donate Online



[7lakesalliance.org/donate](https://7lakesalliance.org/donate)

### Support Our Annual Fund!

Setting up an automatic, recurring gift is a convenient and impactful way to support 7 Lakes Alliance year-round. Give \$84 a month or \$250 quarterly, to become a Leadership Circle member. (\$1,000+ in annual giving). Visit our website and select Monthly or Quarterly under Frequency in the donation information section.

### Gifts From Retirement Assets

Donors who are 70 ½ or older can direct part or all your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) to 7 Lakes Alliance. This Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) can lower your taxable income.

### Planned Giving

Consider naming 7 Lakes Alliance as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or other retirement account. This is a simple way to make a lasting impact while reducing potential taxes for your heirs. Another way to create a lasting legacy is to include 7 Lakes Alliance in your will or estate plans.

### Gifts of Stock

Donating appreciated stock can provide tax benefits while making a meaningful impact on our lakes and lands. 7 Lakes maintains a brokerage account at LPL/ Golden Pond Wealth Management at 129 Silver Street in Waterville, ME, 04901. Our taxpayer ID # is: 04-3047156.

### Real Estate

Donate land or an easement to 7 Lakes Alliance through an outright gift, as a legacy gift, or naming 7 Lakes Alliance as a beneficiary of a remainder or charitable lead trust. Please contact Noah Pollock, Land Conservation Director at (207) 495-6039 ext: 101 [noah.pollock@7lakesalliance.org](mailto:noah.pollock@7lakesalliance.org)

### Donor-Advised Funds

Recommend a grant to 7 Lakes Alliance through your donor-advised fund to make an immediate difference for our lakes and lands.

### Matching Gifts

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

For more information, please contact:

**LAURIE RALEIGH**

*7 Lakes Alliance Development Director*

(207) 931-8806

[laurie.raleigh@7lakesalliance.org](mailto:laurie.raleigh@7lakesalliance.org)



## 7 LAKES ALLIANCE

P.O. Box 250  
Belgrade Lakes, ME 04918



Board members Dick Schmaltz and Dwight Allison enjoying the evening with fellow Leadership Circle members.  
Photo by Alex Wall

## WILL YOU TAKE YOUR GENEROSITY TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

Join our Leadership Circle at the \$1,000+ level to protect our beloved and vulnerable Belgrade Lakes watershed when it needs you most.

**ALL DONATIONS  
WILL BE MATCHED  
100% UP TO  
\$100K THROUGH  
12/31/2025!**

[7lakesalliance.org/donate](https://7lakesalliance.org/donate)

