

Basin-David-Tilton Ponds Association

Newsletter

June 2014

Loons on David Pond

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Summer Greetings!

News from the BDTPA President...

After a long winter on David Pond, summer has arrived quickly and gloriously, and our annual meeting is around the corner. The association has been busy behind the scenes this spring, organizing invasive plant training and plant patrols; connecting with leaders of LakeSmart, the Maine Lakes Society, and the Thirty-Mile River Watershed Association; writing and meeting about our concerns and plans for the future; and even working to protect our nesting loons.

Under Barbara Kinney's leadership, BDTPA has achieved great success in keeping the water quality of David Pond healthy (see Mary Lynch's article on page 5 for more details). As the new president, I will continue those efforts.

Protecting our pond from the devastating effects of an invasive plant such as Eurasian milfoil is one of our highest priorities. At the annual meeting, biologist Alecia Tenney will outline a team-based approach to invasive plant monitoring, which will match up experienced and new people. We hope to create a more sustainable approach for the long run, and we really want everyone to participate as much as they can. The more "eyes on the pond," the better! Learn more about upcoming training sessions at the annual meeting.

Participating in the LakeSmart program is another way landowners have helped to keep the shores buffered and our water protected from the dangers posed by storm run-off. This year, our new LakeSmart coordinator, Patricia Wheeler, will help arrange meetings for those who want to have their lake properties assessed. (See page 3 for more details on this program.)

At the annual meeting, I'll share plans for more online communication (a new website and email list). I am looking forward to meeting you in person and hearing your concerns and ideas. See you at the meeting . . . and on the pond!

-Misty Beck



ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK BRUNCH

7/12

Starling Hall

Rt. 17

9:00 a.m.

Following the meeting
will be a potluck brunch.
Stay to meet your
neighbors on the pond.

Loons Nesting on David Pond

By Linda Stanton



Image from *Portland Press Herald*

Those of us who live on the lake year-round notice how quickly after ice-out our resident loons arrive for the season. Their instincts are amazing! Soon they are courting and, if we are lucky, building a nest on an island or in a protected cove.

As loons are clumsy on land, they nest as close as possible to the waterline. This makes their nests vulnerable to changes in the lake's water level. Nests can be ruined either by flooding, or becoming too far from the water's edge. Often there is only one egg, though twins are not uncommon. Eggs usually hatch in early July, and the tiny chicks can be prey for large fish, eagles, and snapping turtles. Loon parents are very protective and you can hear their alarm calls when a predator is near.

It is crucial to the success of nesting pairs that their nests and the pond area close to the nests not be disturbed by humans. It is fascinating to watch our loons swimming, fishing and caring for their young, but the best thing we can do to help them along is to leave them, and particularly their nesting areas, alone.



Last year's unhatched egg (from Jim Seidel).

A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature.

~Henry David Thoreau

As of this writing, there is a nest on "Loon Island" on the East Road side of David Pond. Two of our BDTPA members have marked the area with signs warning us to keep back from the nesting zone to prevent a recurrence of last year's nest abandonment.

Another significant danger to loons is the use of lead fishing tackle. Swallowed lead sinkers are a leading cause of death among adult loons. A lead-tackle exchange kit will be available at the BDTPA annual meeting on July 12th at Starling Hall on Route 17 in Fayette. We will also have more information to share on this subject.

Every year on the third Saturday in July, Maine Audubon sponsors the Loon Count to track the progress of Maine's loon population. Volunteers at hundreds of lakes across the state spend half an hour in the early morning out on their lakes counting loons. This year Misty Beck, Kirstie Ludwig, Joy Higgins, and Deb Cayer will be counting the David Pond loons on July 19th from 7:00 to 7:30 AM. Our counts over the years have varied from 1-8 adults and 0-3 chicks.

Let's continue to do a good job of keeping our lakes clean and sharing them with the loons—one of the most distinctive features of life on a Maine lake.

Seeking Notes and Images of Life on the Ponds

- Do you love local natural history? Share your stories of life on David Pond (or Basin and Tilton).
- Are you interested in seasonal change on the ponds? "Phenology" charts such changes as ice-out, arrival of migratory birds, leafing out of specific trees. If you'd like to observe and contribute notes on these markers, please send me a line.
- Capture a great image of wildlife on the water? Contribute to our online collection of images, coming soon. (Attend the annual meeting for details!)

Contact Misty with your stories and photos.
(mbeck@bates.edu)

Buffers: The Best Defense for Lakes



What is a BUFFER?

A buffer is a sturdy strip of mixed vegetation along the lakeshore. The trees, shrubs, groundcovers and duff of a sturdy buffer shield the lake from rainwater runoff which otherwise would carry nutrients and other pollutants into the water. Plant stems and tree trunks slow runoff so rainwater is more likely to soak into the earth rather than washing over it. Buffer trees act as umbrellas, protecting soil from the impact of raindrops. Twigs, branches, and leaves blanket the soil with an absorbent cover called duff.

What Does It Matter?

Too much rainwater washing into a lake will load it with phosphorus. This is not a good thing! Phosphorus feeds algae and turns lakes green. Fish kills, unpleasant odors, loss of recreational opportunities and falling property values follow.

Phosphorus, the Green Machine

Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element. It readily attaches to soil particles. It's also a plant food. One muddy rivulet in one rainstorm may not seem too important, but if you add up all the muddy rivulets in one rainstorm, multiply that by the number of rain events per year, then run the calculation out 20 years, you'll see how rainwater runoff can ruin a lake. Lake experts call the outcome *Death by a Thousand Cuts*.

Why Target Shorefront Owners?

Lake shorelands have a disproportionate effect on water quality. Research shows that vegetated shorelands predict good water quality in the whole lake. Finally, since all development within a lake watershed can cause harm to its water quality, the shorefront is the lake's last defense.

And, We're Not Alone...

Buffers also maintain critical habitat for 60 native Maine wildlife species. *60!* A sturdy buffer shades and cools vital near shore nurseries essential for insect, fish and amphibian life, too.

How Should I Start?

Take a break, retire your rake, and save the lake! In other words, let Mother Nature take charge! If you stop mowing and clearing vegetation near the lake, a fine buffer will reassert itself there in time.

If you prefer a planned approach, visit the Maine Lakes Society website and search <http://mainelakessociety.org/lakesmart/> where you will find Maine nurseries and landscapers who are LakeSmart trained. They know what to do to protect water quality as they beautify your home.

(Article used by permission from Maine Lakes Society)

LakeSmart recognizes property owners whose landscapes observe lake conservation practices such as buffers.

For information on how your property can be "LakeSmart" certified, contact our new BDTPA LakeSmart Coordinator, Patricia Wheeler at 409-5133 or 293-2064.

Take a break, retire your rake, and save the lake!

Buffer Up!

A History of the Basin-David-Tilton Ponds Association

By Mary Lynch

Our association was started by a small group of people who became aware of the risks to the water quality of David Pond. In the mid-1990s, Rene Mathieu, Barbara Kinney, and others started to educate themselves about how to protect the pond. From visiting other local pond associations and attending lake training workshops run by the University of Maine at Orono, they learned that the water quality of David Pond is particularly vulnerable. It is relatively shallow, has a low flushing rate, and faces threats from development.

The workshops taught how to reduce run-off from camp roads and how to use plant buffers to catch rainwater before it reaches the pond, so that phosphorus build-up in the lake could be slowed. They learned to monitor water quality from the workshops and from the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP), and they continue annual sampling in Basin and David Ponds.

Other people around the pond became interested and began to educate themselves about the responsibilities of owning property on a pond. They realized that a pond association could be a resource for all of us and a stimulus for taking action to keep our water clear, which, in turn, can help maintain property values.

Barbara, like many of us, had bought land on the shore of David Pond knowing nothing about how to help protect it from the threats of algae growth and invasive plants. She gathered names and addresses of lake shore residents from tax maps and sent out a survey to determine concerns about the pond. With the support of others in the neighborhood, including Edna Winn, our treasurer for many years, who "wanted to learn everything," the Basin, David and Tilton Ponds Association was formed in 2002.

Committees were then formed to learn about setting up a non-profit organization, and many of us attended workshops to learn to identify invasive plants and to monitor water quality. These workshops continue to be given every year by VLMP and other organizations, and

From the self-education of a few concerned residents to "Gold Star Lake" status

we should all learn something about how to spot these threats to our precious pond, which can cover it with a mat of plants that can destroy its beauty and its recreational value. Biologist Alecia Tenney will attend our annual meeting this year to provide beginners information on invasive plants.

The BDT Ponds Association voted to bring the LakeSmart program, initially run by Maine DEP, to David Pond a few years ago and we have become a "Gold Star Lake" because of the high rate of participation. When invited by owners, LakeSmart evaluators visit and make recommendations to help us understand what can be done to make our properties more lake friendly. Residents have shown a lot of interest and worked to have their properties certified both individually and as neighborhoods. LakeSmart is now run by the Maine Lakes Society (formerly Maine COLA). We hope interest will continue to grow and that LakeSmart will thrive in our neighborhoods. Patricia Wheeler will be our new Coordinator on David Pond. (To have your home assessed for the LakeSmart award, contact Patricia at 409-5133 or 293-2064.)

There are about 200 residents on the shores of our ponds and everyone in the Basin-David-Tilton watershed is considered a member of the association and receives the newsletter. We suggest \$10-25 annual dues, which is used for projects that members vote on to protect the ponds. The water quality of David Pond has actually improved slightly and is usually above the statewide average, unlike Maine lakes generally, which have slowly declining water quality.

The willingness of everyone in our pond neighborhood to learn about the issues and work to improve shore land conditions, as well as shore land zoning laws introduced in the 1970s have all contributed to the improvement of water quality here. The threats remain though, so we can never take the health of David Pond for granted.

Come to the annual meeting and pick up a free "Quick Key" plant identification pamphlet. It can give anyone boating on the lake an idea of what to look for in plants.

The Youth Conservation Corps assists landowners who want to decrease run-off and erosion on their lakeshore. Contact 30 Mile River Watershed Association for more information.



**Respect Maine
Boating Law:**

**NO WAKE
ZONES**

Please remember . . .

The “no wake” buoys mark sensitive areas on the pond.

“No wake” zones exist 200 feet from every shoreline, including islands.

“No wake” means operating at **“headway speed”** (“the slowest speed at which it is possible to maintain steering and control . . . except when actively fishing or on a direct line to pick up skiers”).

These zones protect our shores from erosion -- and our children and ourselves while swimming or paddling.

Thank you for helping to preserve the shoreline and keeping the lake a safe place for all.

Volunteer!

Opportunities abound.

- Get involved with maintaining the pond’s water quality by volunteering for a plant patrol team.
- Learn how to landscape to protect water quality by participating in LakeSmart.
- Help produce the newsletter or website and social media.
- Assist with mailings and meetings.
- Learn more about pond environmental issues by attending workshops and reading up.
- Share your ideas!



Contact Misty at 491-9216 or mbeck@bates.edu.

Membership Information

1. Help Keep Our Mailing List Up-To-Date

Name:

Winter Address:

Summer Address:

Phone Number(s):

Email Address:

2. Renew/Contribute

We are a 501.c(3) corporation, and contributions are deductible. We suggest an annual membership contribution of \$10-25, which will help us to maintain and protect the excellence of our ponds.

Mail to:

**Basin-David-Tilton Pond Association
c/o Monique Longtin
330 Shore Road
Fayette, ME 04349**

3. Volunteer! Come to the Annual Meeting or contact any board member to find ways to help.

Basin-David-Tilton Ponds Association

Board of Directors

Misty Beck, President
Linda Stanton, Vice President
Mary Lynch, Secretary
Monique Longtin, Treasurer
Barbara Kinney, Past President

Water Quality / IPP / LakeSmart

Joe Longtin (Invasive Plants)
Rene Mathieu (Water Quality)
Debbie Cayer (30 Mile Rep)
Patricia Wheeler (LakeSmart Coordinator)

Trustees

Ken Hall
Joe Longtin
Kirstie Ludwig



*Pure water is
the world's
first and
foremost
medicine.*

~Slovakian Proverb

*The BDTPA works to improve the water quality of the ponds and their total environment.
The association also educates and informs landowners, their guests, and other interested individuals
on issues of water quality, invasive plants, and other environmental and safety issues.*

Basin-David-Tilton Ponds Association

c/o Misty Beck, President
16 David Pond Lane
Fayette, ME 04349

[Recipient]

Address Line 1
Address Line 2
Address Line 3
Address Line 4