

BASIN, DAVID & TILTON PONDS ASSOCIATION

WWW.BDTPA.ORG

NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2025

ANNUAL MEETING - 2025

The BDTPA annual meeting is scheduled for:

**Saturday, August 2nd at 12:00 noon
Starling Hall, Fayette**

Draft minutes from the 2024 meeting are posted on the BDTPA website: <http://bdtpa.org/meetings.html>

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope you all are doing well this spring and looking forward to your time on Basin, David, and Tilton Pond this summer.

This edition of the newsletter includes a special emphasis on the invasive swollen bladderwort and what BDTPA, the 30 Mile River Watershed Association, the Maine DEP, and local residents are doing in response. Along with information on water quality, the annual loon count, and water level management, the articles in this year's newsletter are information dense – all very important to the quality of life on our precious ponds. Please reach out to any of volunteers mentioned in these articles and/or attend the annual meeting in August for more information.

Also in this newsletter is a special section with information on 30-Mile River Watershed Association and all the great initiatives that organization spearheads on our behalf to protect the ponds we love. Please consider making a personal donation to 30-Mile at: <https://30mileriver.org/>

Lastly, I would encourage us all to enjoy what we have here on Basin, David, and Tilton Ponds and to take care of those things with an intentional long-term vision, to preserve this special slice of the world for the enjoyment of all for many years to come.

Thank you. I hope you have a wonderful summer!

Stephen Smith-Erb, BDTPA President

SWOLLEN BLADDERWORT

As you are likely aware, the invasive swollen bladderwort (*Utricularia inflata*) was found on Tilton Pond in the late summer of 2023. Much of this newsletter is dedicated to providing information on the invasive bladderwort and plans by local and state organizations to manage it, this year and in future years.

Although the plant was first collected in Tilton in August 2023, it clearly has been there for at least several years, based on how widespread and abundant it is.

Swollen bladderwort was found in Mousam Lake in 2023 and added to the Maine list of invasive aquatic plants that year. It now has been confirmed in eight lakes and ponds, including Tilton, an increase from five lakes in 2024. It is found in all of the New England states except Vermont, plus New York and Washington state. The species is native to the southeast United States, but its native range does not extend north of New Jersey.

The focus of bladderwort-related efforts in 2025 will be on hand-removing existing bladderwort from Tilton Pond and preventing the invasive plant from finding its way downstream to David Pond. 30 Mile is organizing surveys for early in the growing season to make sure that, if the plant does reach David Pond, it will be seen right away, when eradication would still be possible. Surveys will continue through the summer, focusing on the area on the southwest side of David Pond where the stream from Tilton enters.

Anyone who wants to help with pulling the plant from Tilton may email Bob Capers (rscapers@mindspring.com) or Lori Beaulieu (lbeaulieu63@gmail.com). People interested in helping with surveys on David or Tilton Pond should email Bob Capers.

IDENTIFYING SWOLLEN BLADDERWORT

The invasive swollen bladderwort (*Utricularia inflata*) is easily confused with the native floating bladderwort (*Utricularia radiata*) because they both use floating bladders to support their yellow flowers, and no other bladderwort species does that. Even when they are in flower, telling these two apart is difficult. Swollen bladderwort is always larger than floating bladderwort, but unless you have floating bladderwort in your hand it can be hard to remember if something is bigger or smaller than that.



In swollen bladderwort, the ring of floats has a diameter of about 6-8 inches, compared with about 3-4 inches for floating bladderwort. Both have yellow flowers, but swollen bladderwort has 9-14 flowers and floating bladderwort only 6-8 flowers. The flower stalk also is longer in swollen bladderwort. The plants of swollen bladderwort are described as "robust," meaning they are big and coarse, while those of floating are described as "delicate," meaning they are smaller and with finer divisions.

Both species have leaves that are divided into two sections at the base. Those of swollen bladderwort are of unequal sizes and those of floating are usually more equal in size, but again, that can be difficult to judge when you're looking at such finely divided objects floating in the water, even more difficult when you pull them out of the water because they all bunch together.

All of these difference can be difficult to understand until one has first-hand experience with the plants. Please consider attending one of the following sessions to learn more and see both floating and swollen bladderwort in person:

- Invasive Plant Refresher, David Pond, Lake View Estates Common Lot: 10:00 am to 12:00am on June 20th
- Live Plant ID, Wayne: 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm on July 11th
- Plant Paddle, Minnehonk Lake, Mt Vernon: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm on July 18th

MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR 2025

Surveying for the invasive swollen bladderwort (*Utricularia inflata*) in Tilton Pond will begin during the second half of May, which is when the plant is expected to begin flowering. At the same time, volunteers will begin pulling the plants from the shallow water in front of their homes and at the boat launch.

Flowering began on May 26 last year, and the plants become easy to see when they produce the floating bladders that hold the yellow flowers above the water's surface. The plants are expected to start flowering about the same time this year. However, the swollen invasive species, *Utricularia inflata*, bladderwort was found in Tilton only in 2023, and it is possible that it will not flower every year.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has authorized hand-pulling of the invasive bladderwort under a permit granted to 30 Mile, as was done in 2024. Volunteers removing the bladderwort from Tilton have agreed to weigh the plants and to keep track of the hours they work so the plant density can be compared with results from 2024, when more than 2,500 pounds of bladderwort were removed from the pond by Lori Beaulieu and other volunteers.

Volunteers, including staff from 30 Mile and Maine DEP, will begin surveying the south end of David Pond in May as well, looking for any evidence that the invasive bladderwort has been carried downstream from Tilton.

Like many aquatic plants, bladderworts reproduce largely through fragmentation, and any piece of a stem or leaf can float in the water and grow into a new plant. Because they are unrooted and float freely in the water, bladderworts are especially difficult to control, and people removing the plants need to be careful not to break the plants, which would create fragments that could colonize elsewhere.

30 Mile and the Maine DEP put a net across the Tilton Pond outflow stream in 2024 to catch fragments of the invasive bladderwort before they could reach David Pond. That net was cleaned and reinstalled in April. However, the water level in Tilton was unusually high because of beaver activity, and this compromised the net's effectiveness during the spring. A second net was installed slightly farther downstream a few weeks ago and has been effective to date. The nets will be monitored regularly through the summer.

John McPhedran, coordinator of the Maine DEP invasive aquatic species program, said his agency will continue to monitor the invasive bladderwort in Tilton and other lakes where it occurs. During a meeting with Tilton residents, 30 Mile representatives and BDTPA members, McPhedran said that there is no way to eradicate the invasive bladderwort once it becomes as well-established and abundant as it is in Tilton.

WATER QUALITY

Water quality monitoring is done on David and Basin, biweekly between May and September by the 30 mile team and volunteers.

Basin pond is 33 acres with a mean depth of 42 feet and a maximum depth of 106 feet. David Pond is 302 acres with a mean depth of 15 feet and a maximum depth of 37 feet.

The shallow depth of David and Tilton Ponds predispose them to increased plant growth due to the littoral zone (where sunlight reaches the bottom), reaching far into the ponds.

The water quality report from 2023 and information from 2024 are available at: <https://30mileriver.org/david-pond/>. More information will be presented at the BDTPA annual meeting in August.

See: <https://bdtpa.org/water-quality.html>

LAKESMART

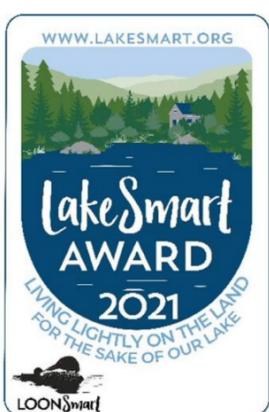
As our rainstorms become more severe, and our waters warmer, protection from runoff into our lakes is critical. Phosphorus loading from gravel, dirt, or other pollutants into our warmer waters will most assuredly promote increased algal growth.

How can you as a shorefront owner help you ask?

It's so easy, we come to you at your convenience with trained volunteers to do a survey of your property. LakeSmart is most importantly educational, but also non regulatory and free. We rely on best management practices (BMP's) developed over the years by the experts. We can provide you the landowner with individualized suggestions for keeping pollutants from stormwater out of the lake. We can answer questions and provide you with resources. Even the smallest improvement will help.

Thank you for helping to keep our water clean, swimmable and full of life!

Submitted by Deb Cayer (debbiecayer@gmail.com)



FOR THE LOVE OF LOONS!

Bird of the Year! Our beloved loon, the Common Loon, is the Bird of the Year, as chosen by the American Birding Association.



42nd Annual Loon Count – Saturday, July 19th, 7:00am to 7:30am, will mark the 42nd Loon Count for Audubon. Thousands of volunteers throughout Maine will take to the waters and count all adult loons and chicks that they see in a designated area. If interested in volunteering, contact Phil Keefe at pkeefe@maineaudubon.org.

Nesting-Females usually lay two eggs between mid-May and mid-June. Both parents incubate the eggs for about 29 days. Please tell your families and guests to stay off the "loon islands" or other areas where there is a nest until mid-July.

Things you can do to be loon-friendly (from the Maine Audubon)

- Obey the no-wake law within 200 feet of shore.
- Enjoy the "loon islands" from a distance until AFTER chicks are hatched, typically after mid-July. Do NOT climb on the islands during nesting season.
- Keep garbage out of reach of loon egg predators, like skunks and raccoons.
- Use lead-free tackle.* Other good options are made of bismuth, steel and tin.
- Get rid of fishing line so it doesn't get tangled up in a loon's foot or bill.
- Use phosphorus-free fertilizer, and plant shrubs as a buffer along the shoreline to reduce run-off.

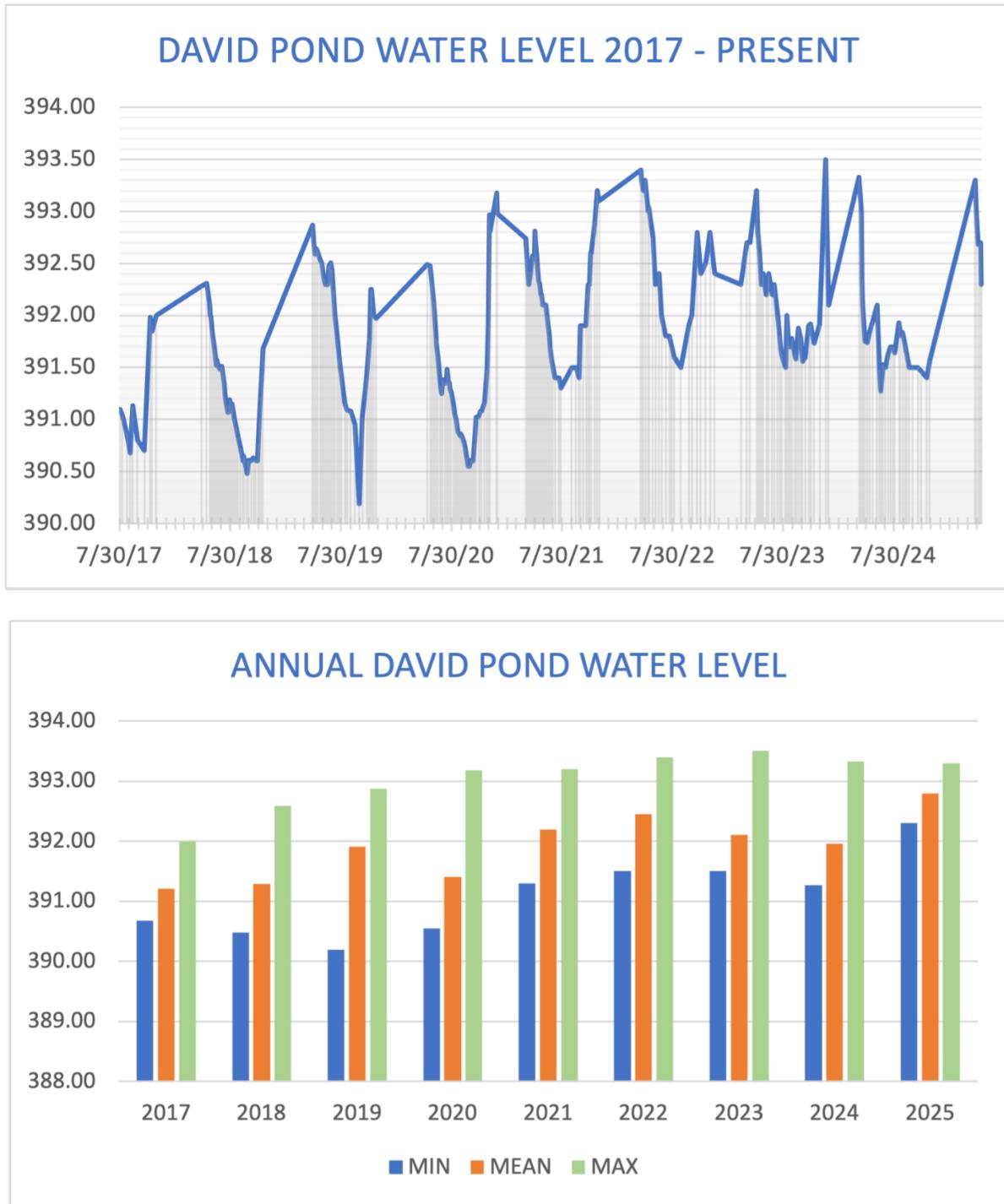
*Lead that enters our lakes as lost or discarded fishing gear is a leading cause of death for adult Common Loons. To protect loons and other wildlife, Maine state law bans the use and sale of lead sinkers and bare (unpainted) lead jigs that weigh one ounce or less, or that measure 2 1/2 inches or less.

Maine Audubon has all sorts of information on the loon, including answers to questions like "Do loons return to the same lake year after year, and nest in the same place every year?" and "Do loons mate for life?" and "How often do loons have chicks and how many do they have each year?" Go to their website at <https://maineaudubon.org/>

Submitted by Ellen Smith-Erb, BDTPA secretary

DAVID POND WATER LEVEL

BDTPA has been tracking the water level on David Pond since 2017 while targeting an average level of around 392 feet through its management of the impoundment at the north end of the pond. The graphs below shows the seasonal variations in water level over those years. A special thanks to Bob Harradon for monitoring the water level and to Richard Hicks for maintaining the data on the BDTPA website: <https://bdtpa.org/water-level-data.html>



Charts above updated 5/16/2025 - for the most recent data see: <https://bdtpa.org/water-level-data.html>

NEWS FROM 30 MILE RIVER WATER ASSOCIATION



The 30 Mile River Watershed Association (30 Mile) is a nonprofit organization committed to protecting the health of over 25 lakes and ponds in this watershed region, including Basin, David and Tilton Ponds. To achieve its mission, 30 Mile collaborates with the seven towns, nine lake associations and two land trusts in the watershed. 30 Mile is based out of its new offices in Mt. Vernon Village.

30 Mile has a diversified funding stream, with 2024 operating revenue of \$377,580. Funding provided by lake associations is critical for us to leverage funds from other sources. In 2024, funding from lake associations was 12% of operating revenue, including \$900 from BDTPA. Other funding sources include individuals and corporations (59%), private and state grants (17%), towns (7%) and other (5%).

30 Mile manages a variety of programs and projects, each aimed at keeping our lakes and ponds clean and healthy – free of algae blooms and invasive plants – and protecting your investments in the property you own on or near lakes. Volunteers are a key part of this effort, and over 200 of them contributed over 900 hours in 2024.

30 Mile requests that BDTPA continue to support its work to protect these valuable and beautiful resources with a contribution of \$1,000 for 2025.

Key services performed in 2024 that directly benefited Basin, David and Tilton included:

1. Managing invasive bladderwort in Tilton Pond:

In August 2023, the invasive plant swollen bladderwort was discovered to be well-established in Tilton Pond. Our 2024 efforts included installing a fragment net at the pond's outlet to reduce risk to downstream waters, increasing surveying on David Pond, monitoring plant growth, and supporting volunteer survey and removal efforts.

Swollen bladderwort was listed as an invasive species in the State of Maine in 2023, after being found in Mousam Lake (Shapleigh). It has now been confirmed in eight lakes and ponds. It's found in all New England states except Vermont, plus New York and Washington State. The species is

native to the southeast United States, but its native range does not extend north of New Jersey. Bladderworts are carnivorous, free-floating (not rooted) plants. They have tiny sack-like bladders used for capturing small prey, such as zooplankton and small insects. Swollen bladderwort looks most like the native *Utricularia radiata*, commonly known as floating bladderwort. Both species have spoked or wagon wheel-like floats from which yellow flowers arise, but the invasive is much larger than the native.

30 Mile's priority, since the plant's discovery in Tilton, has been to reduce the risk of downstream spread into David Pond. We've worked closely with Maine DEP to (1) place two nets to catch fragments along the Pond's outlet, (2) acquire a permit-by-rule for storefront property owners to remove the plant, (3) help BDTPA plant patrol volunteers survey David Pond, (4) and update signage at Tilton's boat launch.

For any questions, please contact 30 Mile's Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator, Silas Mohlar, at silas@30mileriver.org or (207) 860-4043.

2. Water Quality Monitoring: We collect extensive data to track the health of our lakes and ponds, including Basin, David, and Tilton. May-October we measure water clarity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, and other parameters. Our staff, alongside **35 volunteers**, completed a full season of monitoring on **13 lakes and ponds**, **completing 112 visits**. For more info, visit <https://30mileriver.org/water-quality-monitoring/>. We are looking for additional volunteers to assist our monitoring efforts on Basin and David. If you are interested in joining us, please contact our Water Quality Specialist, Sara, at sara@30mileriver.org.

3. LakeSmart: 30 Mile is a regional LakeSmart “hub,” providing technical support for this statewide program that helps lakefront homeowners manage their properties in ways that protect water quality. Our watershed's five volunteer lake teams and our staff conduct free site visits for landowners. In 2024, together we completed evaluations for 11 landowners and delivered LakeSmart education throughout the watershed to build a conservation ethic across the lake community. The team covering Basin, David, Tilton and Parker is coordinated by Deb Cayer. To volunteer or have a free site visit of

your property, please contact Deb at debbiecayer@gmail.com.

4. **Septic System Vulnerability Study and Permit Database Project:** Thanks to a grant from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, and matching funds from participating towns, 30 Mile is now wrapping up a project that assessed the impact of septic systems within our watershed, and provided our partner towns (including Fayette) with a town-wide septic system database and a tool for current and future septic permit and maintenance tracking. Project findings and an interactive septic risk map are available on 30 Mile's [website](#).

Other services that protect the health of the whole watershed include:

1. **Supporting landowners:** In spring 2024, we launched a [new initiative](#) to improve shoreline buffers and protect water quality, planting over 300 native live stakes on shorefront properties throughout the watershed. We will offer this again in fall 2025.
2. **[Invasive milfoil management in Androscoggin Lake:](#)** Since it was first found in 2020, 30 Mile has managed the infestation of invasive variable watermilfoil in Androscoggin Lake, working in partnership with the Maine DEP and the lake association. Because this invasive plant spreads rapidly and threatens all our waters, we work aggressively to control it. May-October, our staff survey the infested area (and beyond), marking each individual milfoil plant to be removed by a trained SCUBA diver on our team. We have kept the infestation from spreading, and are seeing fewer plants regrow. We will continue the fight in 2025, employing benthic barriers and surveying other parts of the lake.
3. **[Courtesy Boat Inspections:](#)** From May to September of 2024, our paid staff and 49 volunteer

Courtesy Boat Inspectors (CBIs) conducted 3,801 inspections on five lakes, preventing invasive species hitchhiking on boats and trailers from entering our lakes, and educating boaters about the threats. On Echo Lake, a volunteer CBI found and removed a variable-leaf milfoil plant fragment from an entering boat, saving this lake from a potential infestation.

4. **Invasive Plant Patrols:** Annual surveys are critical for detecting invasive species infestations early, before they're too well established, and for monitoring current infestations. There has never been a more important time to join the survey effort on the ponds.

A short plant identification paddle and training will be held at the Lakeview Estates Common Lot on Friday June 20th or Wednesday July 9th from 9am - 11am. Join us to learn more about current management efforts and how to identify swollen bladderwort and other invasive plants. Please let IPP Coordinator, Bob Capers, know if you plan to attend the training or are interested in helping with plant surveys at rscapers@mindspring.com.

5. **Community Education:** In 2024, we hosted several training and workshop opportunities for Courtesy Boat Inspector and Invasive Plant Patrol volunteers. Through our monthly e-newsletter, social media pages, and [upcoming workshops](#) page, we inform and educate the public about lake protection and promote opportunities for community involvement.

6. **Securing Grants for Town Road Projects:** 30 Mile wrote two successful grant proposals for the Town of Vienna to address key road crossings that have repeatedly suffered from severe washouts and road failures, and significantly threaten water quality in downstream lakes.

PLEASE JOIN THE BASIN-DAVID-TILTON POND ASSOCIATION

You are receiving this newsletter because you are or have been a member of BDTPA, have a residence on one of the three ponds, or are a resident of Fayette who has expressed an interest in the association. Life on a Maine pond is a special privilege, one we are all surely grateful to have.

The charter of the association is to “preserve and improve the water quality of the ponds and their supportive ecosystem.” Living up to this charter and supporting our ponds requires significant efforts, especially with the threats of invasive plants and the weather changes caused by a warming planet.

Please join BDTPA or renew your membership by sending \$30 dues, payable to BDTPA to:

Gail Rioux, Treasurer
244 Shore Road
Fayette, ME 04021

PLEASE VOLUNTEER TO HELP PROTECT THE THREE PONDS

Please consider helping the three ponds by attending a workshop on invasive plants, volunteering to work with Bob Capers (rscapers@mindspring.com) on an invasive plant patrol, volunteering with Sara York (sara@30mileriver.org) to monitor water quality, or volunteer with Stephen Smith-Erb (scse@maine.rr.com) to serve on the BDTPA board. We are looking for volunteers to step into the roles of treasurer and secretary starting after this summer’s annual meeting.

Protecting Basin, David, and Tilton ponds takes a village. Thank you for your support!

BDTPA CONTACTS

President
Steve Smith-Erb
president@bdtpa.org

Vice President
Steve Melchiskey
vp@bdtpa.org

Treasurer
Gail Rioux
treasurer@bdtpa.org

Secretary
Ellen Smith-Erb
secretary@bdtpa.org

Trustee 1
Fred Jackman
trustee1@bdtpa.org

Trustee 2
Chris Riley
trustee2@bdtpa.org

Trustee 3
Susan French Smith
trustee3@bdtpa.org

Water Quality Officer
Deb Cayer
water-quality@bdtpa.org

30 Mile River Liaison
Kirstie Ludwig
30-mile@bdtpa.org

Plant Patrol Coordinator
Bob Capers
plant-patrol@bdtpa.org

BDTPA Webmaster
Richard Hicks
webmaster@bdtpa.org

[Join BDTPA at bdtpa.org/join-bdtpa](http://bdtpa.org/join-bdtpa)

Gail Rioux,
BDTPA Treasurer
244 Shore Rd
Fayette 04349

