



## BELGRADE REGIONAL CONSERVATION ALLIANCE



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

### BRCA Begins Work on Watershed Restoration Project, Phase II- \$\$\$ available

The Maine DEP recently awarded a grant to BRCA to continue to implement the recommendations of the Long Pond Watershed Management Plan that was approved at the end of 2009. Funded under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, this grant provides cost share resources to reduce phosphorus loading to Long Pond and Great Pond. A major source of phosphorus loading is poorly maintained gravel roads. The grant provides resources to help road associations to implement best management practices (BMPs) such as new culverts, ditches, or road surfaces that will improve the drainage characteristics of their roads. The BRCA and the Kennebec County Soil Water Conservation District (KCSWCD) are teaming to provide the technical expertise to specify and oversee the work. One of the innovative tasks in the grant is to provide road associations with a professionally prepared road management plan for their road. For a nominal fee (\$125), road associations will receive a plan for their road that provides annual maintenance recommendations and develops a capital improvement plan for upgrading the road including cost estimates, technical specifications, budgeting, priorities, etc. The goal is to enable road associations to better use their (always) scarce maintenance dollars to make their roads more lake friendly.

AFTER



BEFORE



Another part of the grant is to work with the Belgrade Lakes Association (BLA) to identify homeowners who want to become LakeSmart but need some technical assistance to get there. DEP-trained volunteers will work with BRCA, the Conservation Corps, and KCSWCD to identify projects, develop plans and help implement improvements that will help homeowners make their properties more lake friendly and achieve "LakeSmart" status.

If you are in the Great Pond or Long Pond watershed and interested in learning more about this grant, especially if your road looks more like the one on the lower left (before) than the one on the upper right (after), please call Pete Kallin at 495-6039.

Those of you who travel regularly through the Belgrade Lakes village must be excited with the progress on the new Maine Lakes Resource Center (MLRC). We're all looking forward to the July 4th grand opening. But completion of the building is only half of the challenge. Behind the scenes many people are already working to ensure that once the building and grounds are finished, the center can then aspire to its mission: Making Conservation a Tradition.

I represent the BRCA on the MLRC board, which includes Ted Alford, Tom Klingenstein, Scott Finlay, Lynn Matson, and Whitney King. Several additional members will soon be added. We are accepting applications for a MLRC Executive Director and have already received resumes from more than 30 highly qualified applicants. A smaller committee, Maggie Shannon, Lynn Matson, and Charlie Baeder will recommend the best candidate to the MLRC board and hopefully we will have an Executive Director in place by late April. Key job responsibilities include fundraising, membership organization, marketing & public relations, communication and organizational skills, and management of volunteers and colleagues. You may note that lake conservation is not among the required skills. With its vast experience and expertise in lake conservation the BRCA will be instrumental in filling this role. We'll continue to run the BRCA programs currently in place, plus we plan additional conservation learning opportunities through collaboration with our partners; the BLA, COLA, and Colby College.

Plutarch wrote "The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled". I believe the Center can do more than just fill your vessel; I'm convinced it will kindle your fire of possibilities and lead us to a new level of lake preservation. The Center offers tremendous opportunity for educational outreach. I hope you turn out to support us on July 4th and enjoy the festivities, but more importantly I hope you use the Center to lesson your impact on our lakes and Make Conservation a Tradition in the Belgrades.

Mel Croft, BRCA President

### Executive Director's Column

It's truly amazing how much the Maine landscape changes in three months. As I write this column, the ice and snow of winter are rapidly being replaced by open water and **"Mud Season" has arrived.** The ducks that two months ago were hunkered down trying to survive now have romance on the brain, bright colorful feathers on their chests and heads, and are excitedly courting their mates and chasing away the competition. The eagles are lined up along the edge of the ice along streams waiting for spawning northern pike that have other things on their mind besides watching out for eagles. The turkey vultures are back at French Mountain, soaring across the landscape, sniffing out dead animal carcasses emerging from the melting snow, and getting ready for their own special version of spring cleaning. At the BRCA we are in the process of ramping up from our winter staff of 3 to our summertime staff of about 40. We are chasing from one town meeting to another and filling out grant applications to fund our summer programs while trying to wrap up land deals we have been working on all winter.

Page 2



Photo:

Full Moon Ski trip, January 19th, 2011. Board Members, Mel Croft (President) and Dick Greenan (Treasurer) smiling for the camera.

The new Maine Lakes Resource Center up the street continues to make progress. The well is in, the roof is on, and the long-time village eyesore is being transformed into a beautiful new (but old-looking) building that will become our new offices next summer. Lots of changes going on.

**Some things don't change. We are still** continuing to try to expand our membership and encourage more volunteers to become involved in our programs. We are looking for new members who are a lot like our current members- in love with this part of Maine and concerned enough to help protect it. The best place to find those people is among the friends and families of our current mem-

bers. If you have a friend or family member who shares your conservation ideals who is not yet a member, please ask them to join or consider giving them a gift membership. If you have a new neighbor, a BRCA membership is a perfect welcoming gift! You send me their name and address and I will send them a gift membership on your behalf. Any member who refers a new member will receive a special gift as a token of our appreciation. Please contact me or stop by the office if you have any ideas about how to make BRCA more responsive to your needs. All the best, Peter Kallin

## LAKESMART PROGRAM

How we develop the land that drains to a lake can have a huge effect on the water quality. If we bring the suburban landscaping practice of large lush lawns to the lakeshore, or even the lake watershed, we bring more sources of pollution. With fewer natural, vegetated areas to absorb stormwater, more pollutants from the land get washed into the lake each time it rains or snow melts.

Pristine lake waters add beauty, increase property value, and provide recreational opportunities throughout the seasons. Studies have shown that as water quality declines the value of shore-front property also decreases. Declining water quality can also affect the type and number of fish species that inhabit the lake and can hinder other recreational uses of the lake as well as the local economy.

LakeSmart is a program that offers FREE opportunities for homeowners to learn how to manage their home and yard to protect the water quality of their lake. The goal of LakeSmart is to change the increasingly common suburban landscaping practices around lakes to more natural, lake-friendly environments.

The primary focus of LakeSmart is to keep our lake water clean by stabilizing eroding areas, reducing the use of chemicals, diverting rainwater into vegetated areas, and maintaining or planting trees, shrubs, and ground cover along the shoreland. Landscaping and managing your property in an environmentally friendly manner through LakeSmart is one way for you to help your lake and have a low-maintenance, great-looking property.

### It's LakeSmart Season in the Belgrade Watershed

Soon the snow will be gone, mud season will be a distant nightmare, and you'll be enjoying beautiful long days on the lakes soaking up the sun in blissful happiness. How could life get any better? Unfortunately, lurking beneath the water is the microscopic equivalent of the Creature from the Black Lagoon: algae! Once conditions are right, the algae devour the phosphorus in our lakes, much of which is contributed from human activity. When these tiny plants feast, the blue water takes on a green tint and can even resemble pea soup if enough phosphorus is available. What can we do to prevent this? Isn't there a magical pill we can drop in the water to make it all better?

**Unfortunately there's no quick fix,** but there *are* steps we can take, and one of the best of them is LakeSmart. LakeSmart is a program that offers FREE opportunities for homeowners to learn how to manage their home and yard to improve water quality in their lake and maintain the value of their shorefront property.

LakeSmart looks at 4 aspects of lake-front properties and rates them for how well they keep phosphorus from getting into the lake. This evaluation is done by trained volunteers who look at 1) Driveway and Parking Areas, 2) Structures (buildings) and Septic Systems, 3) Yard, Recreation, and Footpaths, and 4) Shorefront and Beach Areas. Properties that score well in all four categories receive the coveted LakeSmart Award, but homeowners are also recognized if their homes qualify in 1, 2, or 3 categories.

We hope to spread the LakeSmart idea throughout the Belgrades, and so we invite you to sign up for a free check-up. Participation in LakeSmart is voluntary, so if you do request a **property evaluation, you'll have no obligation to do anything further.** But, if there **are areas for improvement and you'd like to work on them, we'll partner with you to help address the issues.** Most **"fixes" can be done over time and with do-it-yourself techniques,** but our Youth Conservation Corps is another great option; they provide free labor and homeowners only pay for materials. We can also recommend landscape professionals.



Local lakes currently offering LakeSmart are East Pond, Great Pond, Long Pond, McGrath Pond, and Salmon Lake. Trained LakeSmart Evaluators are looking forward to evaluating your shorefront property. Give the BRCA a call at 495-6039 and they'll put you in touch with the Coordinator for your lake. Look for LakeSmart signs around the lake which advertise those properties that have been deemed LakeSmart, and if the opportunity presents itself, take time to talk to the property owner to get their assessment of the LakeSmart process.

It's not a magic pill, but it's the next best thing!

Mel Croft

Is there evidence of erosion along your shoreline? Do you have patches of bare soil on your yard? Is your buffer adequate? Does some of your loose soil trickle into the lake during a rain storm? Have you thought about having **an erosion control project don't by the Belgrade Lakes Youth Conservation Corps?**

Regular readers of the BRCA newsletter know that 2010 was a phenomenally successful year for the Conservation Corps, and we fully expect to repeat that success in 2011. We need your help to do it, though – the Conservation Corps relies on residents of the Belgrade Lakes Watershed to supply us with our projects. All the work we have done over the years can be attributed to the hundreds of people who decided to take action to make their property more lake-friendly, and we thank them and hope that many more will do the same this year.

Projects we can help with include shoreline stabilization, buffer gardens, runoff diversion or infiltration, rain gardens, bare soil stabilization, and other erosion control techniques. **If you're thinking about having the Conservation Corps work on your property, here are some things to keep in mind:**

Labor is free. If the Conservation Corps works on your property, you will be responsible only for the cost of the materials used; the labor is paid for by BRCA and your donations to the Conservation Corps.

There is no obligation. The purpose of the initial site visit is to discuss ways to make your property more lake-friendly, and you can choose to act on all, some, or none of our recommendations. You can also implement our recommendations yourself, or with the help of a professional landscaper or contractor – **we won't get jealous**.

**If you're not sure you have a problem, we're still happy to take a look. We may be able to suggest small improvements to avoid future problems.** If your property is already lake-friendly, you might also consider applying for a LakeSmart award – additional recognition for protecting your lake.



Get in early. Although our director won't begin visiting sites until May, the summer's schedule is usually nearly full by the end of June. That may seem like a long way off, but the sooner we hear from you, the more likely it is that we'll be able to work on your project this summer.

For more information, or to set up a site visit, contact the BRCA office at 495-6039.

**You may want to apply to be a Conservation Corps summer worker if....**

- .....You're a high school student age 16 or over
- .....You live in or near Oakland, Mercer, Rome, Sidney, Smithfield, Mt. Vernon, Vienna, or Belgrade
- .....You love being outdoors in the summer and don't mind a little sweat
- .....You're dependable and hardworking
- .....You like to work on projects to help the environment
- .....You have a positive attitude and are a good problem solver
- .....You'd like a job where a lake is usually part of the scenery
- .....You want to have a fun summer working with other people your age

HIRING

## Conservation Corps Program: The Bob Joly Youth Conservation Corps Award

The Belgrade Lakes lost one of its most ardent soldiers when Bob Joly of Smithfield passed away February 9. Bob raised his family on East Pond, loved the lakes and worked diligently much of his life to implement measures to protect these treasures. In fact, Bob was one of the founding fathers of the Youth Conservation Corps, whose mission is to improve and maintain water quality in the Belgrade Lakes region. Bob and several colleagues began the Corps as a grass roots effort in 1996, and today it is an integral part of the BRCA's efforts to preserve our lakes.

Bob moved his young family to East Pond from Waterville in 1956 at the age of 29. He became a champion of lake water quality and was actively involved with the growth of the Conservation Corps for over 15 of his 83 years, but his recent declining health limited his involvement. Still, Bob continued to make helpful suggestions on ways to protect our lakes, attending meetings when possible. I visited Bob several weeks before his passing where we talked about, yes you

guessed correctly, the lakes. Not surprisingly, Bob sent me off with some good ideas to work on.

According to long time friend Jerry Tipper, Bob was the "go to" guy regarding lake quality and did all the early water quality testing for East Pond. In addition to his work with the Corps, Bob was also involved with COLA, East Pond Association, and other lake organizations around the state starting 30 years ago. Bob was a visionary, proposing a phosphorous control ordinance for Smithfield 20 years ago. Tipper recalls "He was the driving force behind the first Golf Tournament with all proceeds going to the Conservation Corps, now a BRCA tradition". He was also very active in Trout Unlimited holding the positions of chapter chair and treasurer.

Following a Corps meeting earlier this year we reminisced about the enormous impact that Bob made to our lakes, and everyone agreed that Bob's legacy should be honored and remembered.

Therefore we created The Bob Joly Youth Conservation Corps Award, which along with \$100 will be awarded to the outstanding Corps crewmember at the end of each summer work season. A wooden plaque, which will hang in the new Maine Lakes Resource Center, has been made and includes one of Bob's favorite quotes from another lover of lakes;

*"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

The plaque has room for 24 name plates recognizing each annual award recipient. I can't wait to place the last name on that plaque, and then purchase a second plaque. And those who follow me will purchase a third plaque, and so on. Due to Bob's enthusiasm, leadership, and passion the Corps will be working for years to help ensure our lakes are kept pristine. Thanks Bob! I hope the fish are biting. -Mel Croft, BRCA President

## Milfoil Program Season

### Round Two

**Being my first winter in Maine, and first "over average" winter in New England, I was ready to change my clocks and sacrifice that hour and have my flip-flops out of the closet. What makes this upcoming summer so much more exciting is I know I will have days jam-packed with water, sun, hikes, my wonderful volunteers and milfoil combats as I approach my second season as BRCA's Milfoil Program Coordinator.**

**Hired as the "Courtesy Boat Inspection Coordinator" my duties started out (what now seems) small. Hire, train and supervise the employees that inspect boats going in and out of our seven lakes. Then invasive plant patrols were added; now I also help organize and conduct the groups of lake lovers that use strange looking tubes, snorkels, buckets and scuba gear to lookout for invasive plants in the outstanding aquatic gardens we have in the Belgrade Watershed. I was gaining tremendous amounts of valuable skills and concepts, teaching and having fun.**

Then I took on another project when half way through the summer, I received a phone call. One of the people I was learning so much from became the bearer of bad news. We had another confirmed Variable Leaf Milfoil infestation in Great Meadow Stream. Wheels started turning and before I

knew it, I was being yelled at by Sand hill Cranes while paddling a kayak, up to my knees in mud and dragging 30 ft by 20 ft plastic mats over beds of milfoil in the cold October water. And while the circumstance was not the most positive news, I loved every second of it. I was surrounded by volunteers who care about the lake as much as I do, professionals who taught me everything they could **and I was positively contributing to the future of Maine's** amazing resources.

This year, I will have some help, (along with the volunteers who graciously donated time and fun to the efforts last year) but some is never enough. If you are interested in **helping please contact the office. I can't promise you won't get dirty or wet, but I can promise a lot of laughs, some very memorable moments and a most deserved sense of pride.**

In the next few weeks I will be hiring our summer boat inspectors, planning infestation control strategies and setting training workshop dates. If you or someone you know would like to work or volunteer for the BRCA or attend a workshop on plant patrolling, boat inspecting or plant removal, call me or stop by and see me in the office.

-Corinne Dawson, Program Manager

## BRCA and BLA buy the “Top of The Mountain”

Thirteen years ago the Belgrade Lakes Association (BLA) purchased 207 acres on The Mountain and donated the property to the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance (BRCA) for long-term stewardship. The BRCA and BLA worked together to design and construct the current “Long Pond Loop” and “Great Pond Loop” hiking trails, parking lot, and kiosk. This property is now heavily used by BRCA and BLA members, local residents, and visitors for hiking, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing.



On February 28<sup>th</sup> BRCA purchased an additional 41 acres that includes the highest point on The Mountain. The picture above shows the new property in red, the existing Mountain property in green and the existing trail in purple. Acquiring this property will enable us to protect the top of the Mountain from development, add to our existing trails, permanently protect almost ½ mile of the existing snowmobile trail, and open up additional views, especially of Great Pond. Additionally, it will permanently protect and preserve the view of the skyline from Great Pond.

We would like to thank the following generous donors who made this acquisition possible:

Jonathan and Marilyn Aliber  
 Michael Alter and Mary Fox-Alter  
 John and Flor Atkinson  
 Robert Bates

Dr. Mirle A. Kellett, Jr. of the  
 Maine Medical Center  
 Department of Cardiac Service  
 in memory of Paul D. Gray

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Lynn and Phyllis Matson

Marc Maxwell,

David and Alice Passer

Barbara Mayer and David Schneider

Nancy and Mark Maymar

Thomas McCandlish

Richard and Margaret McCann

Blaine Moores

Many bills pending before the Maine State Legislature pose grave threats to lake water quality. Protections that shield lakes from the harmful effects of runoff and nutrient loading could be eliminated this year unless many of us speak out on behalf of lake protection. Lakes are fragile, and they are voiceless; they need yours, now.

The worst of the pending bills, LD 219, would slash the area governed by **Maine's Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act** by 60%, from 250 feet to 75 feet. If passed, LD 219 would permit structures and septs to be built 25 feet closer to lakes, abolish limits on clearing vegetation behind 75 feet, and effectively remove regulation for most roads and driveways. Bottom line: vastly increased impervious areas in the shorelands and therefore more and faster runoff and greater nutrient loading; much less forested cover so less filtering and absorption, 60% cutback

**of a lake's last line of defense. It's true that a 75 foot buffer can filter most runoff on an ideally flat, forested lot with absorbent soils, but a sloped lot with poorly draining soils requires a much wider buffer (up to 300 feet) to achieve the same water quality protection. That's why we have the law we do. The US EPA's just-published, first-ever National Lakes Assessment found the absence of forested cover in shorelands to be the single most important cause of lake problems like algal blooms, excessive weed growth and reduced water clarity. EPA concluded that "local, state and national initiatives to protect the integrity of lakes should center on restoring the natural state of shoreline habitat." Translated into action terms, this means, "Vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 219."**

If successful, LD 219, alone, will have far-reaching negative impacts on lakes, but

there are other bills to be concerned about, too. LD 434 would exempt wetlands caused by barriers (such as dams, and how many lakes have them?) from all Shoreland Zone protections: LD 888 would permit a second enlargement of an already once-expanded building in the no-build 100 foot setback area, and LD 159 would significantly change the rules for subdivisions in ways that will increase allowable impervious surfaces and raise the trigger point for runoff protections from roads and driveways.

**We simply can't let this happen.** If you vote in Maine, you can influence the outcome of this debate. Please determine to do so.

**Here's how: LD's 291, 434, and 888** will be heard by the committee that deals with the environment on Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 9 am, in Room 216 of the Cross State Office Building in Augusta. Plan now to make your presence count by attending this hearing.

Better still, write and deliver a brief (3 minute) statement about why lakes are important to you and why you want the committee members to oppose these bills. (Bring 20 copies for the 13 Committee Members and staff.) Plan now to carpool with friends and sport a *Citizens for Maine Lakes* sticker at the hearing. **(We'll give you one at the Hearing Room door)** For tips on where to park, who your legislators are, how to contact them, and how to testify, **please visit "POLICY" at COLA's web site [www.mainecola.org](http://www.mainecola.org)**

Of the host of reasons why **we're lucky to live in Maine**, one of the most valuable is our amazingly accessible citizen legislature. Your voice really does count here! Use it!

Maggie Shannon,  
Executive Director  
Maine Congress of Lake  
Associations



Photos:

(Left) Peter Kallin, BRCA Executive Director, testifying at legislature.

(Right) Maggie Shannon, MeCOLA Executive Director and BRCA Board member, testifying at legislature





**BELGRADE  
REGIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
ALLIANCE**

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To view the BRCA Newsletters  
in full color with active  
hyperlinks visit our website

ANNOUNCING  
STEWARDSHIP  
WORKDAYS  
2011:

Saturday, June 4th

Friday, July 22nd



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