



BELGRADE REGIONAL CONSERVATION ALLIANCE



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

Messalonskee Lake Property Now Belongs to BRCA

In December of 2013, BRCA acquired a 46 acre property at the southern end of Messalonskee Lake in Sidney. Most of the property (approx. 40 acres) is part of the Messalonskee Marsh, which is an emergent wetland that includes extensive Cattail Marsh vegetation and is considered a “Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance” by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW). The Marsh provides breeding and nesting habitat for the endangered black tern, the endangered least bittern, several species of special concern, and is considered highly valuable Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat. Sandhill cranes have also been documented within Messalonskee Marsh, and are being considered for special concern status by MDIFW. The remaining 6 acres of the property are forested upland comprised of mostly hemlock, but with cedar swamp pockets and some white pine.

The property was purchased with funds from the North American Wetland Conservation Act small grant program of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and was purchased from the Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine. This property is best accessed by boat, or during the winter, and will provide valuable wildlife habitat for species that depend on the Marsh.



Sandhill Crane chicks

Fun Fact—A Miocene crane fossil, thought to be about ten million years old, was found in Nebraska and is structurally identical to the modern Sandhill crane, making it the oldest known bird species still surviving!



BRCA Protected Acres

Town	Properties	Easements	Total
Belgrade	23	108	131
Mount Vernon	469	0	469
New Sharon	0	458	458
Norridgewock	0	244	244
Oakland	50	58	108
Rome	638	40	678
Sidney	46	0	46
Smithfield	316	28	344
Vienna	73	15	88
Total Protected Area	1615	951	2566

President's Column: Education and Outreach

This is my seventh year living in the Belgrade Lakes Region. I thought I was conservation savvy when I moved here, but looking back I actually knew very little about what I could do to help preserve the lands and waters that I love. Fortunately through my volunteer efforts I had the good fortune to meet and work with conservation experts, such as Roy Bouchard, Maggie Shannon, Pete Kallin, and many others. They educated me on lake conservation! I've also benefitted from formal programs such as the LakeSmart training offered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Because of these opportunities I've learned what I can do to protect our lakes.

Through education I'm confident that I've made a difference on East Pond, my home lake. And if you can teach an old dog like me new tricks, think about the opportunities to educate others, especially the younger generations. An old Chinese proverb states that "Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere."

Education and Outreach are part of our BRCA mission. But we have our hands full running our programs, such as land purchases, the Youth Conservation Corps, and the Milfoil Program. With our small staff we simply haven't found time to run a fully effective Education and Outreach program. Still, we've done our best to provide educational programs for all ages, and I am very proud of our accomplishments. I thank all of those volunteers, such as Margaret Pietrak, for their efforts. But we've only scratched the surface.

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the BRCA Education Committee brought forth a recommendation to the BRCA board in December 2013 to develop a formal Education and Outreach program that will include an education director. BRCA board members who crafted the recommendation include Pete Kallin, Jane Eberle, Warren Balgooyen, and Jodie Mosher-Towle. Former board member Bruce Hazard was also involved. The recommendation passed easily. Running an Education and Outreach program requires a lot of planning, creativity, and money. Money is the key to hiring an education director who can provide the planning and creative ideas to put forth the kind of program we need to step up our efforts to educate as many people as possible, especially our youngsters.

Fortunately we have many volunteers who always seem to step forward when we need them. Pete Kallin donated his time to write a draft grant proposal which BRCA Executive Director Charlie Baeder and Milfoil Director Toni Pied finalized. It was submitted on January 15, 2014 and includes a request for \$40,000 for education and outreach. We all have our fingers crossed that the grant will be awarded.

The money from the grant, if successful, will allow us to hire an education director for the first year of the program. I'm confident with a dedicated director that we can create a sustainable Education and Outreach program that dovetails with our existing programs and enhances our efforts to protect our lakes for ourselves and future generations. American philosopher Allan Bloom hit the nail on the head when he said "Education is the movement from darkness to light." Through education I am convinced that we can teach property owners in our watershed the importance of keeping phosphorus out of our lakes, and thus allow the light to reach even the deepest depths of all our lakes. Your continued support is very much appreciated and I look forward to providing regular updates on our Education and Outreach progress.

Mel Croft; BRCA President

LAKE TRUST FUNDRAISING 2013 REPORT

Harold Alfond Foundation challenge grant update

As an exceedingly cold winter turns to spring – it is -10 °F tonight and we are entering the first week of March! – I want to report on the success of the challenge grant BRCA received from the Harold Alfond Foundation.

On August 14, 2013, BRCA held the Harold Alfond Memorial Golf Tournament at the Belgrade Lakes Golf Club to benefit BRCA's Lake Trust and its water quality programs for the Belgrade Lakes watershed. These programs include the BRCA Youth Conservation Corps and Milfoil programs, and their work on East Pond, North Pond, Great Pond, Long Pond, Salmon Lake and McGrath Pond, and Snow Pond/Messalonskee Lake. In conjunction with this Tournament, the Harold Alfond Foundation gen-

erously committed to a challenge grant of \$25,000 to BRCA if we could raise \$25,000 within 120 days (August 15th to December 15th). BRCA is pleased to report that thanks to the inspiration provided by this challenge, **BRCA raised \$39,677 for our Lake Trust programs exceeding our goal by over 50%.**

The BRCA board and I want to take this opportunity to thank you, our supporters and volunteers, as well as the event sponsors, the Belgrade Lakes Golf Club, Kyle Evans and his team, and especially the Harold Alfond Foundation for your support of BRCA's efforts. Please thank these BRCA supporters and yourselves. We are making conservation a tradition.

Charlie Baeder; BRCA Executive Director

Upcoming BRCA and Conservation Events

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

“Birding for Beginners”

with Don Mairs, *Ornithologist*

Lecture – Tuesday, April 8th, 6:30-8:30pm
Field Trips –

Saturday, April 12th at 7 a.m. and
Saturday, April 19th at 7 a.m.

This event is designed to introduce beginners to the tools and techniques of birding, and to provide some appreciation of the diversity of species found in our area. Topics will include optics, print and online resources, bird classification and identification. All skill levels welcome, but emphasis will be on basics. Pre-registration required, call 495-6039.

Family Membership Challenge

In order to draw attention to BRCA’s expanded education and outreach programs and at the same time increase membership, Dr. Peter Kallin, BRCA’s recently retired executive director, has issued the following challenge to BRCA families:

For the first 20 BRCA families who recruit a new family to join BRCA at the Family Level in 2014, Pete will take your family and the new BRCA family on an expedition of your choice. It could be a hike (or snowshoe) on one of our existing trails, a cross country ski trip in the Kennebec Highlands or on one of our other properties, or a canoe/kayak trip to an interesting place in our watershed. This is a great opportunity to recruit your neighbors, adult children, or grandchildren to become active participants in enjoying and helping to protect our lakes and lands for future generations.



Ice on The Mountain

Photo by Pete Kallin

Stewardship Volunteering

I volunteer my time stewarding the Narrow’s Preserve trail on the McGrath Pond Salmon Lake. This land was generously donated by the Sataloff family to BRCA. The McGrath Pond Salmon Lake Association is a very small board and considers themselves fortunate to have a larger conservation alliance to co-manage the property. It is not only a nice way to give back of our time but also to financially support BRCA’S effort to employ the very best of land management practices. The interest of conservation is a community duty not just that of a single lake association.

On a personal level, I am grateful to hike the many acres of trails thought-out the Kennebec Highlands.

By Nona Purnell

Open summer positions for BRCA:

BRCA has a year-round staff of three, but during the summer months, our staff increases to almost 50! This increase in staffing enables BRCA to conduct programs such as the Youth Conservation Corps, Courtesy Boat Inspections, and our Milfoil Crew. We are actively seeking high school and college students, volunteers, and other interested individuals to fill positions and help with our summer programs.

If you are interested in applying for a paid position, or volunteering, please contact Toni Pied at 215-2685 or brcamf@belgradelakes.org.

Job Openings

Conservation Corps

You may want to apply to be a Conservation Corps summer worker

To request an

application

email

brca@belgradelakes.org

or call 495-6039

-You're a high school student over the age of 16
-You live in or around Oakland, Mercer, Rome, Sidney, Smithfield, Mt. Vernon, Vienna, Belgrade, Waterville, or Augusta
-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 and restore native landscapes
-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

Milfoil 2014: Courtesy Boat Inspection Program

Looking for the *perfect part-time summer job* ?

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SIT LAKESIDE AT A PUBLIC BOAT RAMP THIS SUMMER - MEETING AND EDUCATING SOME TERRIFIC LAKES PEOPLE— AND GET PAID FOR IT?

In an effort to implement the Maine state-wide Milfoil Program at public boat ramps to help prevent the spread of invasive aquatic plants (e.g. Milfoil), the BRCA will be interviewing candidates for the positions of **Courtesy Boat Inspectors** on the 7 lakes in the Belgrade Watershed:

East Pond **Great Pond** **Long Pond** **North Pond**
Messalonskee Lake **Salmon Lake & McGrath Pond**

- \$8.00 /hour
- Training provided
- Free T-shirts provided
- Get Community Service Credit

These part-time positions will begin Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day.

You must have own transportation.

To get an application mailed or emailed call 495-6039 or brcamf@belgradelakes.org, Please apply by Apr18th

Milfoil Program:

New DASH
to Remove Milfoil
from Belgrade Lakes

This winter, BRCA is busy working to build a new DASH (diver assisted suction harvester) to help with milfoil removal efforts throughout the watershed. A DASH works by creating a suction system that makes milfoil removal more efficient for a diver. The diver pulls the plants and feeds them into a tube underwater, the plants are then pulled up to the surface and dumped into a collection bin. Hand removal of milfoil plants can create fragments, and a DASH is also effective at decreasing fragments that may get left behind.



The new DASH will be ready to go this summer and will be working in Great Pond, the Great Meadow Stream, Messalonskee Lake, and the Belgrade Stream.

The New England Milfoil DASH boat in the Belgrade Stream, Summer 2013.

Photo by A.J. Wall

NRCM: Maine lakes at risk

New Report Documents Damage to DEP's Lake Protection

The Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) today released an investigative report documenting damage caused to the State of Maine's lake protection efforts under the Administration of Governor LePage.

Although Maine's lakes are among our state's most valuable natural resources, the NRCM report finds that the LePage Administration and current DEP leadership have put our lakes at increased risk by cutting DEP lake protection staff and resources, terminating education and technical assistance, purging DEP's website of valuable public documents, disrupting the work of DEP scientific and technical staff members, and failing to enforce a Maine law that helps protect lake water quality.

Troubled Waters: Damage to Maine's Lake Protection Program Under the LePage Administration is based on information gathered from lake protection specialists across Maine and documents secured by NRCM through Freedom of Access Act requests.

"The report finds that Maine's lake protection efforts have been curtailed, disrupted and dismantled and now are at the lowest levels in decades, raising serious questions about whether the DEP can protect the health and integrity of Maine lakes, as required by Maine law," said NRCM Advocacy Director Pete Didisheim.

The decline in DEP's lake protection programs comes at a time when the water quality of Maine lakes appears to be deteriorating. New research from the University of Maine shows that the clarity of Maine's lakes has worsened since 1995. If this trend continues, the impact could be severe for Maine's economy. Studies show that Maine's lakes generate at least \$3.5 billion in economic activity annually and help sustain 52,000 jobs.

"Maine has some of the highest quality lakes in the nation, but the current administration is undermining the work that needs to be done to keep those lakes clean," said Didisheim.

The report explains that over the past 40 years, with broad bipartisan support, Maine has adopted laws and programs that have helped protect the clean water in Maine lakes by reducing pollution, curbing the spread of invasive species, fostering school and lake association activities, and promoting best practices on shoreland properties. But that has changed over the past two years, as the LePage Administration has drastically curtailed and disrupted DEP's lake protection work. The report includes seven major findings and urges Maine lawmakers to begin now to reverse the damage.

To see full report visit, <http://www.nrcm.org/news/environmental-issues-in-the-news/nrcm-maine-lakes-at-risk/>

GOLDIE'S HIBERNATION

By Denise Bruesewitz

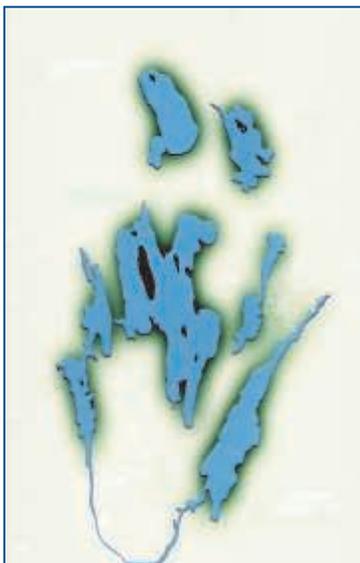
Goldie's hibernation is well underway after her first successful season of recording Great Pond's vital signs. We were able to see the lake water mix the week of 4 November in real time based on Goldie's data. After this important event in the seasonal cycle of the lake, we brought Goldie in for the winter. Goldie is doing a great job providing us with important data about the summertime phytoplankton activity and the decline in dissolved oxygen in the bottom of the lake, which progressed steadily through the summer months. We are working our way through this very large dataset and will continue to learn more about Great Pond through the winter. We will be bringing Goldie back out to the lake after ice melts in the spring. In the meantime, you can visit Goldie at the MLRC this winter.



Lake Trust Corner

BRCA Lake Trust

The BRCA Lake Trust is a collaboration of Belgrade Lakes Association, East Pond Association, Friends of Messalonskee, McGrath Pond-Salmon Lake Association, North Pond Association, the Youth Conservation Corps, the Milfoil Program and the BRCA Watershed Program



BRCA Lake Trust Vision & Goals

20 YEAR VISION:

By 2025, the Belgrade lakes Region will be known for its clear lakes and vibrant communities set in a landscape with ample habitat for native species and abundant recreational opportunities for residents and tourists. The watershed's natural beauty, healthy ecological systems, and connected network of conservation lands contribute to an exceptional quality of life for its communities, citizens and visitors.

GOALS OF THE BRCA LAKE TRUST:

1. Improve and stabilize Water Quality so all lakes in the watershed meet or surpass requirements for human use, aquatic life support and recreation.
2. Build the capacity of Lake Associations to function as effective agents for water quality stewardship and restoration.
3. Create public support and funding for a community-based approach to water quality restoration and stewardship.

BRCA Awarded DEP Erosion Control Grant for \$75,000

BRCA was recently awarded a DEP 319 grant of \$75,000 which will be used for storm water and erosion control projects on Great Pond and Long Pond in 2014 and 2015. This is Phase III of a long-term watershed plan to improve water quality on these lakes which are recognized as "impaired" by DEP because of long-term declines in water clarity (Secchi disk) and nuisance algae (gloeotrichia) blooms. BRCA will work with area towns, road associations and homeowners on roads and driveways which have significant erosion problems and which need structural improvements like ditching and culverts rather than routine maintenance.

In addition to providing construction cost-share funding, BRCA is also promoting Road Design and Maintenance Plans through the Kennebec County Soil & Water Conservation District. These plans have proven to be invaluable for long-term planning, for making sound investments in roads, and for working with contractors. BRCA will be doing outreach with towns and road associations to develop projects this spring and summer. If you have a road or driveway project you would like to discuss on one of these two lakes, please call or email BRCA.

5K Race for the Lakes-

On August 31, 2013, BRCA held the sixth annual 5K Race for the Lakes at Camp Runoia. We had almost 100 runners show on that beautiful Saturday morning. Thank you to the runners, sponsors, and volunteers for supporting BRCA.

SAVE THE DATE: **Saturday, AUGUST 30th**



ADOPT-A-SHORELINE: A Program Partnership

In partnership with the Belgrade Lakes Association (BLA), the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance (BRCA) launched a new program last summer. The program is loosely modeled after the popular Adopt-a-Highway program. Instead of patrolling for litter, this program enlists shorefront residents in an effort to monitor the shoreline for another type of pollution, invasive aquatic plants.

Early detection is a key piece in our battle against invasive aquatic plants such as variable milfoil, which was discovered in Great Pond in 2010. If an infestation is discovered early, there is a greater chance for eradication.

In the 2013 summer season, 121 participants received training in identifying aquatic invaders and monitoring a manageable section of their shoreline throughout the growing season. They reported their findings to Toni Pied, Milfoil Program Director at the BRCA. No new infestations were found. All training and equipment were provided, and monitoring was done while enjoying activities on the lake as you normally would (i.e. kayaking, canoeing, snorkeling, fishing).

A total of 11 miles of shoreline was adopted this past summer. We hope to expand this program on Long Pond and Great Pond this summer. The program is open to individuals, families, road associations, and any other group interested in helping protect the lakes of the Belgrade Lakes Watershed. For more information, please e-mail or call Toni at brcamf@belgradelakes.org or 215-2685.

BRCA Land Trust Acquires a New Conservation Easement

BRCA acquired a new conservation easement at the end of 2013 – a 60 acre property on McGrath Pond and Salmon Lake that *protects over 2,000 feet of lake shore frontage from development*. The easement requires that the property remains “forever wild” except for a recreational hiking trail that may be developed in the future at the discretion of the owner. The easement was donated to BRCA by the owner, Jody Sataloff of Cape Elizabeth, Maine. Jody’s reasons for the donation are discussed below:

“In 2013 I made the decision to donate a charitable easement to the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance. My dad had made a similar gift several years ago of an abutting piece of property, and I, like him, believed this organization to be a worthy donee. BRCA is committed to the stewardship of land for preservation purposes.

Aside from the positive tax benefits from such a gift, I wanted to ensure that this beautiful piece of property and its open space would be preserved without threat of development years down the road. A conservation easement leaves me confident that this forest will continue to grow and be healthy and that the wildlife habitat therein will be maintained, improved and protected.”

BRCA is interested in land conservation opportunities that protect water quality and wildlife habitat, that preserve traditional land use such as forestry and farming, and that provide recreational opportunities that connect people with nature. This easement provides many of these benefits, and is adjacent to an existing BRCA property donated by Jody’s dad over 15 years ago. The easement also illustrates the great connection that people have with our lakes and lands, and the legacy they want to leave to their families and the community.

We want to thank Jody publicly for her gift and want to encourage others who wish to conserve land, water and habitat to contact BRCA.

Conservation Easements Defined

The most traditional tool for conserving private land, a “conservation easement” is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. It allows landowners to continue to own and use their land, and they can also sell it or pass it on to heirs.

When you donate a conservation easement to a land trust, you give up some of the rights associated with the land. For example, you might give up the right to build additional structures, while retaining the right to grow crops. Future owners also will be bound by the easement’s terms. The land trust is responsible for making sure the easement’s terms are followed forever (“in perpetuity”). This is managed through “stewardship” by the land trust.

Conservation easements offer great flexibility. An easement on property containing rare wildlife habitat might prohibit any development, for example, while an easement on a farm might allow continued farming and the addition of agricultural structures. An easement may apply to all or a portion of the property, and need not require public access.

For additional information about easements including potential tax benefits see the Land Trust Alliance web site: <http://www.landtrustalliance.org/conservation/landowners/conservation-easements>

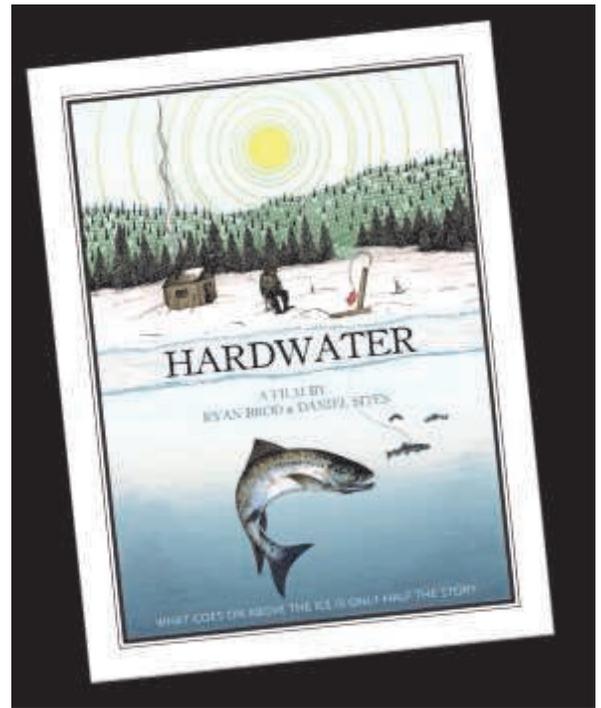


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To view BRCA Newsletters
in full color with active
hyperlinks visit our website

Friday, March 7th



Colby College Goldfarb Center for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement

Uniquely Maine: ICE FISHING DAY

With Ryan Brod of the documentary film HARDWATER
Ice Fishing on Long Pond, Film Screening and Discussion

Friday, March 7th from 12pm to 7pm at the MLRC

Contact Amanda Cooley if you are staying for dinner.
akitchen@colby.edu (207)-859-5319

Giving to BRCA helps protect the lakes and hills we love.

Gifts of Cash – are always welcome, and are tax-deductible. Unrestricted gifts help keep the organization running. Or you could designate a special program area (Milfoil, Watershed Protection, Land Acquisition and Management, or the Conservation Corps), or a specific project.

Gifts of Stock – A gift of appreciated stock to the BRCA can bring extra benefits to you – you get a charitable deduction, and you pay no capital gains tax. The easiest way to donate stock is to have your broker call the BRCA office for instructions – 207-495-6039.

Gifts of Life Insurance – If you have a life insurance policy that you no longer need, consider making the BRCA the beneficiary. The value of the paid-up portion of the policy is tax deductible.

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