

August 2020: A seasonal HELLO from Washington Lakes Watershed Association and a hope that you and yours are well.

We hope these notes assure you that WLWA is continuing all but in-person activities. Read on . . . For the lakes association, Covid 19 means cancellation of our public paddles, paddle boat race and annual meeting. Our board also decided not to solicit membership dues this year. If your membership was active in 2019 it will continue through 2020.

Donations are welcome. WLWA makes an annual donation to Midcoast Conservancy, Maine Lakes Society, and Lake Stewards of Maine, who provide us advice, support and resources. Memberships and donations are our only source of funds since we do not charge for any of our events.

Our “bills” are mostly small but ongoing: postage, postal box fees, newsletter printing, occasional speaker fees, rare online support fees, lab analysis fees and membership donations to the organizations that directly support our work: Midcoast Conservancy, Maine Lakes Society, and Lake Stewards of Maine.

Our directors have agreed to extend their terms until such time as we can hold a normal recruitment and a full association meeting to elect them. We are: Frank Braun, Casey Carr, Scott Edwards, Sue Sainio Edwards, Dale Griffin, Jeff Grinnell, Neil Gross, Kathleen Gross, Charlotte Henderson, Annamary “Peg” Hobbs, George Stone, Sharon Turner, Elaine O’Keefe, and Alewife Project Coordinator, Brian Alves.



Archive Photo from Plant Identification paddle trip on Crystal Lake

Algae and other “stuff” in the water

Last spring, a member contacted WLWA with a question about what she was seeing in the water near her cottage. Luckily, our water quality monitor, Roger Cady, was able to get an answer in just a few days through his association with Lake Stewards of Maine. It turned out to be a common phenomenon that just happened to appear earlier than usual. Late summer and early fall, when the water is warm, is the time algae blooms are most likely. We are lucky that Washington’s lakes are in good shape and the risk of imported invasives is low (partly due to the carry-in rule). Still, noticing something new or different is a very valuable tool for monitoring water quality. We are grateful for these kinds of reports.



Alert: Cyanobacteria on Damariscotta Lake. Midcoast Conservancy notified WLWA of this toxic blue-green algae on Friday 8-14. More information is at midcoastconservancy.org .

This is NOT reported in Washington’s lakes but we should exercise care – this material is very easily transported.

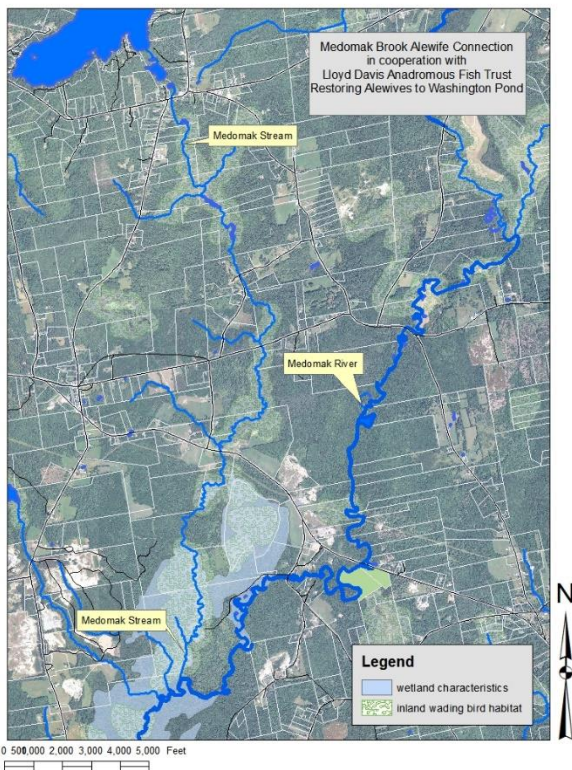
Always make sure not to spread it.

Tracking Ice-Out, Ice-In

One of the earliest ice-out dates on record was this year when Washington Pond became open on March 21. If you happen to watch for this or other lake phenomena, please share them with us on Facebook at [https:// www.facebook.com/washingtonmaine.lakesassociation/](https://www.facebook.com/washingtonmaine.lakesassociation/) or email wlwassn@gmail.com We pass our dates along to our associate groups (named above) as well as the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) which keep long-term records of ice out and ice in.

Restoring alewife passage

Over the last year and a half, the lakes association and Lloyd Davis Trust held several public information sessions for the community as well as the fire department and select board where concerns were raised, aired, and answered. The WLWA board met with the Lloyd Davis Trust board and affirmed the steps to reestablish fish passage along Medomak Brook. Assured that a serious effort to restore free water flow along Medomak Brook was underway, the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) stocked Washington Pond with 1500 alewives on May 28, 2019. These adult fish spawned and returned to the ocean. The young alewives remain to be part of the natural migration cycle which will begin when they mature, return to the ocean and finally come back to spawn – in three to four years.



ALEWIFE ACCESS PROJECT Continues Medomak Brook (traced with white line) is the waterway that connects Washington Pond with the Medomak River. Freeing water flow to allow alewife passage is the culmination of a nearly forty-year commitment by the Lloyd Davis Trust.

Projects on hold: needing time and leaders

Late last winter, member Kathleen Gross followed up on some ideas for having a dock at the Washington Pond Public Access. One motivation was a funding opportunity from Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF). That offer was withdrawn due to Covid but the inquiries Kathleen made will still be useful when we visit the idea next season. A dock would be an assist for launching kayaks and a “seat” for swimmers.

A year round walking path along the stream below the dam at Route 220 in Washington Village has been on the back burner for some time. We need someone to get permissions and a couple of people to head up a few work days. With Covid-19, being outdoors is a great way to get social in a safe and fun way. FMI or to help: wlwassn@gmail.com.

Visit us at <https://www.facebook.com/washingtonmaine.lakesassociation/> Post photos, comments, lake observations, etc. and get occasional updates from us. BTW, our long name evolved from discovering that nearly every state has at least one “Washington.” So, we put Maine right up front in order that search engines could find us easily. And you can, too. Like us! Follow us! Post to us!

Water quality testing

Our fantastic volunteer water quality monitor, Roger Cady, completed training several years ago and has done this most valuable work throughout summers ever since. Our association is in serious need of two volunteers to take the necessary training course and work with Roger to keep the testing going. WLWA will pay for training classes. FMI, call Charlotte at 207-845-2661. Roger performs tests every two weeks. One uses a water clarity measuring device called a Secchi disk which enables measuring transparency. The other

measures temperature and dissolved oxygen at one-meter intervals in a designated location. In the late summer, when changes are most evident, Roger does chemistry tests for Chlorophyll, pH, Phosphorus (both in water column and bottom), Color, Conductivity, and Alkalinity. Regular water quality monitoring looks at lake health and trends over time, but does not test for drinking water purity.

Thank you to everybody for the great stewardship that keeps our lakes among the state's best water quality.

We are very grateful to Midcoast Conservancy for loaning us a Dissolved Oxygen instrument for the entire summer (saving WLWA hundreds of dollars) and the use of their collection equipment for the comprehensive annual water test.

Good summer for lake swimming

Our impression is that this summer there is more swimming from public access areas than in the past few years. Very hot days and nights along with the overall increase in outdoor activity may account for it. It's a great trend, no matter the cause. Thank you! The Washington Recreation Committee and WLWA provided a porta-potty at the Razorville site for much of the summer.

Loon Report There was a report of two loon chicks sighted this summer during the appointed time for the official 2020 Maine Loon Count on Saturday, July 18. Maine Audubon says around 1400 people participate in the count on about 400 lakes and ponds. Loons nest in their special places on Washington's lakes and are very wary and easily frightened when approached by swimmers, boaters, or on foot. Please keep a distance and respect their space.



Archive photo: a raft of loons on Washington Pond

E-mail voting in the future? Even before Covid-19 interfered with in-person meetings, members looked into possibly communicating via Skype, Zoom or group emails. Which led to the question of whether we could conduct full meetings online. Rob Levin, an attorney who specializes in non-profit law, wrote about this practice in his blog, concluding that as long as the voters agree on the process it's okay to hold online votes. He favors in-person meetings but there's little doubt but what some kind of "distancing" will persist into our future. As long as we have your email or cell phone number, we can include you in a 4 meeting whenever appropriate. You may rest assured, **WLWA does not share our membership list or contact info. Period.**

Maine is home to the largest and most robust alewife runs on the entire East.

Volunteers make it all possible. According to the Nonprofit Times the value of a volunteer hour in Maine is \$25.43! The reality is they are worth their weight in gold!

Washington Lakes Watershed Association

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LAKES FACTS:

Washington Pond

Washington, Knox, Maine

MIDAS 4894 Acres 565 Perimeter 8 miles

Mean Depth 16' Maximum Depth 36'

Fishery type Warmwater

No known invasive aquatic plants at this time.

Crystal Pond

Washington, Knox, Maine

MIDAS 4900 Acres 99 Perimeter 2 miles

Mean Depth 12' Max Depth 24'

Fishery type Warmwater, coldwater

No known invasive aquatic plants at this time



2019 Paddle Boat Races on Washington Pond, sponsored by Washington Recreation Committee and WLWA.

2021 Please, please, please!