

WATERSHED VIEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE KEZAR LAKE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

FALL 2022



LEIGH MACMILLEN HAYES



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JILL RUNDLE

Teaching the Next Generation To be Good Stewards of the Lakes

by CHRIS BRINK

KLWA partnered with Maine Lakes and Greater Lovell Land Trust (GLLT) to host thirty-eight 6,7 and 8th graders who apply to participate in the experiential learning Maine Environmental Science Academy (MESA) program, a multi-disciplinary science, mathematics, and English/Language Arts class. The Molly Ockett School program provides students an opportunity to explore the environmental sciences and to be introduced to the state curriculum standards through experiences that bring those standards to life. KLWA hosted the class at two sites on Kezar Lake to learn how to measure and care for the water quality of the lake.

For the shoreland protection presentation on September 29, students arrived at the site early in the morning and participated in three learning segments on how to protect and maintain water quality:

- Engineering buildings and roadways within the shoreland zone to prevent runoff
- Using plants and natural cover as permeable filtration and eliminating the use of fertilizer
- Retaining a canopy consisting of trees, shrubs, plants, and “duff” in the shoreland zone to filter and slow surface water in a water system

Roy Lambert of Maine Lakes taught one of the segments and provided the students with the LakeSmart software evaluation app. This tool is used by LakeSmart evaluators to determine whether a property is properly and adequately protecting the lake. The students worked in teams and used the software on their tablets to do an actual evaluation. They awarded a passing assessment for the property they explored together.

Leigh Hayes, Education Director for GLLT, explored the area around the house to understand engineering solutions to slow runoff, and she provided a hands-on experiment on the effects of unfiltered material that reaches a waterway.

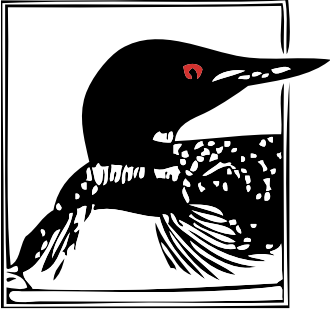
Chris Brink, KLWA board member, showed the road construction methods for slowing and diverting water before it can reach a waterway.

A few weeks later, the water quality presentation began in the Lovell Town Hall with a talk by Steve Lewis on how water quality is measured, why it is important, and about the basic dynamics of lakes. The group then decamped to the Town Beach by Pleasant Point where Heinrich Wurm talked about loons, their life cycle, and showed students one of the loon nesting platforms that KLWA deploys each spring.

Steve and Heinrich took 10 students at a time on a pontoon boat to show how water transparency, pH, and dissolved Oxygen were measured. Meanwhile, Leigh and GLLT docent Dawn Wood taught the rest of the students how to read maps, explore ecotones, and search for aquatic macro-invertebrates that are indicators of water quality.

MESA's real-world learning experience has been demonstrated to increase academic achievement and helps students develop stronger ties to their community. It enhances students' appreciation for the natural world and creates a heightened commitment to protecting our ecosystems. Many of these local students come to Kezar Lake to boat and swim, giving them direct interest in the study location. These students were enthusiastic participants in the environmental science and will be future stewards of our waterways. ♡

Short videos of the classes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aVqVdCgaPs>,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve7lqRPuLM8>



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President's Message

by STEVE LEWIS

First off, you may notice something different in that Rick Pilsbury isn't writing this message. Rick hit the end of his three-year tenure and has handed the reins to me. Rick did a great job helping initiate the LakeSmart Program, working on the Evergreen Valley issue, coordinating various programs, and keeping us going, generally, in the same direction. Thank you, Rick. Now it's my turn and I have big shoes to fill. I feel fortunate as we have a strong Board with a good deal of energy to tackle the issues we want to handle going forward.

On the subject of the Board, we want to also thank Eric Ernst, a Severance Lodge resident, for his six years of dedicated service as he is retiring. His calm and reasonable presence was always appreciated.

In July, we conducted a survey of what people thought of the job KLWA is doing, and should do. I want to mention that in terms of the future efforts, advocacy with the various levels of government on behalf of the watershed and educational activities were highly rated as needing more focus. We are working on some efforts in those directions, which we hope to be able to talk about next spring.

Indeed, we have already teamed up with GLLT on some educational work with students from Molly Ockett School in Fryeburg, teaching them about shoreland stewardship and what constitutes and affects water quality; see the article on page 1.

Also, the subject of having some sort of physical presence, an office of some sort, is a question we are grappling with. The issue: For the same money, we could have a lot more "virtual" presence than we have now. Is a physical presence important? It's difficult to say in this internet age. Stay tuned as we figure this one out.

Not so good news is it has been a hard year for some loons on Kezar Lake as you will read. The good news is that the concerns of a possible large event venue, RV park, and campground at Evergreen Valley is no longer a threat as the land has been sold to an undisclosed conservationally-minded friend of the watershed. We give thanks to the extraordinary work by Howard Corwin, Heinrich Wurm, and Rick Pilsbury, as well as a host of other concerned people for staying on top of that issue.

We are starting a new feature with this newsletter,

"Where in the Watershed," where we will post pictures of off-the-beaten-path places for you to guess the location. We encourage you to send in your photos of places you have visited in the watershed that you think might be a good mystery. We will pick one for each newsletter and see if anyone can guess where it is. We hope this will encourage you to go out and investigate the sites and become more acquainted with the many great places that abound in our area. Take a look at this fall's entry and see if you can guess where it is.

Your support makes it possible to continue with water quality monitoring, the LakeSmart program, Loon Rangers, and general advocacy for our rather spectacular watershed. Please consider KLWA when making your year-end donations.

Speaking about support; the KLWA Board is an active bunch indeed, and, as always, thanks to them for doing what they do, and doing it well.

And finally, fall has been spectacular so far. Here's hoping for a snowy, cold winter for good skiing and snowshoeing... not to mention for a well-replenished watershed next spring. ♡



STEVE LEWIS

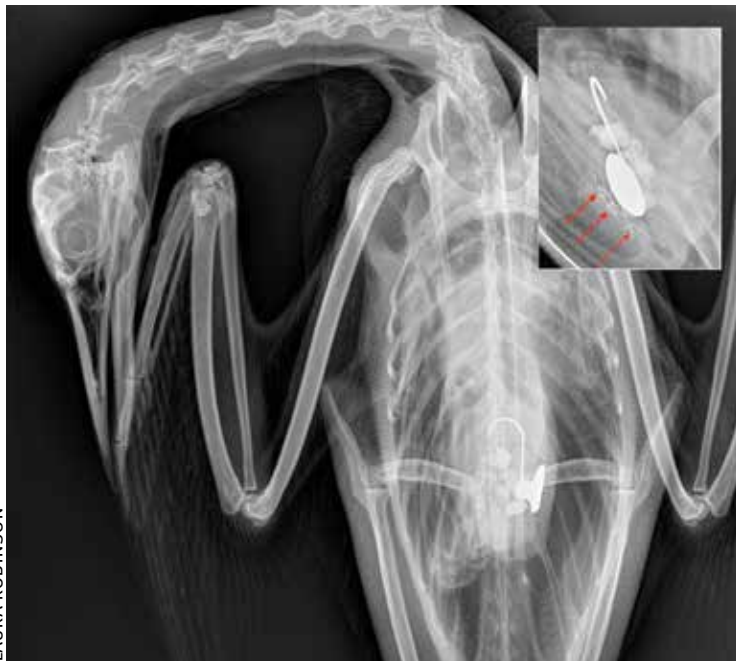
Mysterious Loon Death Solved: A Call to Action

by LAURA ROBINSON

Concern about a listless loon lingering near the Lower Bay shoreline turned to devastation when Heinrich Wurm noticed its leg bands, identifying it as the Great Brook male. Disheveled and trailing lily stems, the bird was seven miles from its home at Kezar's North End—seven miles from its mate who was busy feeding their two ten-week-old chicks. Monitoring it throughout the day, Wurm witnessed its sharp decline, and by the next morning, it was dead. Cause of death: a mystery.

The Great Brook male was Kezar's superstar. The first bird banded in the watershed (2017), he consistently beat the odds. Every year intruding loons attacked the territory, and every year, he prevailed, returning to reproduce the following spring. In fact, he was the most productive male loon on Kezar, despite the fact that his mercury levels were high, making him an outlying data point in a prominent scientific study.

Confounded by the Great Brook male's sudden death, our loon team discussed a rushed necropsy to ensure that there was no emerging epidemic. But those plans were scrapped when an X-ray revealed the culprit: a very large fishing lure lodged in the bird's gizzard. If you look at the X-ray inset, you can just see small flakes of metal sloughing off the jig: the telltale softness of lead succumbing to the rock-tumbler effect of the pebbles in the bird's gizzard.



LAURA ROBINSON

With the ability to kill a loon in as little as a week, lead tackle is the number one cause of loon deaths in New England. It's a statistic that surprises, because the ingestion often occurs silently, after anglers have left the scene. A lead jig left in a released fish because it was too difficult to remove, an abandoned lure, or small lead sinkers mistaken for the pebbles loons ingest to aid digestion, all form temptingly toxic hazards that linger in our lakes indefinitely.

As our loon team lamented the death of the Great Brook male, accelerating our "Get the Lead Out" campaign to minimize repeat deaths, we had no idea that more trouble was brewing in the North End. Just three days after its father died, one of the Great Brook chicks snatched up a lure—this time a rigid fish with three treble hooks dangling from its plastic belly. While it is unclear whether the chick became entangled during a fishing incident, or after the lure had been abandoned, the damage to the bird was devastating. With one treble hook clenched to

the flesh above its beak, and another lodged beneath, the bird was unable to open its jaw.

After hearing that a distressed loon chick had been spotted, three generations of the North End's Simmons family worked together to rescue the bird. When they spotted it, the chick was shaking its head, vigorously trying to free itself from the lure. After cutting it free, they took the chick to Kappy Sprenger in Bridgton for rehab. Two days later, with hooks removed, and

feeding well, the chick was ready to return. Swimming straight to its mother in a spunk-filled reunion, the chick both accepted food and dove vigorously. All was looking good. But in the days that followed, the chick beached itself periodically, a behavior that often indicates ill-health. It was during one of these beached resting periods that an opportunistic eagle seized the moment, and attacked the bird, which died shortly thereafter.

Where do these two losses leave us? The answer is clear: rushing to get the lead and abandoned tackle out of our lakes and ponds. Whether you spy monofilament tangled in a bush, a stray lure on the lake bottom, or potential lead in your own tackle box, please dispose of it properly. You can place it in one of our new lead tackle collection boxes in the lobby of the Lovell Town Office or Charlotte Hobbs Memorial Library, or call us at 207.925.8020. We'll come pick it up at your door.

Do you need some help telling what's what? Give us a call and we will have a look with you.

Change is up to all of us. The human-induced death of these birds is as frustrating as it is avoidable. Lure by lure, sinker by sinker, and jig by jig, please help us make a difference. ♡



LAURA ROBINSON



ROGER SIMMONS



HEINRICH WURM

Water Quality Update

by HEINRICH WURM

I was going to head my guest appearance in this column with “No News is Good News” until I called Laura Diemer, our longstanding and trusted lead scientist at FB Environmental. Scanning through the yet incomplete results of the three major tests run this year, there are a few high readings of Total Phosphorus values in two ponds. Thankfully, we have years of data and experienced professionals like Laura to determine whether those numbers are outliers or truly worrisome. It does bring up thoughts about how we can do better at controlling the things we can that affect water quality.

Speaking of phosphorus—a life-sustaining element of growth and nutrition, ubiquitously found where creatures, organisms and plants live and decay—it must be contained. There is a long To Do list of actions and restrictions, some voluntary, some regulated, to limit phosphate levels in lakes and ponds. Well-functioning septic systems and maximizing rainwater absorption before it enters a lake are just a couple of best management practices.

Maine lakes are struggling with two avoidable threats: high nutrient run-off (including phosphorus and nitrogen, which favors algal growth) and the introduction of invasive plants

and organisms harmful to the lake environment. KLWA and its LakeSmart team, as well as Lovell’s Invasive Plant Prevention Committee with their armada of volunteers, are working to educate our members, guests, and neighbors on ways to minimize run-off, also termed non-point source pollution and how to recognize invasive plants and organisms.

In addition, Lake Stewards of Maine (<https://www.lakestewardsofmaine.org/>), located 45 minutes from here in Auburn, provides workshops where interested volunteers can learn to contribute to lake health by becoming certified monitors for both water quality and invasive aquatic species. Our watershed recently lost several monitors, among them KLWA board member Eric Ernst, who monitored Kezar’s Middle Bay for many years and is taking a well earned rest.

Speaking from experience, active participation in the preservation of water quality is not only satisfying, it also raises your appreciation of this region’s beauty to a new level.

Are you interested in learning how you can become a water quality monitor? Contact us at 207.925.8020. 💧

Be LakeSmart

by DAVE DURRENBERGER

LakeSmart, an initiative of Maine Lakes, is a free educational program for shoreland property owners who want to learn how to manage their property to best protect water quality and aesthetics. KLWA's LakeSmart project team has completed dozens of LakeSmart evaluations for property owners in the watershed in the last year and a half. We also conducted many LakeSmart presentations at road association meetings and director/member meetings for common shoreland communities. The LakeSmart team works year-round and before it snows the team is prepared to evaluate even more properties.

In cooperation with Greater Lovell Land Trust, the LakeSmart team created a community science class and presented a LakeSmart educational event for thirty-eight Molly Ockett School students on the shores of Kezar Lake, which is detailed on page 1.

To expand our LakeSmart evaluation and public outreach capacity, the LakeSmart team recruited Emlyn Crocker for her environmental and technical skills. The team is grateful for all of Emlyn's contributions, not the least of which is the skill to get things done.

LakeSmart program awareness is growing through people seeing the LakeSmart Award signs on properties and through interactions with friends and neighbors. We also hear mentions of LakeSmart in planning board meetings and real estate transactions. The word is spreading.

Nature has a time-tested strategy to slow, absorb, and filter water runoff; it is called natural vegetation, the combination of canopy trees, midstory trees, shrubs, groundcover, undisturbed leaves, and duff. They all matter. Native plants along the lakefront bond the soil together and add beauty to the landscape. Trees and shrubs soak up a huge amount of surface water runoff and provide erosion control, privacy, and wildlife habitat. That is why bushes, shrubs, and groundcovers within the first one hundred feet of lakes and ponds are protected by State and local laws and should be left undisturbed save for a winding path to your dock. If your shorefront has been altered, allowing runoff into a waterbody, you can help by planting a buffer of native shrubs, bushes, and groundcovers or just let nature move back in on its own.

The number one source of pollution into surface water is runoff and erosion according to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Local municipal government and code enforcement cannot protect your water quality and shoreland aesthetics. The Maine DEP cannot do it either. The only people that can protect waterbodies are the owners and maintainers of land abutting lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams. The solution is you and the contractors you choose to assist you.

Questions? Need advice or help? Contact the KLWA LakeSmart team via the KLWA website or call 207.925.8020. ♡



Lake Patrol: Keeping the Calm

by TOM GILMORE

As I sit down to write this I am once again thankful to be on Kezar Lake. It seems there is always a fire, flood, hurricane, drought, or heat crisis somewhere in the country and while not totally unaffected, we seem to suffer far less than many other areas. Our summer was unusually dry, right up until it wasn't. Rainfall from late June through most of August was virtually non-existent but then recovered with over seven inches falling from late August through mid-September. The lake level has risen almost a foot from its mid-summer low and now looks to be back to "normal."

The lack of rain coupled with abundant sunshine explains an uptick in Lake Patrol hours. For 2022, the boat was on the water 245 hours, about 10% above our normal run rate. Lake Patrol officer Turf recorded 31 Boat Assists, 7 Swimmer Assists and 507 Safety Checks. His calming presence contributes immensely to the safe environment we have on Kezar Lake.

Another special shout out is due to both Turf Ramsden and Lee Conary. Turf's role has been well documented on numerous occasions but this year, more than ever, I had many residents commenting on the terrific job he is doing. And the docking space donated by Lee Conary and Kezar Lake Marina is a very generous gift. Many thanks, Lee.

Our buoy monitoring program for the State continued apace in 2022 and is now a matter of routine. The 47 buoys on the lake largely stay put but our watchful eye helps and earns us head-of-the-line privileges with the State when and if there is need for attention. Needless to say, with a lack of rain for much of the summer and resulting low water levels, the hazard buoys were particularly important this year.

Finally, a pitch for donations. Lake Patrol is a significant expense to KLWA but is worth every penny. The patrol has been a presence on the lake for so many years that it is almost a fixture. While well maintained, our 115hp boat engine, now over 20 years old, will need replacement soon. Please remember this as you make your generous year-end donation to KLWA. It is greatly appreciated. Thank you. ♡



Where in the Watershed?

by LUCY LACASSE

While we all appreciate Kezar's glorious vistas, there are many nuggets of splendor tucked away in relative obscurity within our watershed's 56 square miles.

To pique folks' curiosity about some of these less obvious bits of wonder, we thought it would be fun to create a "Where in the Watershed" column, reminiscent of DownEast magazine's "Where in Maine" section.

In each newsletter, we plan to feature a photograph of one of these more obscure examples of splendor, and your job will be to guess where (or what!) it is.

You are also welcome to send us your own favorite bit of beauty from within the Watershed. Who knows? It might get featured in "Where in the Watershed."

To the right is our first *Where in the Watershed* photo. Where do you think this is? Please email your answers to kezarlakewatershed@gmail.com and we will pick the "best" correct response to publish in the next KLWA newsletter.



LAURA ROBINSON

ALBANY SOUTH UPDATE

The Six Lids Timber Sale (that portion of Albany South that is within KLWA's watershed) did not go out to bid this summer as planned. That means there will be no logging on White Mountain National Forest land in our watershed this winter. They intend to put Six Lids out to bid next spring or early summer. Stay tuned.

LIPPC Notes

by DIANE CONARY

Our 2022 Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) program is winding down after a very busy summer.

CBI's were on duty at the boat ramps from May 1 - mid-October. The complete inspection report will be available on our website (LIPPC.org) by November 1.

There were seven bass tournaments on Kezar Lake this season and no aquatic invasive plants were found on any of the boats. All bass clubs were diligent and respectful of the importance of the CBI program.

Our Stewards patrolled the entire watershed shoreline and no suspicious plants were reported. The professional survey of 1/2 of the watershed will be delayed until spring due to health complications with the surveyors.

Exploratory dives for Chinese Mystery snails continued this summer. With the help of the Cushman Pond divers, we performed two surveys. The first was in the Narrows at Conifer and the divers found four snails in the deeper water (12-15 feet). No snails were found by snorkelers in the shallow water. Our second dive was in Lower Bay from Pigeon Point around Buck Island, where no snails were found. LIPPC will continue to try to isolate the snail locations next year, knowing full well that in the future the response necessary may be beyond our scope.

Cushman Pond finished its 4th year of no invasive species following two maintenance dives performed this summer.

Our education committee continued its outreach to the community with advertising, plant paddles and promoting educational awareness. Our Science in the Sand program reached out to the children in the Lovell Recreation swim program and we were asked by the GLLT and MESA (a program at the Molly Ockett School) to teach a class on aquatic plants.



LEIGH MACMILLEN HAYES

Lastly, we developed a new committee: Town Initiatives. This committee will look for ways to elevate the Town's response to the threat of invasive species. We circulated a powerpoint presentation to road associations and formulated a plan for approaching the issue of bait fishing. We are still in the midst of working with the State on trying to address the risk of seining and bait trapping in our watershed. We are hopeful that we have some news by November when the season gets underway.

Over the winter we will continue to look into ways to protect this beautiful watershed.

Many thanks to everyone on our committee and a special thanks to outgoing board member Steve Lewis for his dedication to LIPPC during his tenure. We wish him all the best as the new KLWA president. Have a wonderful winter! ♡

Notes from the Greater Lovell Land Trust

by JILL RUNDLE, PRESIDENT & ERIKA ROWLAND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Water is always on the move, across the land, through the water systems, and under the ground. The lakes, ponds, and rivers are part of the rural character of western Maine. The water is fundamental for people and wildlife, and it's our economic foundation, part of winter and summer recreation, agriculture, timber, and so much more.

GLLT has had a big year. In August, we received exciting news from the national Land Trust Alliance: the award of LTA accreditation that recognizes the quality of GLLT's conservation practices and nearly 30 years of environmental protection and community outreach. An important element of the work is programs that are complementary to the KLWA, and other watershed associations in our service area.

Accreditation is big, but there's more to report!

By the end of 2022, we will wrap up the largest-ever GLLT land project, acquisition of 1,300+ acres in the Kezar River watershed. In keeping with our mission to protect the watershed, this property features outstanding water resources that are recognized by state agencies, foundations, and individuals alike. The forested landscape runs along over two miles of the Kezar River and a mile and a half of Patterson Brook, it surrounds the entire shoreline of Dan Charles Pond and boasts over 150 acres of wetlands. What's more, a significant aquifer sits under nearly half of the land.

This season, water is also the central theme in the GLLT outreach and education programs with our schools and for our friends, from exploring vernal pools and streams, to "water in



LEIGH MACMILLEN HAYES

the community" field trips for 3rd and 4th graders at New Suncook School, to the water ecology curriculum we've developed with the Molly Ockett School's Maine Environmental Science Academy (MESA) weekly program for the 2022-23 school year. And, thanks to the ongoing work of our indefatigable volunteer corps and our dedicated professional staff, our 15 miles of trails are a year-round invitation to all to enjoy the watershed lands and views in this spectacular region of western Maine. Be sure to check our calendar for all the latest, and sign up for weekly program updates on our website: gllt.org

Please reach out if you'd like to know more about our plans and goals for the public assets that we steward for the community. We'd love to hear from you. ♡

Corporate and HOA Sponsors

Once again KLWA would like to extend a huge thank you to our new and long-standing corporate sponsors who so willingly step up each year to support our watershed and the many programs that we manage. It is this community support combined with that of our many members that helps to provide for a vibrant and sustainable watershed. A big shout out to the following:

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