

Mousam Lake Region Association

WINTER 2013
NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 333 SPRINGVALE, ME 04083
WWW.MOUSAMLAKE.MYLAKETOWN.COM

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DID YOU KNOW...

That it is illegal to move, remove or vandalize the navigational marker buoys placed in the lake each season?

In Memorandum

We wanted to take a moment to send out our sympathies on the passing of former Board President Rudy Johnson. Our thoughts are with your family .

The “Dirty” Word on Mousam

Yes – We have a dirty word and its name is **PHOSPHORUS**. This culprit is responsible for the decline in Mousam Lake’s water quality resulting in our lake being placed on the DEP “lake at risk” list in the 90’s. Remediation began and improvement followed. We were, however, warned to be ever vigilant as we could experience another downward shift.

In the meantime Mousam has experienced unusual weather with many heavy downpours allowing a great deal of phosphorus to enter Mousam Lake, warmer temperatures and a prolonged lake season. So much so, that we now find Mousam at another crossroad. The dissolved oxygen at the lower levels of the lake are dangerously low which could result in a fish kill (salmon and trout) if not dealt with.

For phosphorus to harm Mousam

– it must be transported into the lake. Undeveloped forest land acts like a sponge, absorbing rainwater and snow melt in the irregular depressions of the forest floor and trapping run-off in the rich organic duff. From there the water slowly filters into the ground. The tree canopy breaks the velocity of the rain, reducing soil erosion and absorbing some of the moisture. The under story brush provides additional protection binding the soil through their root systems. Much of the phosphorus in a forested watershed is taken up by the vegetation and soils therefore remains in the forest.

As a watershed gets developed, the forest cover is removed and the soils are disturbed. Surface irregularities are smoothed out and soil is compacted with impervious surfaces and buildings and roads. As a result much of

the precipitation that would otherwise be retained or be absorbed runs off the surface of buildings and lawns. Since phosphorus run-off from developed areas is as high as 10% greater than undeveloped areas, one can see why vegetation is so important.

Keeping any and all soil particles and storm water run-off from entering the lake is crucial to a healthy lake regardless of its origin. The biggest threat to water quality is “non-point source” pollution. This is because it exists in so many forms and is often difficult to pinpoint sources. Non Point Source Pollution is related to the way land around the lake is used and is often not recognized as a form of pollution. It exists wherever there is human activity. In other words, NPS pollution is you and me and all of us combined.

Welcome New Members

Alan & Laurie Wilson, 7th St., Acton

Jason & Ann Margaret Eagleston,
21st St. Shapleigh

Carol Turgeon and David Dennehy,
12th Street, Acton

Directors	Contact Number	Position
Rich Eagleston	(978) 985-3243	President
Skip Bartosch	(207) 636-2751	Vice President
James (Jamie) Verity	(207) 636-3644	Treasurer
Chris Leupold	(617) 283-7135	Secretary
Glenn Baxter	(207) 636-3510	Director
Jack Kelley	(207) 636-3252	Director
Elaine Beck	(207) 636-2166	Director
Elliott Levine	(207) 636-1785	Director
Mark Rousseau	(978) 374-3771	Director
Dennis Roberge	(207) 850-1588	Director
Jaime Fajardo	(207) 252-3215	Director

50 Ways to Love Your Lake...

Planting & Landscaping

1. **Practice natural yard care.** Build healthy soil. Use the right plant for your site. Water the right amount. Think twice before using pesticides. Practice natural lawn care.
2. **Go Native.** Native Plants are adapted to our climate and thrive with little maintenance, fertilizer and water.
3. **Plant a buffer** between your lawn and your lake.
4. **Landscaping to slow rainwater runoff** between your house and the lake, making it easier for water to soak into the ground.
5. **Plant Trees and Shrubs** on your property in places that allow them to frame your view of the water, rather than obstruct it, even when they have reached mature size.
6. **Plant extra shoreline plants for critters.** Beavers, otters and muskrats find willows and dogwoods tasty treats and good for building.
7. **Garden to benefit nature.** Create a wildlife sanctuary in your backyard. Place emergent plants on a small part of your beach. Plant decorative, non-native aquatic plants in a separate water feature, NOT along your shore line.
8. **Reduce or eliminate pesticides or herbicides.** Gardening chemicals end up in the lake in measurable amounts. Pesticides also kill good bugs; can poison birds and fish; and should be used sparingly around children and pets.
9. **Use organic, slow-release fertilizers on your lawn** - or none at all! Conventional fertilizers and weed-and-feed type products are released all at once and end up mostly in the lake. Use phosphorus-free or slow-release natural fertilizers on your lawn area.

10. **Shrink your lawn.** Less Lawn = less maintenance, mowing, watering, fertilizing, money and more rain soaking into the ground instead of running off into the lake. Geese love large lawns. Reduce your lawn, reduce your fowl visitors.
11. **Replace concrete and asphalt.** With permeable alternatives. Rather than letting water flow off your driveway, walkways and outdoor living spaces. Check out alternatives that let rain soak in like “grasscrete” gravel, pavers, or other surfaces.
12. **Leave large trees and shrubs** on your property to create wildlife habitat and shade, especially over the water.
13. **Keep your shore line natural.** Bulkheads and artificially sandy beaches can destroy critical habitat for fish, cause erosion and add toxins to the lake.

Weeds & Troubleshooting

14. **Learn to identify the noxious weeds on your lake.** Check for noxious weeds, such as Eurasian milfoil, fragrant water lily, Brazilian elodea, purple loosestrife and yellow flag iris. Learn what you can do to control and eradicate them before it becomes a problem and who to notify if it does.
15. **Pull up or cut lily pads.** Fragrant water lily (pink or white flowers) is a noxious weed. If uncontrolled, it can overcome small lakes. But don't confuse it with the native yellow water lily which is beneficial.

16. **Check boat trailers for noxious weeds.** Boats can carry aquatic weed fragments from lake to lake, creating infestations. Wash boats and trailers thoroughly between use at different lakes
17. **Don't ever dump aquarium contents, fish or amphibious pets in the lake.** These plants and animals can create serious negative impacts to lake ecology. Love the fact that your lake is not a bathtub or swimming pool.

Wildlife & Habitat

18. **Discourage geese—shrink your lawn.** Goose poop, in excess, can negatively affect water quality. Reduce the wide open spaces they love so much by replacing grass with taller plants.
19. **Leave fallen trees in the lake and on the shoreline.** If not a threat to safety, they provide food and shelter for native fish, amphibians and birds.
20. **Don't feed the ducks.** Bread isn't good for ducks, they can transmit disease, and excess poop can contribute to water quality problems
21. **Leave beaver dams alone.** Or find out how you can legally modify them. Alert authorities if beavers are altering your lake level. Improperly removing dams can cause major flooding damage downstream and beavers will likely return to build again using more trees.
22. **Put up wood duck boxes.** They can substitute for the nests ducks usually make in large trees, which are disappearing from lake shores.

23. **Let the birds have some fish.** When your lake is stocked and is suddenly visited by a hundred cormorants, they're just following the food and soon they'll be gone.
24. **Put up bat boxes.** Bats eat pounds of insects every night—that's serious relief from mosquitoes!
25. **Love the fact that your lake is not a bathtub or swimming pool.** Abundant and varied native plants are fun to explore and good for the wildlife you share this ecosystem with.

Community Activism

26. **Join or form a lake association.** Mousam Lake Region Association encompasses neighbors from Mousam Lake and Goose Pond.
27. **Attend public meetings.** Stay informed about what's happening in your area. Ask questions about how projects and development will impact you and the lake.
28. **Talk to your neighbors.** Caring and sharing about your lake is something you probably have in common. Take a new neighbor on a lake tour.
29. **Create a "Welcome Packet" for New Neighbors.** Many newcomers to lakeside living would welcome information about how to protect water quality and the environment.
30. **Organize a public meeting .** Invite experts to your lake group meetings to discuss topics of interest or attend a public meeting. You'll learn what is happening in your watershed and how it affects you.
31. **Keep hazardous waste out of the lake.** Organize a neighborhood trip to the Hazardous Waste mobile. Check our car for oil leaks. Don't dump anything down storm drains or ditches.
32. **Create wildlife corridors.** Work with your neighbors and community to organize and plan landscaping projects together to create "wildlife corridors" between properties, the lake and forested areas away from the water. This gives critters somewhere to go besides your yard or patio.
33. **Be a zebra mussel monitor** join the volunteer Zebra Mussel Monitoring Project and be part of the early warning system for these tiny Asian invaders that can cause damage to water structures and native ecosystems.
34. **Communicate with your elected officials.** Let them know what you love about your lake, what issues residents face and be sure to vote.
35. **Research the history of your lake.** In a library, local agency or Web—from facts and photos to legends and lore—you'll be amazed at what you find.

Maintenance

36. **Pick up trash around the lake.** Organize a community, clean up day to remove litter and illegal dumps in the neighborhood that might impact lake water quality.
37. **Clean up after your pets promptly.** Pet waste can contribute significant fecal contamination to your lake, even if its just from rain or sprinklers washing over it.
38. **Maintain your septic system.** Failed septic systems can cause significant water quality problems. Get regular inspections by professionals.

39. **Clean up your yard.** Old equipment, machinery or debris lying around can leach contaminants into the soil, impacting lake water quality.
40. **Keep a lid on it.** Securing your trashcan lid will prevent litter from accidentally being blown into the lake on windy days.
41. **Monitor public access points.** Report vandalism, destruction or maintenance needs to the city, county or state agency responsible for the right of way.
42. **Manage domestic livestock mature.** Get assistance in developing management plans to protect water quality.

Around the House

43. **Use non-toxic dock preservatives.** Avoid harming water and the critters in it, while protecting your dock. Research and choose alternative environmentally friendly maintenance materials before treating.
44. **Wash your car at a car wash.** Washing it in your driveway sends harmful car oil and residue right into your lake and yard.
45. **Install a rain barrel.** Collecting water from your rain gutters is a great source for watering your yard and reduces utility bills.
46. **Take a canoe or row boat.** Good exercise and you're quiet and closer to the water, so you might see a river otter up close.
47. **Don't drive golf balls (or cars!) into the lake.** Golf balls in a lake are trash and can harm fish and other critters.
48. **Don't shoot fireworks into the lake.** They contain chemicals.
49. **Go for a quiet, moonlight paddle** in a canoe. You'll see a whole new side of your lake.
50. **Enjoy the beauty.** It's what makes the other 49 things worth doing!

Going Retro, from MLRA Newsletter published in spring of 1987...

“The winter was mind boggler---very deep snow and many tree branches down. The camp inspections were completed and, thanks to our almost 100% correct listing of members’ winter addresses and telephone numbers, we were able to cooperate with the sheriff’s department in the notification of property owners about damage.”

Members let’s hope the winter 2013-2014 isn’t as bad 1987, but reading this made us wonder, does the MLRA have your current contact information? Please email us with any updates to: **general@mousamlake.org** .

If you are interested in submitting a historical article for future newsletters email:

chrisleupold@comcast.net

Look for the Spring Newsletter in April 2014!

**MOUSAM LAKE REGION
ASSOCIATION**

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