



BELGRADE REGIONAL CONSERVATION ALLIANCE



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



Funded by a National Science Foundation EPSCoR grant, the BRCA is collaborating with

Colby College, the University of Maine at Farmington, and the Maine Congress of Lake Associations (COLA) in the Belgrade Lakes Watershed Sustainability Project. Faculty from the Colby Departments of Chemistry, Geology, Biology; the Environmental Studies Program; and the Science, Technology, and Society Program are collaborating with the BRCA, COLA and with faculty at the University of Maine at Farmington to form interdisciplinary teams with stakeholder participation to understand the impact of landscape and lake-ecosystem changes in the development Belgrade Lakes region will be used as a model because it provides a unique laboratory to understand the complex dynamics between environmental, biogeochemical, and socio-economic systems. We will explore how "resilient" (i.e., sustainable) the Belgrade Lakes system is to disturbance and change. For example, what is the current capacity of the system to assimilate nutrients before crossing a threshold into another regime that has a different identity (i.e., oligotrophic vs. eutrophic lakes)? What are the demographic, political, and economic drivers (e.g, land prices, taxes, population density, tourism, infrastructure development, zoning policies) that can positively or negatively influence the resilience of the system or the timing of the "tipping points"?

Maine's Sustainability Solutions Partners



How will we know when a tipping point has been reached? Conversely, how do feedbacks in the ecological relationships within the system influence the socio-economic system? Data will be gathered and used to develop models to improve understanding, prediction, and management of past, present and future changes in this and other lake regions of Maine. Results from the study can be scaled to other interconnected freshwater systems. A K-12 outreach program will raise awareness and communicate these results through detailed classroom curricula and hands-on student activities. This grant will help us learn lessons that will enable us to better protect this region that we all love. For more information, visit <http://web.colby.edu/epscor>



Photo (left): One of two Southern Flying Squirrels that were rudely awakened from their mid-day nap in a wood duck box by the "Trees on Skis" group.

Photo (right): The intrepid group of skiers that learned about winter tree ID during "Trees on Skis."



(Trip leader, Warren Balgooyen, Mike and Margaret Pietrak, Ed Bres, David and Saskia Grody, and Reen Maslak.)

President's Column: Sustainable Culverts?

Why do culverts matter? Culverts move water, which is great, but sometimes they block fish from swimming up or down stream. Which is not great. When they block fish, the fish can't get to habitat, they can't spawn or get to cold water, or provide food for some waiting predator fish or bird. Why mention culverts? The opening article of this newsletter is about the new relationship with Colby and it talks about "sustainability". Culverts are a solution to storm water management that has unintended consequences. The way that most culverts are built today is not sustainable from a fish ecology perspective. The State of Maine DEP and legislature are considering changes that will make culverts less likely to damage fish and other aquatic organisms. I mention this not to get you to support the "culvert bill", or to think about culverts, but to give an example about sustainability that most people do not think about until it is brought to their attention.



Photo (above): Fish Passage Culvert which is fish friendly

I often say that I was "numb" about things having to do with conservation, until I got invited to be treasurer of BRCA 10 years ago. During this time, I've learned something about conservation. The sustainability project is all about unintended consequences, learning what they are, and figuring out how to make some changes that will lead to better outcomes. There is no end to the process of getting it right. We're excited about our partnership with Colby, and see this project as helping us learn more about water quality in the Belgrades and the change we need to make to move us in the right direction.

- Charlie Baeder

Photo (left): Perched culvert which is not fish friendly

Executive Director's Column

Lots of exciting things going on at BRCA these days! We are partnering with Colby College on the Belgrade Lakes Sustainability Project trying to better understand our lakes and communicate with stakeholders and students to ensure we can protect our lakes for future generations. We are partnering with DEP and Maine COLA to help improve the LakeSmart Program and inspire greater participation by shorefront property owners from all our lakes in this important program. We are partnering with the Belgrade Lakes Association (BLA) on "Docks to Doorways" and helping to develop plans for a new conservation resource center that will enable us to demonstrate key best management practices (BMPs) and help watershed residents learn how to "do things right" and make conservation as important a tradition as the mail boat. Our Education and Outreach Committee has been sponsoring events all winter such as "Trees on Skis," winter birding and small animal tracking, and snowshoe stomps under the full moon on some of our trails. They are gearing up for a whole new series of events for

the summer. Please check our web site regularly for updates. We are planning Conservation Corps projects, hiring Courtesy Boat Inspectors, and planning for Invasive Plant Patrols. Spring is just around the corner and we will be in the middle of our busy summer season before we know it.

Our Kennebec Highlands Phase III Project recently received a generous gift of \$50,000 from the Bafflin Foundation, which administers the Estate of Lois Orswell, a generous supporter of both the arts and the environment. We still need YOUR help however. Please call me or log in to our web site to see how you can help protect important parts of the landscape before it is too late. With the recent gains in the stock market, perhaps you have some appreciated stock in your portfolio. Donating it to BRCA would allow you a charitable deduction for the full value while eliminating any potential capital gains tax- a double benefit!

See back page for the Kennebec Highlands Phase III Capital Campaign update

We are still continuing to try to expand our membership and encourage more volunteers to become involved in our programs. Margaret Pietrak's Education and Outreach Committee is creating many opportunities to come out and meet some of your fellow members while enjoying the outdoors and maybe even learning something in the process. 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 members. 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. 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

Winter Programs 2010: Guided Recreation

Programs free, pre-registration required, please call BRCA.

This year we are planning to expand our outings into the winter months. The following activities are in the works to be scheduled at least once beginning in January:

- XC Skiing
- Ecology Scavenger Hunt
- Winter Hiking
- Snowshoeing
- Winter Bud I.D.
- Map and Compass for kids
- Winter Bird Watching/Small Animal Tracking

Keep an eye on your email and the website for upcoming dates!!

In an effort to reach more people with an understanding that our pre-determined schedule may not always match yours, we are extending an invitation to get a group of friends together (minimum 6 people) and give us a call! We'd be happy to try to arrange for someone from BRCA to lead your group! Just give us a week's notice, please.

Photo: Hikers Mel Croft and Maureen Maslak on the BRCA Guided Hike on The Mountain with guide, Saskia Grody, on February 10th, 2010.



Saturday, March 6th, 10 a.m. Location TBA	Snow Shoe Trip	Visit nature at its winter's best on snow shoes. Guide TBA. Easy -moderate walk on snow shoes.
Tuesday, March 9th, 10 a.m. Location TBA	Cross-country Ski Trip	Visit nature at its winter's best on cross-country skis with Sarah Zazzaro. Easy-moderate ski.
Saturday, March 20th, 10 a.m. Watson Pond Rd, Rome	Snow Shoe Trip	Visit nature at its winter's best on snow shoes. Location to meet at the Round Top trailhead parking lot on Watson Pond Road in Rome. Guide TBA. Moderate walk on snow shoes.
Saturday, April 3rd, 10 a.m. Wishing Well Farm, Norridgewock	Maple Sugar Tour	Visit the Wishing Well Farm and see native trees sugaring with Warren Balgooyen. Call for directions, easy nature walk.

Announcing: Kennebec Highlands Summer Hiking and Fitness Club

What: This is a summer hiking club for adults. This program will only run if there are at least 10 participants signed up.

Why: The new 2010 Kennebec Highlands Hiking Club is a way to enjoy nature in its summer glory, improve your health/fitness, revitalize your sense of team spirit, see the lands and lakes BRCA protects, and contribute to its further conservation.

When: Participants will meet twice a month (June through September) to do their hikes on a weekday.

How: Each participant will be asked to contribute \$12 for every month which they participate. All proceeds will go towards funding BRCA education and outreach programs.

Sign up: Follow this link www.surveymonkey.com/s/TVGT9MT to complete a survey that will act as your sign up sheet. Or call 495-6039 and ask for Sarah.

Who: There will be two groups.

The **Recreation Hiker's Group** will be a group of everyday to experienced hikers, in other words, you have some experience and feel you are in shape enough to complete hikes of 1 to 4 miles without any extreme discomfort. Hikes through the months will be a tour of available hikes in and around the Kennebec Highlands.

The **Healthy Start Hiker's Group** will be a group that will be working to get in shape, starting from limited to no experience in hiking or haven't hiked in a while, in other words, you either have little/no experience or feel you cannot complete a 1 to 4 mile hike at an enjoyable comfort level. These participants will work with the Hiking Instructor (Sarah Zazzaro) to formulate a plan based on individual goals (for example: hiking a particular trail or going a particular distance) and current fitness level. The individualized plan will detail walks to be done in between meetings in order to improve fitness.

Conservation Corps - You may want to take advantage of the Conservation Corps' free labor for erosion control on your property if....



- ...you have more grass than other vegetation in your yard
- ...your shoreline is eroding (you noticed loss of soil, undercutting, exposed roots)
- ...your driveway goes downhill towards the lake
- ...you have soil displacement under roof driplines
- ...you have spots of bare soil in your yard
- ...you have a path that goes downhill to the lake
- ...you want to know what you can do to improve the water quality of the lakes

Bottom line:

- Phosphorous is in soil, when storm water carries soil (erosion) it gets into our lakes decreasing water quality and increasing the chance and number of algal blooms and Gloeotrichia.
- The BRCA Conservation Corps works with homeowners, free of charge, to decrease erosion and filter storm water carrying phosphorous on your property.

A sample project:



For more information:

E-mail brcacc@gwi.net or call 495-6039 and ask for Sarah Zazzaro, Conservation Corps Director

Job Openings

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

-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
-You want to have a fun summer working with other people your age

To request an application email brcacc@gwi.net or call 495-6039 and ask for Sarah Zazzaro Conservation Corps Director

Milfoil 2010: Courtesy Boat Inspection Program

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

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

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?

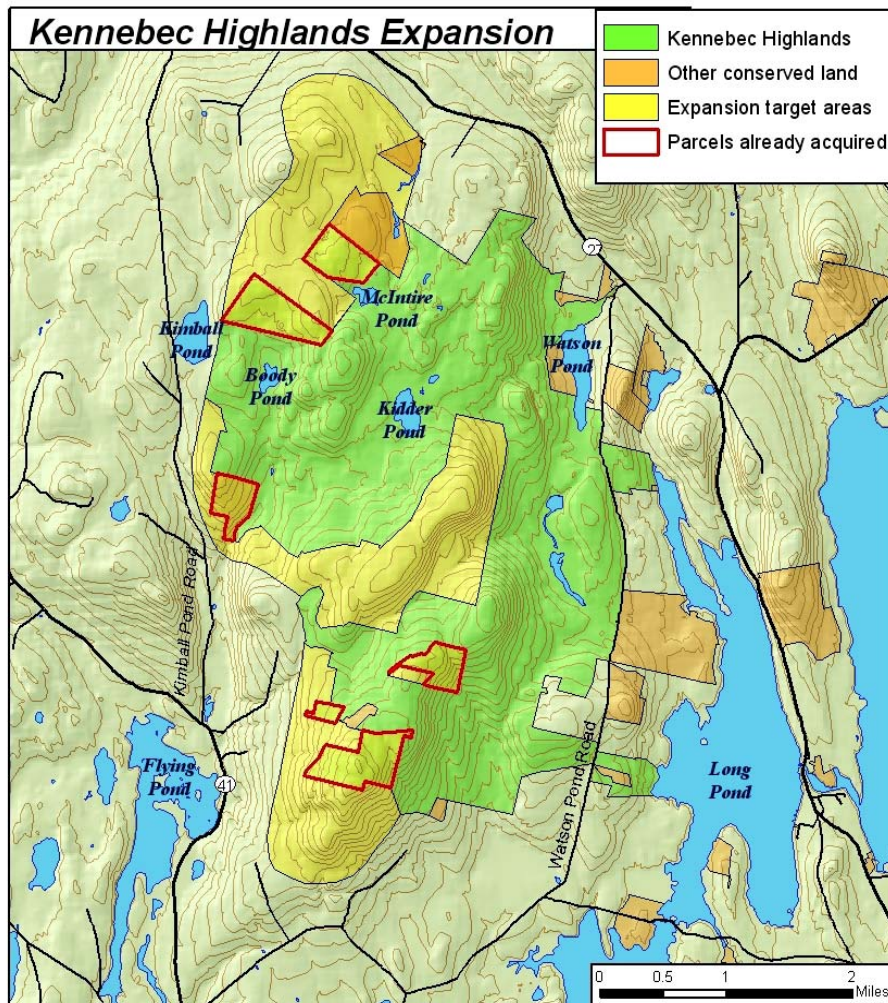
- \$7.50 /hour
- Training provided
- Free T-shirts provided
- Get Community Service Credit

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 brcacc@gwi.net ~ Please apply by April 16th Page 4

Thank you to Our Kennebec Highlands Project Phase III Donors

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AQUAFEST

July 9-10, 2010

Antique Wooden Boat Show Dinner On Golden Pond and FAMILY FESTIVAL

Belgrade Lakes, Maine

AQUAFEST is a celebration to raise funds for Milfoil control, the Belgrade Conservation Corps, and numerous watershed-wide programs to improve water quality.

Hosted by the BRCA Lake Trust:

East Pond Association, McGrath Pond/Salmon Lake Association, Messalonskee Lake Association, Belgrade Lakes Association, North Pond Association, and Belgrade Conservation Corps

DINNER ON GOLDEN POND WITH AUTHOR ERNEST THOMPSON & ANTIQUE WOODEN BOAT SHOW



Photo: Jack Schultz's boat.

Friday, July 9th, 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm

The Village Inn, Belgrade Lakes

Tickets: \$100 per person

Showcase Sponsors:
Scott and Lauren
Bolduc

On Golden Pond wowed audiences by depicting a remote place and time when a loon's call signaled, "We're home again!" and wooden boats ruled the waves. Join us for an unforgettable event that brings rare antique wooden boats from across Maine together with Ernest Thompson, author of the beloved classic, for an evening of fine dining and living history on the *real* Golden Pond. Space is very limited, reserve now by calling 207-495-6039 or brca@gwi.net

FAMILY FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, JULY 10th:
ALL DAY

Belgrade Community Center for All Seasons (CFAS), Belgrade

KID'S CORNER CHALLENGE
(free) Games, activities and learning adventures for kids of all ages from 9 am to 4 pm

- Rides on the good ship Melinda Ann
- T-shirt painting
- Fishing for Tots
- Rainy Day Relay
- Musical Milfoil
- Stream and Lake Critters
- Invasive Fish Game
- Native Fish and Animals
- Dragonfly Survey
- Watershed Model
- Letterboxing and more!

Sponsor:
North Pond Association

FUN RUN, WALK, CRAWL, OR CREEP
Begins at 11 am from the CFAS around the Flower Triangle and back. All ages. FREE with 5 pledges, or \$5 per person, \$10 per family. Registration required at the Race Station by 10:45 am on 7/10/10. Well-behaved dogs may participate without charge.

BARBECUE LUNCH AT NOON
12 noon to 1 pm on the Center grounds
\$5 per person, Kids 3 and under FREE!
First come ~ first served!
Pay at the Lunch Station.

FAMILY SWIM (free) 1 pm to 3 pm at the Center Beach. Life guard on duty; bring your own towels!

Various locations in Belgrade Lakes Village, Rte. 27, Belgrade, Maine

ART and CRAFT SALE
See our local artisans work on display.

BELGRADE FARMER'S MARKET
See our local goods on display.

CANOE/KAYAK RACE
2 pm at the Belgrade Town Beach, Lakeshore Drive (behind the Sunset Grille)
\$10 entry fee. Registration required.

SAILBOAT RACE
Time and location, TBA.
\$10 entry fee. Registration required.

SEA PLANE RIDES
Description, location TBA.

Visit www.belgradelakes.org for more.. Page 6

This winter the BRCA Education and Outreach Committee scheduled outings to encourage folks to get outside and enjoy the land and waters of the region, in turn hopefully soaking up appreciation and spreading the word of the importance of our lakes and conservation lands.

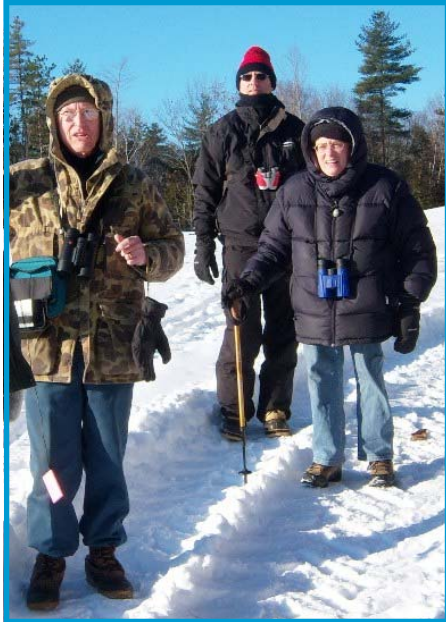


Photo: Bird watchers, Mel Croft and Linda Kallin, on the BRCA Guided Bird Tour with guide, Don Mairs, Jan 9th.

Well, seven stalwart birders joined Bob Lewis and me at 0800 hours on 9 January for a morning's winter birding. We started directly from our meeting place (the Belgrade Community Center for All Seasons), walking down to the lake and finding Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Red-breasted and White-breasted nuthatches and Downy Woodpeckers there. Our next stop was at the Belgrade Lakes golf course where, by prior arrangement, we were able to park off the road and tramp down a tractor trail to find Common Ravens, Blue Jays, and Hairy Woodpecker. From there, we ventured to the foot of Messalonskee Lake in Oakland, where we had Mallards, Black Ducks, a magnificent adult Bald Eagle, and a lively flock of House Sparrows. Depending on one's perspective, the highlight of the trip occurred there when we witnessed an amazing "wild kingdom" episode of a male Northern Cardinal being chased and attacked by a very determined Northern Shrike! The contest was briefly interrupted at one point by a Herring Gull which would gladly have settled for either or both of the

combatants as a lunch item. Anyway, the fracas continued for probably five minutes, and did not end well for the cardinal, an outcome not met with universal enthusiasm by the trip participants. Still, an awesome encounter, and a good reminder that in the outdoors, to use an old friend's book title, "Everybody's Somebody's Lunch!". So, then we headed out to Fort Halifax in Winslow, where we found Common Goldeneyes, and to our wrap-up at the Two-Penny Bridge in Waterville, which featured more Goldeneyes and a nice male Common Merganser. On the way back to Belgrade, Bob and I and our two passengers drove through the Colby campus, where we discovered about a hundred Cedar Waxwings and at least 3 Bohemian Waxwings, the latter down from northern Canada. Our species list wasn't exceptional (22 species in all, counting the waxwings, I think), but good weather, good company, and good birds combined to produce another excellent winter day outdoors. Thanks for the opportunity to participate in a fun BRCA event!

Best, Don Mairs

Safety on the Ice In Our Back Yard: Going Out On the Ice?

Go safely! If you are headed out to go skating, ice fishing, or ice boating, check first to be sure the ice is safe. As of mid December, The Maine Warden Service has been urging people not to venture out onto any ice on Maine waterways. The state's lakes and ponds may appear to be frozen over, but safe ice conditions cannot be assumed. So before you go out - check the ice thickness. Although many factors can cause ice to be unsafe, there are some guidelines for the recommended thickness of new, clear, solid ice: 4" of new clear ice is the minimum thickness for travel on foot; 5" is the minimum for snowmobiles and ATVs; and 8"- 12" is recommended for cars or small trucks. You can test the thickness yourself using an ice chisel, ice auger or even a cordless 1/4 inch drill with a long bit. You can also check with the locals - at a resort or bait shop— about known thin ice areas. Also, don't drive on ice unless you have to. If you must drive a vehicle, be prepared to leave

it in a hurry- keep windows down, unbuckle your seat belt and discuss a simple emergency plan of action with your passengers. **What if a companion falls through thin ice?** Keep calm and think out a solution. Don't run up to the hole. You'll probably break through and then there will be two victims. Use an item on shore to throw or extend to the victim to pull them out of the water such as jumper cables or skis, or push a boat ahead of you. If you can't rescue the victim immediately, call 911. Get medical assistance for the victim after a rescue. People who are subjected to cold water immersion but seem fine after being rescued can suffer a potentially fatal condition called "after drop" which occurs when cold blood that is pooled in the body's extremities starts to circulate again as the victim starts to re-warm. **What if YOU fall in?** Try not to panic. Instead, remain calm and turn toward the direction you came from. Place your hands and arms on the unbroken

surface of the ice. Work forward on the ice by kicking your feet. If the ice breaks, maintain your position and slide forward again. Once you are lying on the ice, don't stand. Instead, roll away from the hole. That will spread out your weight until you are on solid ice. This sounds much easier to do than it really is. The best advice is don't put yourself into needless danger by venturing out too soon or too late in the season. Each year at least a few vehicles go through the ice on Maine's lakes and ponds. Remember, those same lakes and ponds that we enjoy can easily become contaminated by submerged engines that release gasoline, battery acid and motor oil.

Thanks to the Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources for this information. *In Our Back Yard* is a column developed by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.



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in full color with active
hyperlinks visit our website

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