

SPRING 2024

GPA Newsletter



News from the Georges Pond Association

GPA Progress Report 2018-2023

At the annual University of Maine Sustainability and Water Conference, held this year in Augusta on March 28, GPA president John Eliasberg gave a presentation on communication and community-building as essential elements in the continuing effort to conserve Maine lakes.

As the Conference website explains, "The Maine Sustainability and Water Conference provides an annual forum where professionals, researchers, consultants, citizens, students, regulators, and planners gather to exchange information and present new findings on sustainability and water resource issues in Maine."

Launched in 1994 by UMaine's Senator George J. Mitchell Center with a primary focus on the future of Maine's water resources, the conference has grown to incorporate topics related to many of the sustainability challenges facing Maine, including issues related to climate change, energy futures, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism, and municipal planning. The conference attracts a broad audience of close to 400 participants from across the state."

In reviewing some highlights of the GPA's successful efforts to protect Georges Pond's water quality, John listed our collective accomplishments from 2018 to 2023:

- Ten-year Watershed Based Management Plan (WBMP)
- 88 LakeSmart surveys in six years
- 2020 and 2021 aluminum treatments
- Two 319 grants over five years
- Established a septic inspection program
- Enhanced water monitoring
- Water clarity improved from 2 feet (2018) to over 25 feet (2023)



Things you can do now!

After sharing the GPA's mantra that "The greatest threat to our Pond is the belief that someone else will save it," John identified some very practical and immediate ways that each and all of us can make a difference: "Things you can do now!"

Thanks, John, for representing the GPA at the conference -- and for your ongoing advocacy for Maine lakes.

Schedule a LakeSmart Visit

- Or complete existing recommendations

Sign up for a cost-share grant

- Sign up for a free site visit
- Complete existing site plans

Septic Systems

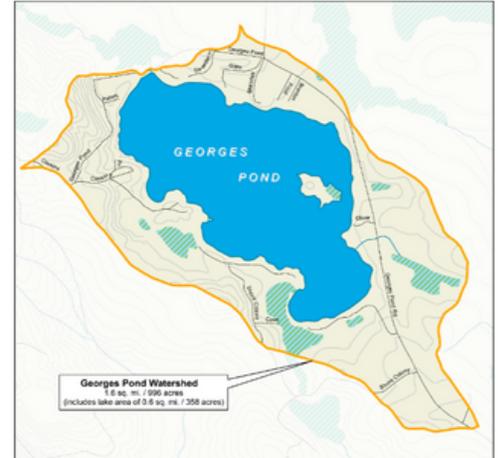
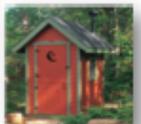
- Replace pre-1974 septic systems and cesspools!
- Pump every 2-5 years

Roads

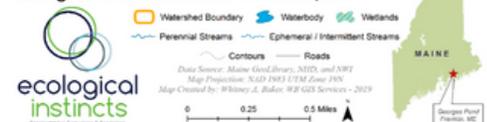
- Participate in grant programs
- Keep gravel roads maintained

Support GPA

- Become a Member
- Join a Committee
- Participate in Projects
- Provide Financial Support



Georges Pond Watershed - Franklin, ME



ecological instincts

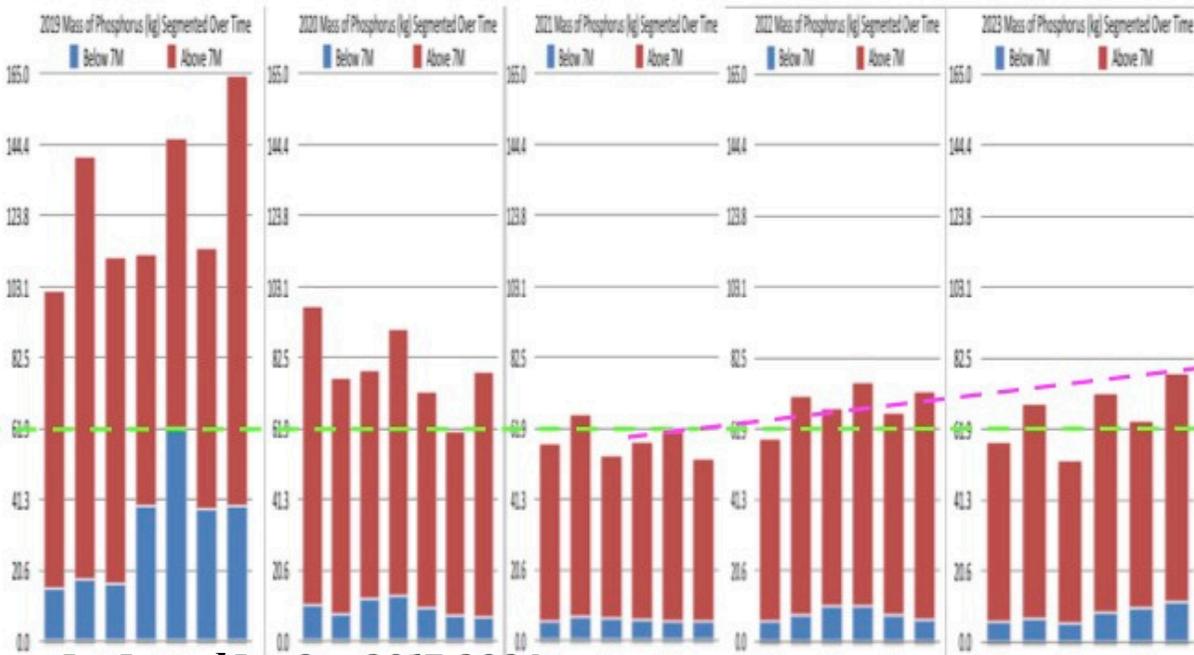
Data Source: Maine GeoLibrary, 2021, and NRI
Map Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Map Created by: Whitney J. Balon, WJ GIS Services - 2023

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING WITH THE POND?

REMEMBER THE ALGAE BLOOMS BACK WHEN?



WBMP Goal of 10 ppb (parts per billion) reached in 2021



Ice In and Ice Out 2017-2024

| Year (Winter starts) | Ice In | | Ice Out | # days Final to Out |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|---------|------------------------|
| | Initial | Final | | |
| 2017 | | 12/17/17 | 4/7/18 | 111 |
| 2018 | | 12/8/18 | 4/16/19 | 129 |
| 2019 | | 12/10/19 | 3/28/20 | 109 |
| 2020 | 12/20/20 | 1/20/21 | 3/31/21 | 70 |
| 2021 | 12/26/21 | 12/26/21 | 4/1/22 | 96 |
| 2022 | 1/9/23 | 1/25/23 | 4/8/23 | 73 |
| 2023 | 12/9/23 | 1/19/24 | 3/7/24 | 48 |
| Avg | | | | 91 |



Keith Herklotz' ice sail boat

LET'S BE CLEAR

Clean lakes are good for Maine's environment and economy

Maine's 6,000 lakes and ponds are a beloved feature of our state, providing beautiful landscapes, outdoor recreation opportunities and generations of memories "upta camp." Maine lakes are also a strong economic driver and are valued at \$14 billion per year, according to a new study from researchers at the University of Maine.



Time to Renew Your GPA Membership for 2024!

Help promote, protect, and preserve our beloved Georges Pond

From the Ellsworth American (March 13, 2024, B7):

*"As spring weather begins to emerge, **two bald eagles** enjoy early March sunshine on Georges Pond."*

Photo: Olivia Sinclair



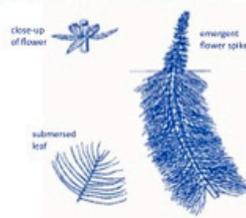
Maine's Most UNWANTED Aquatic Invasive Plants

Under Maine law, it is illegal to transport ANY aquatic plant on the outside of a vehicle. It is also illegal to sell, propagate, or introduce to Maine waters these aquatic invasive plants.

EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL*
*Myriophyllum spicatum*¹



VARIABLE-LEAF WATERMILFOIL*
*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*²



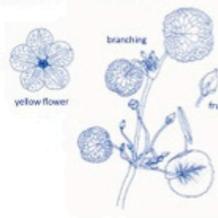
PARROT FEATHER*
*Myriophyllum aquaticum*¹



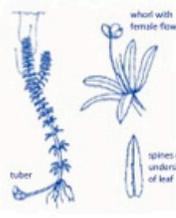
BRITTLE NAIAD
*Najas minor*³



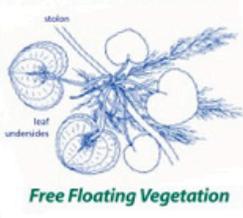
YELLOW FLOATING HEART
*Nymphoides peltata*²



HYDRILLA
*Hydrilla verticillata*²



EUROPEAN FROGBIT
*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*²



Free Floating Vegetation

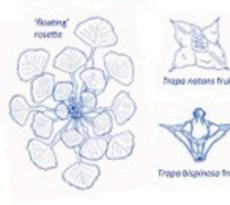
BRAZILIAN ELODEA
*Egeria densa*¹



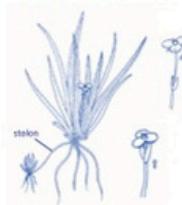
CURLY-LEAF PONDWEED
*Potamogeton crispus*¹



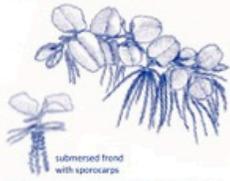
WATER CHESTNUT
Trapa species^{1,5}



WATER SOLDIER
*Stratiotes aloides*¹



GIANT SALVINIA
*Salvinia molesta*¹

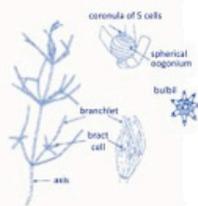


Free Floating Vegetation

FANWORT
*Cabomba species*¹



STARRY STONEWORT
*Nitellopsis obtusa*⁴



SWOLLEN BLADDERWORT
*Utricularia inflata*⁵



Free Floating Vegetation

* All non-native milfoils are considered invasive in the State of Maine.
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For assistance, please contact:
Lake Stewards of Maine (207) 783-7733 stewards@lakestewardsme.org
For additional assistance, please contact Maine DEP (207) 287-3901

LAKE STEWARDS OF MAINE
Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program
www.LakeStewardsOfMaine.org
www.LakesOfMaine.org
Original poster design by Portland Water District

Georges Pond Public Beach Renovation Nears Completion



Dawn Carter, Town of Franklin's Select Board chair, detailed in the Town's 2023-24 Annual Report that the renovation of the public beach is nearing completion. The project, **partially funded by the second 319 DEP grant secured by the GPA**, is "our opportunity," she explained, "to save and restore the beach," leave "something of value for the next generations," and "make it **a source of pride for Franklin.**" More good news is that "additional funding to maintain the beach will come from excise tax, primarily boat excise tax, that the town collects and not from property tax."

Thanks to Danny Grant and others who worked on the project, a beach retaining wall and granite steps have been installed. "**All of the rocks used in the wall and lining the road are all local**, mostly from blueberry fields. The granite steps and curbing were sawn by Taunton Bay Stone -- again local granite. Watching Wade Mowry of Dean Young's crew carefully place the boulders and steps and not hit Danny," Carter added, "was both scary and exciting."



COUSINS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Moving Stormwater Away from the Pond and Into the Woods.



Jeffrey Norment, project coordinator at the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District, worked alongside **Dean Young** on making **various improvements to Cousins Road**. In mid-December, Jeff reported: "We had 3.5" rain in about 12 hours and snow melt on mostly frozen ground. I've been getting calls all morning about project successes. Dean Young was one of the calls. He's proud of the grant projects he's worked on. He's called me three times this morning with **all good news.**"

In response, GPA president John Eliasberg emailed Jeff back, saying, "Thank you very much for the update. It looks to me like the Cousins Road project held up very well. I'm **amazed at the volume of water flowing through the culvert and into the woods**. So much better than down the road and into the lake. The road is really dry beyond the lower dip, which is just as it should be. I'm very glad that Dean is **proud of this work**, as both he and you should be."

SAME STORM, DIFFERENT RESULT

More upgrades needed on Bunkers Beach Road



Photos Chuck Dawes

Interested in Campfire Safety?

New laws regarding open burning now in effect



Looking forward to being outdoors and relaxing by a campfire? You're not alone. You're also in good company about always **keeping fire safety a priority**.

In October 2023 the Maine Forest Service defined **new laws for open burning**. Recreational campfires, including those within an outdoor fireplace, are allowed -- *without a burn permit* -- for fires with a ground circumference not exceeding three feet and with a fire height not exceeding three feet.

Which fires require a permit? Campfires larger than the stated limits or fires used to dispose of brush or debris. Regulations also prohibit any fire when the fire hazard level is high.

Because large or unattended fires are the primary cause of wildfires in Maine, abiding by these laws is **essential for safe campfire enjoyment and to protect the community**. It's also important to extinguish open fires carefully and keep water handy to put out escaping coals and sparks.

Burn permits are free of charge and available at maineburnpermit.com or from the Franklin Fire Department.



We owe a debt to those who keep an eye on the pond!

A big thank you goes to the **volunteers who monitor the pond water**. For years Brian Friedmann has led this effort, and in the last couple of years John and Ginger Eliasberg have aided Brian. Marvin Ellison and Frank Brooks have rushed water samples to Augusta for testing, and each year Marie Phero has led a **check for invasive water plants**, another factor in keeping the pond healthy.

The length of time the pond is totally ice locked impacts the likelihood of an algae bloom. Kate Connor, Steve McMullen, Molly O'Dea, Sharon Oliver, and Stacy White **volunteer to report** the dates that, from their various vantage points, they see **total ice-in and the start of ice-out**.

With or without a formal commitment, **most ponders who remain or visit off-season** are mindful of what's happening to their friends' and neighbors' properties and are happy to **inform the absent property owners if they see something amiss**.

There's **always someone watching -- in a good way**. Thank you, one and all.





Georges Pond Association
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