

# AROUND THE LAKE

NEWS FROM THE MERRYMEETING LAKE COMMUNITY

Brought to you by



## Merrymeeting Lake Has It All

***New Hiking and Snowmobile Trails Added, Thanks To Dedicated Volunteers***

*By Julie Gaynor*

At first glance, the best thing about Merrymeeting Lake is ... the lake. But one of the things that makes our lake so special is the hundreds of acres of recreational trails surrounding it. And, thanks to a core group of dedicated volunteers, there are now even more of those trails to enjoy, year-round.

If you only visit during the summer, you might not know about the winter wonderland that emerges between January and March. Thanks to the Powdermill Snowmobile Club, there are over 80 miles of snowmobile trails throughout New Durham, from the Rochester High School to Rt. 28 in Alton, Lake Winnepesaukee, the old Moose Mountain ski area and all around the lake itself.

Over the last year, new trails have been added and existing ones improved, giving snowmobilers

and hikers alike new access to Mt. Bet and Mt. Caverly, as well as an updated Camp Pride trail and improvements to the cabin on Birch Ridge. We spoke with trail master and lead volunteer Mike Gelinas to learn more about how lake residents and guests can enjoy these updates to the lake's outdoor recreation.

### **What have the biggest changes been to the trails around the lake?**

In terms of snowmobile trails, one of the biggest expansions this year was to the Camp Pride trail on the north side of the lake. The old Camp Pride trail was difficult and beginner riders would have trouble on it. Now it's a family trail system. It's almost all completely brand new, almost every inch of it was moved. And what's great is, we got a recreational trails grant from the NH Trails Bureau that paid for the bulk of it.

*Continued on page 4*

# Thoughts from the President

Each year as I reflect on the past year's accomplishments of the MMLA, I am excited for our progress and incredibly grateful to our members, the community and our conservation partners who continue to support our mission to preserve and protect the lake we love.

As a community, we are writing an amazing conservation story with a new chapter this year! We are in the enviable position of having undeveloped land that is ripe for conservation, coupled with a strong support from our community and generous landowners who are dedicated to our success.

In Chapter 1 we partnered with The Southeast Land Trust (SELT) and Moose Mountains Regional Greenways (MMRG) to create the 2,027-acre Birch Ridge Community Forest (BRCF).

In Chapter 2, we expanded BRCF by 643 acres with the addition of two more properties, and conserved Mt. Molly (a 500-acre gem) on the northwest shore.

Chapter 3 is here! SELT has announced the next phase of our "Keep Merrymeeting Clean" campaign with an exciting opportunity to ensure the future of Merrymeeting Lake by adding Mt. Bet and additional properties to our conservation portfolio.

When we began our conservation story just five years ago, only 4.9% of the land in our watershed was in conservation. We have expanded the acreage each year, and with the success of our new campaign we will be celebrating 49%--an incredible ten-fold increase in five very active conservation years!

Although conservation and water protection are the MMLA's primary mission, we have many other irons in the fire. Our dedicated Preserve & Protect Committee has launched a public safety initiative to place defibrillators at key locations around the lake and will also be offering informative and valuable educational opportunities this year to support lake friendly living.

Our energetic Events Committee is planning a season of fun activities for our members, bringing back our

well-received favorites and adding a new stargazing event. Our committees are a mix of board members and volunteers from around the lake, working together to help you have a wonderful summer and to foster our strong community spirit.

A heartfelt thank you to all of you who dedicate your time. You are appreciated. We're also sending a welcome call-out for additional volunteers, so please reach out if you're interested!

How can you support the MMLA? It's simple—become a member! Your membership is the **ONLY** source of income for many of our programs and is critical to our success. You'll read in this newsletter about the many valuable programs your membership dues support, including water quality testing, the Lake Host program and public safety initiatives.

We also provide regular communication to members about issues of interest to the lake community. I urge you to please renew your membership for 2023 or join as a new member at [mmlake.org](http://mmlake.org).

With appreciation of your support, and best wishes for an amazing summer!

Laurie Smith  
President, MMLA

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# Are You Ready for an Awesome Summer?!

*By Jen Seusing*

The MMLA Events Committee and Preserve & Protect Committee are excited to announce the jam-packed Summer of 2023 Merrymeeting Lake events. Mark your calendars now! New this year we will be offering raffles and giveaways for participation for all MMLA members in good standing! (Please remember to pay your dues!)

Visit the website for more information at [www.mmlake.org](http://www.mmlake.org)

## Summer of 2023 Merrymeeting Lake Events

- **June 3 (rain date June 4) - MMLA Roadside Clean-up!**  
We'll be gathering at the MMLA Meetinghouse (by Cove Cottages) at 8:30 AM for light refreshments, and to get our assignments along with free MML giveaways and sign in for participation raffles! Roadside clean-up will be 9:00 - 11:00 AM with a group photo at the end. More information to come!
- **July 9 - MMLA Annual Meeting**  
To be held at the MMLA Meetinghouse at 9:00 AM. Gather at 8:30 AM for light refreshments. Come to hear all the great things happening with our Merrymeeting Lake community including the latest preservation efforts by SELT to protect and conserve the watershed areas around the lake, and a presentation from the town on new septic regulations.
- **July 15 - MMLA's 3rd Annual Music on the Lake!**  
This event features Merrymeeting's very own talented musicians who will entertain us from their docks as we listen to their tunes from our boats. This event usually runs from 3:30 - 8:30 PM.
- **July 22 - Septic System Care and Maintenance Workshop**  
MMLA Meetinghouse, 9:00 -10:30 AM. Scott LaCroix (New Durham Building Inspector/Code Enforcement) will present info and answer questions regarding the town's new septic regulations.
- **July 29 - MMLA Annual Ice Cream Social**  
MMLA Meetinghouse, 2:00 - 4:00 PM. Held in conjunction with the generosity of Johnson's Restaurant. More to come!
- **August 5 - MMLA's Annual Boat Parade**  
This year's Chair, Chris Kowalski, has set the theme as Disney and Marvel Movies so get your creative brains going. Chris will be sending out more information as we near the date.
- **August 19 - Lake Friendly Landscaping Workshop**  
MMLA Meetinghouse 9:00 -10:30 AM.
- **August 19 - MMLA Lights Out Stargazing**  
NEW event! Please join us for our first-ever event, perfect for families and kids of all ages to appreciate the stunning night skies over our beautiful lake. Beginning at dusk. More information to come!

Mark your calendars for a jam-packed fun-filled 2023 summer of events sponsored by the

## Merrymeeting Lake Continued

On the other side of the lake, the trails surrounding Devil's Den have also been expanded, allowing access to Mt. Caverly and Mt. Bet. There are new parking lots on Marsh Hill Road and Chesley Road by the French cemetery for people who live in Alton. The new trail that we put in last year up to Caverly Mountain is a whole new trail that's more environmentally friendly and not as steep, with fewer water issues as in the past. SELT also opened hiking trails up Mt. Molly.

### **Can hikers access these new trails to Mt. Bet and Mt. Caverly?**

Yes, you can access them via the Class VI road into Devil's Den or the new parking lot at Marsh Hill Road. From up there, you have views out to Wolfeboro Bay and Winnepesaukee. At the top of Caverly Mountain there's a seating area in appreciation of Bill Norris, who used to take care of the trails. I'm a believer that if you can thank someone while they're still with us, you should, so we made that seating area in honor of Bill.

### **Can you tell us about the cabin at Birch Ridge?**

The cabin is accessible on the SELT trails, which you can get to from the parking area by the public beach and the SELT parking lot at the end of Birch Hill Road. It was originally built as a hunting cabin and it's been up there for 20-25 years. It's a great spot, but it needed some updates to be more usable. There was a loft that was unsafe, so we removed that, tightened the whole place up so not as much snow gets in and moved the doors for future handicapped access. It was \$16,000 worth of work. We had \$4K in cash donations from local residents, \$3K in in-kind donations (the lumber, a new stove), as well as hundreds of hours of volunteer time. The only thing left is the floor, which is about \$1,500. We're still looking for donations, so if anyone's interested, they can reach out to me.

### **What are some of your wish list projects?**

I'd love to connect the Devil's Den area with the rest of the lake trails at some point so snowmobilers won't have to cross the lake. We're working on it, but it's not possible today. I'd love to see some kind of restroom up at the cabin, and we're hoping that the trail to the cabin will be handicapped accessible soon,



*The Birch Ridge cabin is a favorite stopover spot for snowmobilers.*

which would also make it a much easier trail for the elderly to walk on.

### **Maintaining 80 miles of trails is a huge undertaking. How does it all get done?**

Powdermill Snowmobile Club has done 99% of the work on the snowmobile trails. It's a combination of club members, volunteers, and the funding comes from club dues and fundraising, as well as some grant money. In terms of Mt. Bet, I did that myself this year, but was able to use Merrymeeting Marina's equipment. Russ Weldon, who owns the marina, has done so much for the trails. Four years ago, you couldn't drive through the Class VI roads, and he put in so much time. We wouldn't have a lot of what we have today without him. We work well together. All my life I feel like I dragged people along on the trails and now I feel like I'm running after Russ to catch up. He's a ball of fire.

### **Do you have any plans of slowing down?**

Well, I'm retired, but I spend thousands of hours on the trails because it's how I entertain myself. I get the most pleasure when I see people using the trails. If someone wants to thank me, use them. And sure, I give the bulk of the time, but if you didn't have other people when you need them, nothing would get done. We have so many volunteers from the community, a core group of people from the lake who are always



there to help. I can't name them all or I know I'll forget someone. But we are always looking for more volunteers. You can find the Powdermill Snowmobile Club on Facebook. We announce when we need help on the trails. You can help us trim face whackers on the trails, even clean up rocks. People call picking up three rocks per day the "Mikey tax." I love it when people come up to me and say "I paid my Mikey tax today."

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In 2022, Mike was recognized by the NH Snowmobile Association as "Groomer of the Year" and received the "Chiefs Award" from the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development Bureau of Trails. Russ Weldon received the "2022 Snowmobile Business of the Year" Award from the NH Snowmobile Association.

To find hiking trails around the lake, download the latest Birch Ridge Community Forest trail map at [www.seltnh.org/seltlands/birchridge](http://www.seltnh.org/seltlands/birchridge). As a reminder, other than snowmobiles, there is no motorized vehicle access on the trails. That includes no ATVs

and no dirt bikes. There are cameras throughout the trail system and offenders will (and have) received tickets.

To get involved, please visit the Powdermill Snowmobile Club's Facebook page or email Mike Gelinas at [mikegelinas8@gmail.com](mailto:mikegelinas8@gmail.com)



*Russ and Mike were both honored by the NH Snowmobile Association.*

## Watershed Wisdom from the P&P Committee

*By Nancy Bryant*

The MMLA Preserve and Protect (P&P) Committee works to preserve and protect Merrymeeting Lake and its watershed by educating the lake community to be good lake stewards. P&P Committee Co-Chairs Brad Smith ([royalb@tds.net](mailto:royalb@tds.net)) and Nancy Bryant ([bryantnab@yahoo.com](mailto:bryantnab@yahoo.com)) would like to invite more MMLA members to join this important committee. It's a great way to meet people, learn about the lake and its mountains, and share that watershed wisdom.

Merrymeeting depends on all of us to keep it clean. Here are a couple quick tips:

- Pump out your septic system regularly and keep the leach field clear of trees.
- Don't use fertilizer or pesticides (not even organic) on your lawn.
- Direct runoff water (rainwater flowing over your property) away from the lake.
- Plant native shrubs, such as blueberry bushes, along your shoreline.
- Never put sand, soil, leaves, or grass clippings in the lake.

For more tips, please refer to our "20 Ways to Protect MML" manual found on the MMLA website.

Please attend our P&P Workshops this summer at the MMLA Meeting House at Cove Cottages:

- Saturday, July 22, 9:00 to 10:30 AM "Septic System Care and Maintenance"
- Saturday, August 19, 9:00 to 10:30 AM "Lake-Friendly Landscaping"

# Defibrillator Update

## ***Continuing to Make our Community a Safer Place to Live***

*By Brad Smith*

One of the best parts of living or vacationing at Merrymeeting Lake is the incredible sense of community that we have here. Whether it's helping a neighbor plow their driveway, looking after their place while they're away or just enjoying a cocktail or boat ride to catch up, we look out for each other. Because of that neighborly outlook, when the idea of placing public access defibrillators around the lake was raised at last year's annual Merrymeeting Lake Association meeting, it was met with overwhelming enthusiasm and pledged support.

If you haven't heard about this project, we have launched a fundraising initiative to fund 7 or 8 defibrillator units to be placed at various locations around the lake, available to be used by all. We are making great progress and we will begin seeing some units going up in places around the lake by the summer. This is great news!

Many of us witnessed how early defibrillation can save a life while watching a nationally broadcast NFL game last fall. We live in such a great place but it's remoteness has its risks. This program will place valuable resources in our community. Reducing the time between a cardiac arrest and access to defibrillation will increase the chance of survival.



Please consider donating to this project if you can. Thank you to all that have generously contributed already. You can find a link to make a donation on the [MMLAKE.ORG](http://MMLAKE.ORG) website under the "Membership and Donations" tab.

We need more donations to reach our goal of eight defibrillator units placed strategically around the lake. Each unit with protective cabinet costs approximately \$1,500 dollars. The fund will be maintained for upkeep and expendable items so we can keep these units protecting us for many years to come. Help us achieve our goal! Thank you.

For more information, please reach out via email to Brad Smith at [royalb@tds.net](mailto:royalb@tds.net).

## ***Have You Seen the Merrymeeting Moose?***

If you were at the lake this fall and winter, you might have spotted a sweet young moose making the rounds, mostly on South Shore Road. Many of us were treated to visits from "Lucy the Moosey" and wondered why she was out on her own?

During mating season, when the bulls make their presence known, the juveniles are temporarily separated from their mother.

But no need to worry! After several weeks Lucy was no longer visiting and we expect she safely reunited with her mother in the Birch Ridge Community Forest!



# Certifying Septic Systems

This year, New Durham passed an ordinance that applies to septic systems located within 250 feet of Merrymeeting Lake and any ponds in town.

The ordinance requires that septic systems that do not already have design approval on file with the NH Department of Environmental Services obtain certification with the town. The goal of the ordinance is to protect water quality. Bacteria from a leaking septic system can contaminate groundwater, making it unsafe for drinking or contaminate surface water, making it unsafe for swimming. Failing septic systems can also pollute waterways with nutrients that feed algal blooms and excess plant growth.

New Durham's Health Officer Scott LaCroix is enforcing this septic system ordinance. He will be at the MMLA Annual Meeting to describe the certification program.

He will also be the principal speaker at the MMLA "Septic System Care and Maintenance Workshop" on Saturday, July 22 from 9:00 to 10:30 AM at the MMLA Meetinghouse at Cove Cottages.

You can find the new septic system ordinance on the New Durham website ([www.newdurhamnh.us](http://www.newdurhamnh.us)). On the home page, click on "Ordinances/Policies," scroll down and click on "Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Systems."

## Blue Green Algae Blooms

*By Nancy Bryant*

Blue green algae are microscopic plants that are naturally present in freshwater lakes and rivers. Blue green algae are also referred to as "cyanobacteria" as scientists consider them to have attributes of both plants and bacteria. When blue green algae grow rapidly or "bloom" they mass together and appear like bluish-green scum or bluish-green paint in the water. During a bloom, blue green algae will sometimes produce toxins that can cause illness or even death to mammals depending on the amount of the toxin and the extent of exposure.

Blue green algae blooms are an increasing phenomenon in New England, even in large, deep lakes like ours. Climate change may be enhancing the conditions for algal blooms with warmer water temperatures and more rainwater runoff.

Last year blue green algae blooms were documented on Merrymeeting Lake in Pleasant Cove in August and October. The blooms lasted less than a day and dissipated quickly. The MMLA will be working closely with our water quality monitoring program partners at UNH to watch for any blue green algae blooms this year. If you think you see a blue green algae bloom on the lake, please take a few photos, note the date, location and time of day, and send that information with the subject line "possible blue green algae bloom" to both Brad Smith at [royalb@tds.net](mailto:royalb@tds.net) and Nancy



Photo courtesy of NH DES - blue green algae bloom on Arlington Mill Pond, Salem, NH (May 2022)

Bryant at [bryantnab@yahoo.com](mailto:bryantnab@yahoo.com). You can also text the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) Cyanobacteria Hotline at 603-848-8094 or email them at [HAB@des.nh.gov](mailto:HAB@des.nh.gov).

Blue green algae blooms can be confused with other naturally occurring substances such as lake foam, green algae, tree pollen, and duckweed. A blue green algae bloom will look like blue-green paint scum on the surface of the water, it will not cling to a stick if poked into it, and it will typically span a large area. If you suspect a blue green algae bloom, keep people and pets out of the water.

For more information, check out the NH DES website at <https://www.des.nh.gov/water/healthy-swimming/harmful-algal-blooms>. Another website with good information and helpful pictures for identification is at <https://lakes.grace.edu/identify-blue-green-algae>.



# News from the Marina

*By Allen Weldon*

I think that everyone reading this newsletter knows how much my family and I value you as our customers at Merrymeeting Marina. I will always try to be here to help you anytime you ask. I think most of you also know the efforts that my father has made in acquiring land conservation opportunities for SELT, and along with other volunteers, developing recreational trails around the lake to be used and enjoyed by our town residents and beyond.

These efforts have led to protections that add value to all of our properties by protecting our Merrymeeting Lake water quality. At the same time, it has expanded year-round recreational opportunities for everyone. This year I ask for your help. SELT will be starting a fundraising effort second only to the first effort of

acquiring the 2,000 plus acres known as Birch Ridge Community Forest BRCF phase 1. Hard to believe, but this is now Phase 3!

Watch for information soon about a new project for future protection of the Merrymeeting Lake watershed, including Mount Bet on Merrymeeting Road past the Marina!

I hope that you will all help this effort, as “it takes a village to save a lake!” We will do this together. My sincerest appreciation in advance.

Note: The Marina hours this year will be 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM every day. We’re looking forward to seeing everyone!

## Celebrating the Good Work of Our Lake Hosts

*By Laurie Smith*

When guests and community members arrive at the public launch, they are greeted by one of our friendly Lake Hosts who is not there just to offer a personal greeting, but to perform the important task of inspecting boats, trailers, personal watercraft, and gear entering Merrymeeting Lake for hitchhiking plants and animals. In concert with the NH Lakes Association, The MMLA runs the Lake Host program--a nationally recognized aquatic invasive species education and prevention program.

Over the years we have had quite a few “saves,” where we have stopped invasive plants from entering our beloved lake. In 2022, our Lake Hosts worked an impressive 710 hours, plus 267 hours of volunteer time provided by members of the community. These dedicated folks performed 1265 inspections!

The state-wide accomplishments reported by the NH Lakes Association in 2022 are significant, with 105,067 courtesy boat inspections performed and more than 114 suspicious specimens found. Six of those suspicious specimens were verified ‘saves’, and five occurred at waterbodies uninfested with the species captured. Additionally, the number of ‘saves’ Lake Hosts made by educating boat owners

to always take time to clean, drain, and dry their boat and other equipment before and after recreating is immeasurable.

Clean water, happy wildlife, and stable property values depend on a healthy lake, free of invasive species, and The Lake Host Program is the first line of defense. Prevention is always easier than eradication! Unfortunately, invasive species continue to spread to more lakes and there are an increasing number found in New Hampshire. So far, Merrymeeting Lake has no known invasive species, but many water bodies around us have become infected.

Starting Mid-May, the Merrymeeting boat launch will typically be manned 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM during the week and 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM on weekends. We’re looking for additional volunteers this season, so if you have a few hours to spare to support our efforts, please reach out to us via email at [mmla@mmlake.org](mailto:mmla@mmlake.org).

We thank you, our members, as your dues and contributions support this important program. Your participation ensures that our Lake Hosts are on duty, helping to protect our lake



# Obituaries

## **Ernie Ringer**

Ernie began traveling to Merrymeeting Lake as a child in the 1950s and his love for summers in New Durham prompted him and his wife Suzanne to purchase their own home in 1969. He enjoyed sharing his knowledge of the lake with everyone who took a ride on his boat. There was always a new adventure with every trip around the lake.



While spending his summers at Merrymeeting, Ernie was fortunate to develop many friendships that became more like family to him. He is greatly missed by his family and friends who enjoyed his stories, sense of humor and kind heart. Ernie passed away in Venice, Florida with his family by his side on August 2, 2022. He is survived by his wife Suzanne and their two daughters; Stacy Ringer and her children Brandon, Paige and Kyle, and Kendra Stinson, son-in-law Matt Stinson and their children Delaney and Gavin.

## **Colonel Leonard F. Nolan, Jr., USAF (retired)**

Lenny had a long and wonderful history with Merrymeeting Lake. His parents built their lake house on South Shore Road in 1949/1950, and Lenny built his home across the street on the waterfront in 1977/1978. He loved Merrymeeting Lake and spent many years enjoying his New Durham home away from home with his family, friends and neighbors. He passed on August 16, 2022 and is survived by his wife of 44 years, Dorothy (Flynn) Nolan, his son Michael Nolan, his daughter Leigh Wolnik and his grandchildren, Lauren, Erin and Luke Wolnik and Brooke Nolan.



Full obituary at: <https://www.mackeyfuneralhome.com/obituary/Leonard-NolanJr>

## **Captain Nicholas Peter Losapio, USMC**

Nicholas passed away on June 8, 2022, in a training accident in the California desert. Born on March 10, 1991, he grew up in Kensington NH, spending summers with his family at Merrymeeting Lake, where he forged strong bonds with friends and neighbors on the East End and around the lake.



He graduated from Exeter High School in 2009 where he was a member of the wrestling team and The Talon. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Norwich University in Vermont where he was a member of the Corps of Cadets and Naval Battalion and served as the President of the Semper Fi Society. After graduation in 2013, Nicholas was commissioned as an officer into the United States Marine Corps where he fulfilled his dream of becoming a pilot. He served as an active-duty pilot attached to VMM-364 "The Purple Foxes" squadron, 3d Marine Air Wing, Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 39, flying the MV-22B Osprey.

Nicholas is survived by parents, Michael & Susan Losapio, his younger sister, Amanda, his fiancé, former USMC Captain Kelsie Hancock, with whom he found true love, his grandmother and grandfather, Phyl and Dr. Paul Solomon, Captain, USAF (retired), grandmother Teresa Losapio, his uncle John H. N. Noble, III and his wife Lynn, cousins Casey, Bailey and their significant others, his aunt Nancy (Losapio) Wright, her husband Bruce, his cousin Lauren and her husband, his cousin Daniel Wright, hundreds of friends and thousands of individuals whose lives were touched by Nicholas.

Full obituary at: <https://www.seacoastonline.com/obituaries/pprt0239474>

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