

# AROUND THE LAKE

NEWS FROM THE MERRYMEETING LAKE ASSOCIATION - SUMMER 2024



## Keeping Merrymeeting Clean

By Laurie Smith

We have some exciting news to share about our ongoing efforts to keep Merrymeeting Lake as one of the cleanest lakes in New Hampshire. Since 2018, we've been working hard with the Southeast Land Trust (SELT) and Moose Mountains Regional Greenways to conserve the land around our lake. When we began, only 4.9% of the watershed was protected, but thanks to the incredible community support and recognition that one of the best ways to protect the water quality of the lake is by conserving the land around it, we've made huge strides!



PHOTO: JOHN GISIS

### Major Milestones in Our Conservation Journey

**2007 - 2010:** MMLA partnered with The Society for Protection of N.H. Forests and the Town of New Durham to conserve Birch Ridge. After funds were successfully raised for the appraised value, the owner rejected the offer in 2010 and sold to a timber company who intended to harvest the property and potentially sell the land for a large housing development.

**2019:** The creation of the 2,027-acre Birch Ridge Community Forest marked the beginning of our large-scale conservation efforts.

**2020:** We conserved a generous gift of 498 acres at Mt. Molly, creating The Collins Family Forest.

**2021:** Birch Ridge Community Forest was expanded to 2600 acres.

**2023:** Adjacent to Mt. Molly, we protected 400 acres on Mt. Bet with a two-year commitment for payments to be completed this year.

**2024:** An agreement is signed to conserve over 600 acres at Mt. Jesse.

If our current efforts are successful, we will have conserved 49% of the watershed. The protection of Mt. Jesse is particularly significant as it will connect the Birch Ridge Community Forest to Moose Mountains Reservation and NH Fish & Game's Ellis Hatch Wildlife Management Area to complete a wildlife corridor and

water protection area spanning 7,200 acres across New Durham, Middleton, and Brookfield. With the addition of Mount Jesse, we will have all but one mountain around Merrymeeting Lake in conservation! Recognizing that additional opportunities will arise in the future, SELT is seeking community input on which lands should be prioritized for conservation - and for what purpose.

To help answer these questions and shape the future of conservation, SELT recently completed a public opinion survey for New Durham and surrounding communities to find out what residents feel are the priorities for conservation and to learn of related concerns (separate from the town's Land Use Survey). At the MMLA Annual Meeting on July 7 (9:00 AM), SELT will be presenting the results and outlining how we will be shaping the future of conservation.

There will also be a public input session on Friday, 7/19, from 6:30 – 8:00 PM in the New Durham Community Room (at the rear of the Fire Station). SELT and the Birch Ridge Community Forest Management Committee will be sharing info about the current conservation efforts and the management goals for Birch Ridge Community Forest pertaining to wildlife and forestry, community use, and recreation. This event will allow for a deeper dive into the information, with a valuable opportunity to voice your opinions. Thank you for the incredible progress we've made with unwavering community support.

# Letter from the MMLA President

Hello Merrymeeting residents!

I hope you are enjoying the beautiful days at Merrymeeting Lake! I'm excited to share some of the great things happening in our community. Each year as I reflect on our summary of accomplishments from the previous year, I wonder "Could it get any better than this?" It does! Each year keeps getting better and better.

This summer we're celebrating seven years of amazing conservation efforts around the lake. Our partnerships with SELT and MMRG have helped us protect large areas of land, ensuring that Merrymeeting Lake remains one of the cleanest lakes in New Hampshire. Your support has been instrumental in achieving these milestones, and we couldn't have done it without you.

You'll read in this newsletter about our future conservation plans and opportunities for your input as to what lands you feel should be our focus, and how you'd like to see them used. A recent community wide survey by SELT had a significant number of responses from lake residents, so thank you for being involved and sharing your opinions.

## Cheers to 40+ Years of Water Quality Monitoring

*By Nancy Bryant*

In order to monitor that Merrymeeting Lake's pristine water stays clean and free of invasive species and other contaminants, the Merrymeeting Lake Association has been sampling the water quality of Merrymeeting Lake since 1981.

MMLA volunteers collect water samples that we send to the University of New Hampshire Lakes Lay Monitoring Program for analysis. Monitoring is typically conducted every other week from late May to early October at three deepwater locations on the lake: at the East End, off of Owl's Head and in Broad Cove.

We test for the following parameters: water clarity, temperature, chlorophyll a, total phosphorus, dissolved color, specific conductivity, dissolved oxygen, alkalinity and pH. The data tells us that the water quality of Merrymeeting Lake is excellent. But it also shows that human activity is impacting the lake.

In order to protect the lake's water quality, we need to protect the lake's watershed by continuing to conserve the mountains around the lake and we must also protect the lake's shoreline by reducing erosion and runoff from our properties and maintaining well-functioning septic systems.

To learn more about the water quality of the lake, please come to a presentation entitled "Merrymeeting Lake Water Quality: Past, Present, and Future" with Bob Craycraft of the UNH Lakes Lay Monitoring Program on August 17 from 10:00 to 11:30 AM at the MMLA Meeting House.

Your thoughtful feedback will help shape our future plans, and you'll have an opportunity to learn more and express your thoughts at the Community Visioning Session on July 19.

SELT will be presenting the survey results and discussing the future of conservation around the lake at our Annual Meeting on July 7, so please join us for a great presentation and for updates on what's cooking with the Merrymeeting Lake Association.

There are so many positive things happening at Merrymeeting Lake, both conservation-wise and with our full slate of social and informational events this season.

Let's keep the momentum going and continue making our lake a fantastic place to live and visit. Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm. Together, we're making a real difference.

Warm regards,  
Laurie Smith  
President, Merrymeeting Lake Association

## MMLA Board of Directors

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# MMLA Launches Life-Saving Defibrillator Program

By Laurie Smith

Last year, the Merrymeeting Lake Association took a significant step toward enhancing community safety by launching a defibrillator program.

This initiative, aimed at ensuring quick and effective responses to cardiac emergencies, has received overwhelming support. Thanks to your generous monetary and equipment donations, we have successfully placed Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) at eight strategic locations around the lake.

Each AED is positioned such that no device is more than a 2.5-minute drive away, ensuring that help is always within reach in the event of an emergency. These devices are critical in providing immediate assistance during cardiac events, significantly increasing the chances of survival until professional medical help arrives.

Given our remote location, we face unique challenges in emergency response. While we are fortunate to have an excellent fire and EMT staff, every minute counts and by having AEDs readily available we empower our community members to act swiftly and potentially save lives. A huge thank you to the residents around the lake and the Marina, who have generously offered to host these units on their properties.

If you are not sure where your closest unit is located, please check the list below and view the location so you are prepared in case of an emergency. The units are user

friendly and will talk you through the steps while waiting for emergency response, so training is not required but is encouraged.

The success of this program is a testament to the remarkable community spirit at Merrymeeting Lake.

This collective volunteer effort underscores our commitment to looking out for one another and ensuring that Merrymeeting remains a safe and enjoyable place for all.

As we move forward, we continue to rely on the community's support to maintain this program. With your \$10 voluntary donation to the AED fund on our web site and suggested in our membership brochure, the MMLA can ensure regular maintenance of the AEDs and ongoing training for residents on how to use these devices.

We are working on a schedule of classes for this summer, with dates to be announced. Together, we can make a significant difference and ensure that help is always close at hand. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the safety and wellbeing of our community!

## Defibrillator Locations

317 Merrymeeting Rd  
(Marina)

69 North Shore

239 North Shore

115 South Shore

284 South Shore

400 South Shore

178 Pine Point

149 Lions Camp Pride Way

## Tips and Tricks to Keep Merrymeeting Lake Clean and Pristine

By Nancy Bryant

As property owners on Merrymeeting Lake, we are blessed with window views of the lake's beauty, swimming and boating from our shorefront, and the ability to enjoy one of New Hampshire's cleanest lakes. Maintaining the purity of our lake's water quality is one of the Merrymeeting Lake Association's top priorities, and we support many organizations and initiatives with that shared objective, from NH Lakes Association to SELT, to name a few.

As residents, we can also take action to care for the lake, both by practicing lake-friendly landscaping and by maintaining our septic systems. Most of us are aware of the lake-friendly landscaping basics, such as avoiding pesticides and organic and synthetic fertilizers that can pollute the lake. But there are some other natural landscaping tips that you can follow in order to preserve and protect our pristine water:

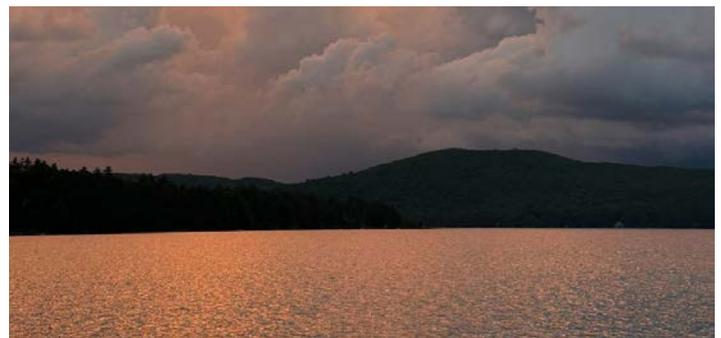


PHOTO:CHRIS MCLAUGHLIN

### Lake-friendly Landscaping Tips:

- Plant native vegetation such as blueberry bushes along the shorefront
- Minimize paved areas
- Redirect and slow down runoff water (stormwater) so it can seep into the ground before reaching the lake
- Follow the Shoreland Protection Act rules and permit requirements.

*continued on page 5*

# Save a Loon—Keep the Lead Out!

By Caroline Hughes, Loon Preservation Committee

Lead poisoning resulting from the ingestion of lead fishing tackle is by far the leading documented cause of death for adult loons across New Hampshire, accounting for 38% of adult loon mortalities from 1989–2023.

Data by the Loon Preservation Committee indicates that the majority of loons that have died of lead poisoning in New Hampshire consumed tackle that was in active use—that is, the loons did not ingest lead from a reservoir of lost tackle on lake bottoms but instead consumed tackle that had been recently used by an angler. Lead sinkers and lead-headed jigs that weigh one oz. or less (the size range most often found to kill loons) have been illegal to use in freshwater in New Hampshire since 2016.

The fact that loons are continuing to die from lead poisoning means that some people, knowingly or not, are violating state lead tackle laws. The upside to this is that if loons are dying from consuming tackle that is in active use, there is an easy way to prevent these lead deaths: switching to non-lead alternatives. Many non-toxic lead alternatives like steel, bismuth, and tungsten, are harder than lead and are less likely to get hung up on rocks or other snags underwater.

The first step in getting the lead out is sorting through your tackle box to determine if you have any lead tackle in your possession. If your tackle is not painted or coated, there are two easy methods to determine whether or not it is lead. First, rub the tackle against a piece of paper. If

the tackle leaves a gray streak, it is likely made of lead.

If the tackle does not leave a streak, one additional test is to try to put a dent in it with your fingernail or a pair of pliers. Lead is a very soft metal and is easily dented. If your tackle is covered in paint or another type of coating, the easiest way to determine if it may contain lead is to remember where it was purchased. Tackle purchased outside of New Hampshire is more likely to contain lead.



*The loon's x-ray shows the ingested lead tackle that led to its death.*

For those who still have lead tackle lingering in their tackle boxes, the Loon Preservation Committee runs a Lead Tackle Buyback Program in conjunction with local tackle shops. At any participating shop, 1 oz. or more of now-illegal to use lead tackle (lead sinkers and lead-headed jigs individually weighing 1 oz or less) can be exchanged for a \$10 store voucher. The program also includes additional incentives for those who turn in the largest amounts of tackle at each participating shop each calendar year: \$100 for the largest turn-in, and \$50 for the second-largest. Berry's Bait in Alton participates in the program. More information about this program can be found at [www.loonsafe.org](http://www.loonsafe.org).

## Loon Post-Mortem Report (2023)

In July, 2023, one of our cherished Merrymeeting loons died. Courtesy of The Loon Preservation Committee (LPC), here are the findings:

The deceased loon is believed to have been the female of the pair that hatched a chick last summer. With the help of Merrymeeting Lake residents, the LPC collected her body shortly after her death, and our veterinary intern did a necropsy here at LPC. She found several pieces of evidence that suggested avian malaria may have killed this loon, including an enlarged spleen and a milky, streaky-looking pericardium (the sac surrounding the heart).

The Merrymeeting loon was the seventh loon documented to have died from avian malaria in NH since 2015, and the first of two that died of malaria in 2023 (in August, another female loon died of avian malaria on Winnepesaukee, bringing our total up to 8 NH birds since 2015). To learn more visit this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOu6nlNMS5E>

## The 2023 Boat Parade (Congrats to the Pirate Ship - the Winner!)



## Lake tips continued

Lake-friendly landscaping aims to minimize erosion and prevent rainwater from washing pollutants and sediments into the lake. Soil, sand, fertilizer, grass clippings, and leaves are loaded with nutrients that will damage water quality. A natural shoreline will help retain and purify stormwater before it reaches the lake, as well as provide important wildlife habitat.

### Septic System Tips:

- Have your septic tank pumped out periodically
- Use no-phosphorus cleansers
- Avoid detergents containing bleach
- Don't use a garbage disposal
- Keep your leach field free of tree roots
- Take care not to overload your septic system

Unlike living in a city or suburban town where wastewater flushes away to a central treatment plant, here at the lake every house has its own individual "treatment plant" (also known as a septic system). The system has a limited capacity, i.e., the tank and the leach field are only so big. If your system leaks or fails, septic system fluids and sewage contain nutrients and bacteria that can significantly pollute the lake. If we all do our part as good stewards of our properties, we'll continue to enjoy excellent water quality on this beautiful lake!

## Lake Hosts Help Protect Our Lake

*By Nancy Bryant and John Chapin*

Did you know that invasive aquatic plants and animals can be spread from lake to lake via boats traveling from one lake to another? The Merrymeeting Lake Association staffs the Fish & Game launch site during busy hours throughout the summer with paid and volunteer Lake Hosts who are trained to inspect boats for aquatic plants and animals. The MMLA has participated in the Lake Host Program since it was started by the NH Lakes Association in 2003. The MMLA receives some grant funding from the NH Lakes Association, but most of the costs are supported by your MMLA dues and water quality donations.

In 2023 our MMLA lake hosts inspected a total of 1,297 boats. A complimentary inspection involves a thorough examination of boats, trailers and recreational equipment for aquatic plants and animals and the safe removal of these "aquatic hitchhikers" before a boat is launched. Statewide, Lake Hosts conducted 83,733 courtesy boat inspections and removed more than 144 suspicious specimens. The Lake Hosts also hand out brochures and educate boaters on NH's "clean, drain and dry" protocol.

To date, Merrymeeting Lake does not have invasive aquatic plant growth. But Merrymeeting is vulnerable to an infestation of invasive aquatics, due in part to our close proximity to other water bodies, such as the Merrymeeting River and Lake Winnepesaukee that have invasive milfoil.

## Notes from the Merrymeeting Marina

**The Marina hours this year will be 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM daily.**

There is a defibrillator hosted on site at the front of the building.

Our ice cream window is open during regular Marina hours.

We thank you for your business!



"The Lake Host Program is our first line of defense in keeping Merrymeeting free of invasive plants and animals", say MMLA members Jan and John Chapin who help manage our Lake Host Program. "Over the years we have had quite a few "saves", where we have stopped invasive plants from entering our beloved lake."

Through Labor Day, the Merrymeeting Lake boat launch will typically be manned from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekdays and from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM on weekends. Please remind your summer guests to clean, drain and dry their boat before launching on Merrymeeting.

If you would like to volunteer as a Lake Host, please contact the MMLA ([mmla@mmlake.org](mailto:mmla@mmlake.org)) or John Chapin ([johnachapin1@gmail.com](mailto:johnachapin1@gmail.com)). We understand that everyone's availability is different, so we offer both standard and flexible scheduling options to accommodate your convenience. Whether you can commit to regular shifts or prefer to volunteer on a more flexible basis with occasional partial days, we welcome your support. Your contribution is appreciated at any time, and especially valuable in the fall when many of our hosts return to school. A brief training and resources will be provided to ensure you feel confident and prepared in your role. Volunteering as a Lake Host is a great way to contribute to the well-being of Merrymeeting Lake!

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# Obituaries

## **Carolyn Jane Sullivan** 1959-2024

Lyn's 12-year battle against breast cancer ended peacefully at her winter home on Siesta Key in Florida on Friday, March 8, 2024. She was surrounded by family, with her beloved dog, Lucy, lying by her side. Her dignity, positive attitude, laughter, and grace never wavered throughout her long ordeal.

Lyn grew up in Chelmsford, MA with her parents, George and Judith Haggerty, known lovingly as Papa and Grandma to their grandchildren. Summers at "Camp Grandma" on the coast of Maine are a lasting memory for all and Lyn cherished her memories of a life spent by the ocean. With her husband Mark, they raised their family in Bolton, MA, but most family memories were made here at Merrymeeting Lake. Their lake home, along with the condo in Florida allowed Lyn to indulge and excel in her life-long passion of interior decorating and design. All who stepped into her homes raved about her abilities and style.

Lyn is survived by her husband, Mark, daughter, Kelly Eldridge and her husband Justin, and the joy of her final year as "Peaches," grandson Aiden, her son Christopher Sullivan and his wife Maggie, and son Reid Sullivan and his wife Abby. For Lyn's complete obituary and to express condolences: [legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/carolyn-jane-sullivan-obituary?id=54623460](https://legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/carolyn-jane-sullivan-obituary?id=54623460)



## **Ann L. Brady** 1933 - 2023

Ann Brady sadly passed away surrounded by her family after a brief illness on October 24, 2023 at the age of 90. She was a wonderful and loving Mother who was always there for her family. She had many friends and was a well-loved member of the New Durham community.

Ann was a beloved mother to her daughters, Lee Ann (Joe) Beals and Karen Coffey, her son Keith Brady and her companion Murphy. She leaves behind six grandchildren, and six great grandchildren and was preceded in death by her husband Francis "Franny" Brady and her parents Clare "Daddy Pat" and Vera Patterson and brothers Robert "Pat" Patterson and David Patterson.

Ann loved sitting on her swing overlooking the lake with Murphy by her side. She enjoyed cooking a meal for her family topped off by a nice slice of pie, boat rides, and a nice quiet evening knitting and watching Family Feud. Ann touched the hearts of many of the people she has met throughout her life. For Ann's complete obituary and to express condolences, please visit: [www.peasleefuneralhome.com/obituary/ann-brady](http://www.peasleefuneralhome.com/obituary/ann-brady).



## **Joseph Allen Beals** 1953 – 2024

It is with profound sadness that the family of Joseph A. Beals of New Durham, NH formerly of Wrentham MA, announce his unexpected passing on March 31, 2024, at the age of 70. He was a wonderful and loving husband, father, grandfather, and uncle. He leaves behind his wife Lee Ann (Brady) Beals, daughters Jaime (Beals) Henthorne and Cheryl Beals, two grandchildren and Brother George Beals Jr. Preceded in death by his father George Beals Sr., mother Barbara (O'Leary) Beals and sister Dorothy (Beals) Colella.

Joe will be deeply missed by all who knew him. He was known for his hard work, dedication, and passion for helping others. He was Jack of all trades and had a smile or wave for everyone he passed by. He enjoyed tinkering with cars, scuba diving, boating, and attending the drag races. He was always there to offer anyone guidance, support and encouragement, no matter the challenges they faced. For Joe's complete obituary and to express condolences, please visit: [www.peasleefuneralhome.com/obituary/joseph-beals](http://www.peasleefuneralhome.com/obituary/joseph-beals)



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## Summer of 2024 Merrymeeting Lake Association Events

What's the most wonderful time of the year? For those who love Merrymeeting Lake, the answer is summer! With longer days and warmer temperatures come a many opportunities to support the lake, get to know your neighbors, and have fun!

### **July 7 - MMLA's 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 in our Merrymeeting Lake community, including the latest "Keep Merrymeeting Clean" preservation efforts by SELT to protect and conserve the watershed areas around the lake.

### **July 27 - MMLA's 5th 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.

### **August 3 - MMLA's Annual Boat Parade**

To inspire the boating creatives, the theme for 2024 will be "Celebrating the Late Great Jimmy Buffett" – stay tuned for more information as we near the date.

### **August 10 - MMLA Annual Ice Cream Social**

Join us at the MMLA Meetinghouse from 2:00 - 4:00 PM to enjoy a tasty treat with your neighbors and community members. Many thanks to Johnson's Restaurant for their continued generosity in support of this event

### **August 17 – Merrymeeting Lake Water Quality: Past, Present and Future**

*10:00 to 11:30 am at the MMLA Meetinghouse*

The MMLA has collected over 40 years of water quality data at three different sites on Merrymeeting Lake. Bob Craycraft of the UNH Lakes Lay Monitoring Program will discuss what that data tells us.

Merrymeeting Lake Association

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