

WILSON LAKE NEWSLETTER

Spring 2024

You teach me, I forget. You show me, I remember. You involve me, I understand. ~E.O. Wilson

Join us at...

Website: <http://wilsonlake.net/> Facebook: *Wilson Lake Association*

Email: Wilsonlakeas@gmail.com



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David & Diana Spahn- *Plant Patrollers*

Margaret Sitarz- *Board Member*

Sadie Walsh- *Board Member*

Membership in WLA: Your Dues Help Protect the Lake!

I want to help protect and preserve Wilson Lake for future generations and enclose my 2024 contribution of \$20 (Please make checks payable to Wilson Lake Association). Additional donations are always welcome!

Name: _____ Mailing Address: _____

Lake Address: _____

Send your dues (\$20) to Wilson Lake Association, PO Box 162. Acton, Maine 04001 *or* through our PayPal QR or credit card at <http://wilsonlake.net/>

SAVE THE DATES!

4th of July Boat Parade

- Meet at the outlet cove (boat launch) at 10 am
Annual Meeting—9 am Sat. July 13th at Nadeau (Old Acton) Airfield

- Bring your lawn chair and a smile
August Kayak Plant Patrol-TBD: Please check Facebook for Official Date

- Come join our local York County aquatic plant expert & biologist Laurie Callahan



Letter from the Lakeside

To paraphrase the old saw; “The price of a clean lake is eternal vigilance.” Many of the words you will read below have appeared in this newsletter before. They bear repeating though for both the long-time property owners and the new arrivals.

Runoff is one of the two biggest threats to our lake: the other being invasive plants. What is runoff? Runoff is the water that flows across the watershed (all the land that surrounds the lake that “sheds” water into it) from snowmelt and rain and deposits into the lake. With that runoff comes all the pollutants that cause algae blooms, cyanobacteria blooms, and other scary stuff.

As you can see in the picture below, the Wilson Lake watershed covers almost 4 square miles around the lake. All the rain and snowmelt run from that area into our lake. In undeveloped areas the water is filtered, slowed, trapped, and cleaned by the forest and plants. In the developed areas, like our camps, much of that filtering plant life is missing.

When the water has a free and open run to the lake, instead of being filtered it becomes a highway for pollutants to get into our lake. The more development there is around the lake, the greater the risk of runoff.

And the biggest pollutant we need to worry about is phosphorus.

Phosphorus occurs naturally in soil. It is also a component of fertilizers and sewage. If you fertilize your lawn or your septic tank leaks; the phosphorus from those sources gets swept up as the water flows from a rainstorm and is deposited in the lake.



What can you do to help reduce the amount of phosphorus that flows into Wilson?

Have your septic tank checked. Is it working? Are your sinks and toilets draining well, or are they slow or backing up? Do you smell sewer odors?

Reduce or eliminate fertilizing your lawns around the lake.

Take a look at your property, is the flow of water unrestricted to the lake? If it is, there are several things you can do to slow the flow and filter it, ranging from simple mulch or crushed stone to more complex landscaping and plantings.

The most important thing you can do though is to educate yourself on the issue.

Visit our website. You will find the 2022 Wilson Lake Watershed Survey Report there as well as links to other resources. We all have an interest in keeping our lake clean. We want to be able to swim in clean water and we want to maintain our property values.

Finally, take a minute to join the WLA. Your membership dues will help our volunteer board help you to keep Wilson Lake the clean, wonderful refuge from the outside world that we all cherish. ~Eric Cook Edcook60@comcast.net

Stocking Fish on Wilson Lake

For those of you excited to get your lines in and nab your trophy fish this spring or those hearty enough to get out on the frozen lake for a winter catch, here is an update on the stocking of fish in Wilson Lake.

Source: James Pellerin, Maine Dept of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

STOCKING HISTORY:

- Brown Trout (BNT) have been stocked in this 288-acre lake since 1955. When available, adult and surplus Fall Yearling Brook Trout (FY BKT) have been stocked since the late 80's. Prior to 1997, 300 FY BNT were stocked annually. In 1997, 300 Spring Yearling (SY) were stocked to accommodate hatchery concerns.
- Splake* (SPK) were also stocked from 1988 through 1992 (not in 1989). This equates to a stocking rate of 1 BNT per surface acre.

**The splake or slake is a hybrid of two fish species resulting in a crossing of a male brook trout and a female lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush* × *Salvelinus fontinalis*).*

CURRENT STOCKING: Maine Inland Fisheries annual stocking of Wilson Lake typically is as follows:

Brook Trout



Brook Trout (BKT) are stocked primarily as put-and-take fish for winter anglers. They are typically readily caught and harvested. The brood fish are 3+ year-old fish that are being retired from the hatchery system as their productivity declines. We do not have a lot of these larger fish available, so we spread them around in small quantities.

- 15 Adult (Retired Brood)
- 250 Fall Yearling (12-14")

Brown Trout



Brown Trout (BNT) are typically managed as a put-grow-and-take fishery. They survive better than Brook Trout in waters with marginal summer conditions and high competition and are more difficult to catch. This means they can hold over to older ages and often produce quality and trophy sized fish for anglers.

- 25 Adult (Retired Brood)
- 300 Fall Yearling (12-14")

F&W have been stocking the new strain of BNT since 2018, and they have been performing better on most lakes/ponds. In 2019, F&W also introduced some smelt for forage. Not sure if it was successful, although there was a report of a few adult smelt found last year.

Q&A:

1) Which are the spring stocks and which are the fall?

All are larger, fall stocked fish due to heavy competition/predation issues from other fish species.

2) What are the greatest threats to fish populations in our lake?

Development, water quality, and invasive (illegal stockings) fish, not necessarily in that order.

3) Are the fishermen competing with loons for the trout?

Yes, loons and anglers compete for fish.

4) Is there any way to monitor our lake's fish population?

It is not easy to do citizen science-based projects with fish. If you have some avid anglers, F&W offers booklets to keep angling records for us, and we are working on a new phone/computer version.

Check out Maine Fish & Wildlife's website for extensive angler resources. ~**Jeff Brown**

Boat Safety

As we look forward to another wonderful summer at Wilson Lake here are a few boating rules that are in place to keep us safe so all of us can enjoy the lake.

Maine does **not** have a boating license requirement. However, as of 1/1/2024:

- **Anyone born after January 1, 1999**, operating a motorboat greater than 25 horsepower or jet ski has to successfully complete an approved boater safety and education course.
- **Person under 12 years of age** may not operate a motorboat of more than 10 horsepower **unless** under the immediate supervision of a person in the motorboat who is at least 16 years of age and has completed an approved boater safety and education course.

No one under 16 years of age may operate a jet ski.

If an operator of a Personal Watercraft is under 18 years old, their parents or guardians are responsible for their actions.

All watercrafts must have a whistle or other sound-producing device.

Paddleboarders –a life jacket is required for each person on the board, a sounding device (such as a whistle) and navigation lights between sunset and sunrise (flashlight or, head lamp).

Every watercraft towing a person(s) must have a driver and spotter at least 12 years old. Those being towed must wear a Life Jacket.

It is illegal to:

1. Operate any watercraft in a reckless manner or with an alcohol level of .08 or greater.
2. For most motorized watercrafts, to tow persons between half-hour after sunset through half-hour before sunrise.
3. Operate watercraft within 200 feet of the shoreline at greater than “headway speed”. This is the slowest speed you can travel while maintaining control of the boat.

For a full details of the boating laws, please check out [maine-boating-laws.pdf](#) at Maine.Gov

~Margaret Sitarz

Water Level

WLA’s goal is to maintain a consistent lake water level for the recreational boating period from late May to mid-October. Our target level is at the top of the dam boards which keeps the lake artificially high. But too high will flood properties. Dam regulation is an active program all summer. This year our early springtime was quite wet with very high-water levels, followed by dry weather. As of this writing at the end of May, the lake is a little low to allow beach cleanup. The dam was closed on May 16th and rain will bring it up to our target level. As a reminder, the dam is opened fully in mid-October until May to flush the lake, to prepare for the winter ice and to allow fish movement. ~John Nadeau

Loons

Two loons have returned to the lake a couple of weeks after ice out for this spring’s mating season. No nesting activity has occurred of which we are aware for a number of years. There can be many reasons for this, including loss of nesting habitat or even “a retired pair of loons.” If you know of a loon nest attempt this year please call John Nadeau at 781-504-3143. He and Ann Marie are the Maine Audubon Loon Counters on Loon Day in July when all the loons in Maine are counted at exactly the same time, rain or shine. Part of the count includes the location of any active nesting sites. Loons indicate a healthy lake with a good fish population. Thank you for not chasing them with motorized watercraft and keeping your distance even when paddling. Getting too close can take them off their nest and thus destroy their eggs. ~John Nadeau

Watershed Survey Progress

The [2022 Watershed Survey](#) identified several severe spots of erosion. Some have been corrected, including those on Route 109 and Pheasant Road. The Watershed Survey Committee will be deciding on projects for 2024. If your property has been identified as having an issue, we will be in contact with you to discuss a cooperative effort of corrective measures you may wish to consider to decrease erosion and preserve Wilson Lake’s water quality.

~John Nadeau, Isobel Michaud, & Eric Cook

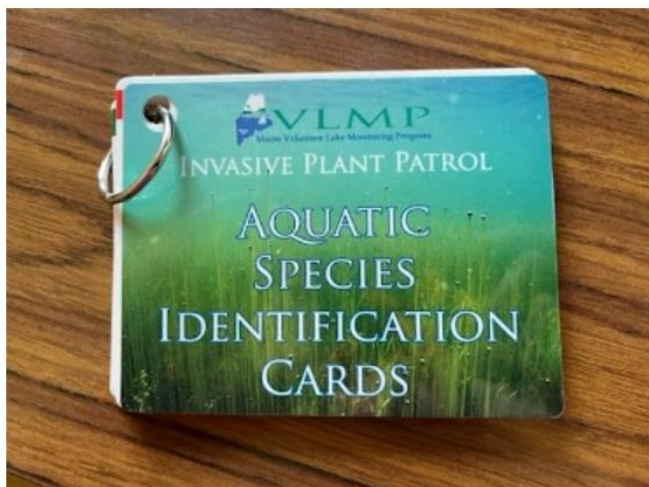
Plant Patrol Update: 4 Plants Added to the LSM Invasive List

For anyone who is a homeowner, camp owner, or car owner, you know firsthand that ownership necessitates maintenance now & then. Our beautiful Wilson Lake is no exception; it takes work and vigilance to keep Wilson Lake free of invasive plants which **remain our #1 threat and #1 indicator of falling property values**. If we were to have an invasive plant establish itself, we could be looking at **tens of thousands of dollars of eradication efforts annually**.

How can I help?

- 1) Pay your WLA Dues & throw in a little extra ;)
- 2) Keep an eye out on your local waterfront & contact us if you notice anything suspicious.
- 3) Buy a new quick key (see below) for a great visual reference. *We will be purchasing keys for the Lake and will have them available to Lake Owners at a discounted price. *
- 4) Become a plant patrol!
 - a. Join us in August for a plant paddle (date tbd) with our local specialist Laurie Callahan
 - b. **LSM's In-person Plant Paddles and Live Plant ID workshops:** *Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM)* is offering several Plant Paddles sessions and Live Plant ID workshops as in-person events in 2024.
 - i. In York County, LSM will provide a Live Plant ID workshop. The workshop will be held on **June 25, 2024 from 10AM-1PM** at the Waterboro Town Hall in East Waterboro, ME. **For any questions related to LSM's IPP workshops and registration, please email stewards@lakestewardsme.org.**
 - ii. Download for free The *Maine's Most Unwanted Aquatic Invasive Plants* poster on LSM's website: [AIS Poster](#)

The Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM) have added FOUR new invasive plants to Maine's AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) watchlist in 2023: giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*), starry stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*), water soldier (*Stratiotes aloides*), and the Swollen Bladderwort (*Utricularia inflata*) also known as Bloated Bladderwort found in Mousam Lake last summer.



The LSM's updated resources, which we will be purchasing in bulk for our Lake include:

1. A new *Quick Key to Ruling out Maine's Most Unwanted Aquatic Invasive Plants*. These waterproof pocket guides have an updated layout and information for ruling out all 15 plants on Maine's aquatic invasive species list.
2. A Supplemental Booklet for the *Maine Field Guide to Invasive Aquatic Plants*.

3. An updated version of the *Maine's Most Unwanted Aquatic Invasive Plants* poster.
4. Updated laminated Plant ID Cards.

While our lake continues to be free of invasive plant species, we need your help in closely monitoring your area of the lake. **Become familiar with your swimming area and if you see something you don't recognize say something, let us at WLA know and we will inspect.** A friendly reminder, do **not** pull out the plant (this can spread it!); Use a buoy to flag the spot and we will examine the plant and contact our local York County specialists, LSM, and Maine DEP. Happy plant patrolling. ~Isobel Michaud

Water Quality

Every two weeks May-September, I sample the water conditions with a Secchi disk and probe connected to a meter through a communication cable (come to the annual meeting this year to see all the gear in person!). The tests are done in the deepest part of the lake called 'the basin'. It's ~44' deep on the east central side of the lake. Field sheets are completed and submitted to LSM, who record water quality data for lakes across Maine.

Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM) require annual certification for lake water quality testing personnel. Certifications will now be conducted here on Wilson Lake for York County with an LSM representative.

Ice-in / Ice-out & Secchi reading

Ice-in was two weeks later than last year and was January 9th. Ice-out was March 11th, one month earlier than last year (last year ice-out was April 12th!). The first water quality readings took place on May 13. This was the same day of the year in 2023. The Secchi disk reading was 7.28 meters down (23.8 ft) which is ~ 1 meter more than last year which is a very good reading.

Water temperatures

The water temperature at the top of the water was 60.8 °F; 51.44°F at 5 meters; 48.56°F at 7 m and 47.3°F at 13 m (42 feet, close to the bottom of the lake). When the ice melts, the cold water on the top drops to the bottom and causes the lake to turn. The thermocline changes its location in the water due to the lake turning. Thermocline is a steep change in water temperature and a layer between this area. The thermocline is between 3 to 5 meters at this time. These readings are 1 meter closer to the surface than last year at this time.

Oxygen readings

The oxygen reading on top of the water was 9.4 ug/L, 5 meters – 10.2 ug/L, 9 meters 9.1 ug/L and 13 meters 7.6 ug/L. The readings are somewhat close to each other which means this is the time of the year the water is circulation top to bottom called 'spring turnover'. Later in the year there is little oxygen at the bottom. Typically, the reading is ~0.4ug/L.



Rich helping the AWWA team teach our local Middle Schoolers about aquatic plants, invertebrates, & the likes!

Gloeo

The *Gloeotrichia echinulata* (Gloeo) reading is zero which is a good sign as Gloeo is a colonial cyanobacteria species that can lead to toxic blooms when there are too many nutrients in the lake. Fortunately, there are none found. The lake is very clean.

In other news, there will be one surface grab at the basin (deep part of the lake) this year testing for pollutants.

Run-off remains one of the major concerns for pollutants entering the lake. The 10-year survey conducted with direction from the DEP included all properties around the lake. The survey pointed out areas of concern that contribute to pollutants entering the lake. Please take advantage of no cost help and only pay for materials from the Acton Wakefield Watershed Alliance (AWWA) to assist with direction for the sure fix to any run-off from your property.

Run-off carries phosphorus from some fertilizers and other pollutants if there is improper absorption into the ground before entering Wilson Lake. Learning about your property and lake water quality will be a benefit to the natural resources around all of us. Please come to the WLA annual meeting to learn more.

Have fun at the lake this year. Stay safe. ~ **Rich Chevalier**

Get your Wilson Lake Gear for the Summah!

Check out the link below:

[Wilson Lake Association - 2024 Spring Summer | Amesbury Sport / Motivate Team Sales | powered by OrderMyGear \(itemorder.com\)](https://wilsonlake2024springsummer.itemorder.com/shop/home/)
<https://wilsonlake2024springsummer.itemorder.com/shop/home/>

Online store will be open starting June 7th through June 21st

July 10th: items shipped to members

July 13th: items delivered to annual meeting



Any issues with the link DURING THE TIME PERIOD,
please reach out to Rob
Rob@amesburysport.com (email)
508.783.6072 (text)

Thank you for supporting the WLA!