

# Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission Newsletter

Mid Winter 2019



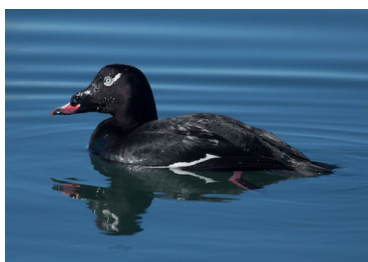
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*Congrats to our Photo Contest winner Chip Love.*

## Sea Ducks on Lake Auburn

Written by Ben Nugent, Wildlife Biologist

Each fall, for a few brief days, special visitors can be observed at Lake Auburn, as they stop to rest on their long voyage from Western Canada to the coast of the Northeastern United States. They are a species of “sea duck” called the white-



winged scoter (*Melanitta deglandi*), and can be seen rafted up on Lake Auburn in large flocks, often over 200 in number. The males are mostly black with a distinctive white wing patch, which is quite noticeable in flight. Males also have a white patch around the eye and a bright yellowish orange beak, with a bulbous black knob at the base. Females are less showy, but still exhibit the name sake white wing patch.

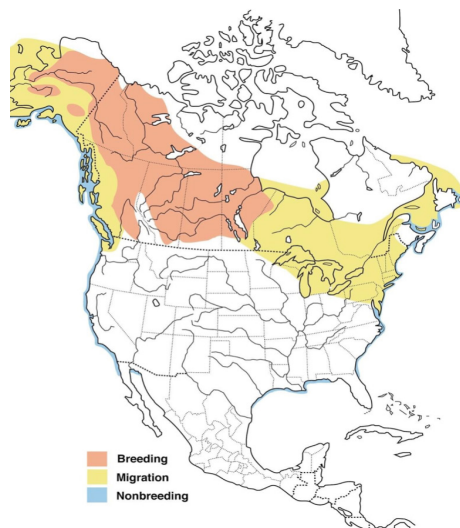
By the time we see the white-winged scoter on Lake Auburn, they are nearing the end of their 3,000+ mile journey to the Atlantic coast. On this long journey, freshwater lakes are used as brief stopover sites. These birds spent the spring and summer seasons in Western Canada and Alaska, breeding and nesting on lakes and ponds in the remote boreal zone. During this time, the birds feed on crustaceans and insect larvae on the bottoms of lakes and ponds. When fall migration occurs, some birds travel to the Pacific coast, and the other birds head to the Atlantic coast.

We can begin to see white-winged scoters on the Atlantic coast be-

tween September and November. Throughout the winter, these birds feed by diving in our coastal waters for mollusks (particularly the blue mussel) and crustaceans. There are two other species of scoters (black and surf scoters) you may also see, but the white-winged scoter tends to feed in deeper waters, further from shore, than the other species. In these wintering areas, white-winged scoters typically dive in water that is 5-20 meters deep, and can stay underwater up to 60 seconds.

When we get to see this species on Lake Auburn, it is a special event that we have come to expect. The large flock flies in the most beautiful way, each individual bird moving in sync together, to form shapes that continue to change as they move across the sky. Not only are the flocks a sight to behold with the eyes, but their wings make a quiet whistling noise in flight. As I watch and listen to their flight, I am left

in awe and wonder at their beautiful display, which signals the end of another summer and fall season on Lake Auburn.



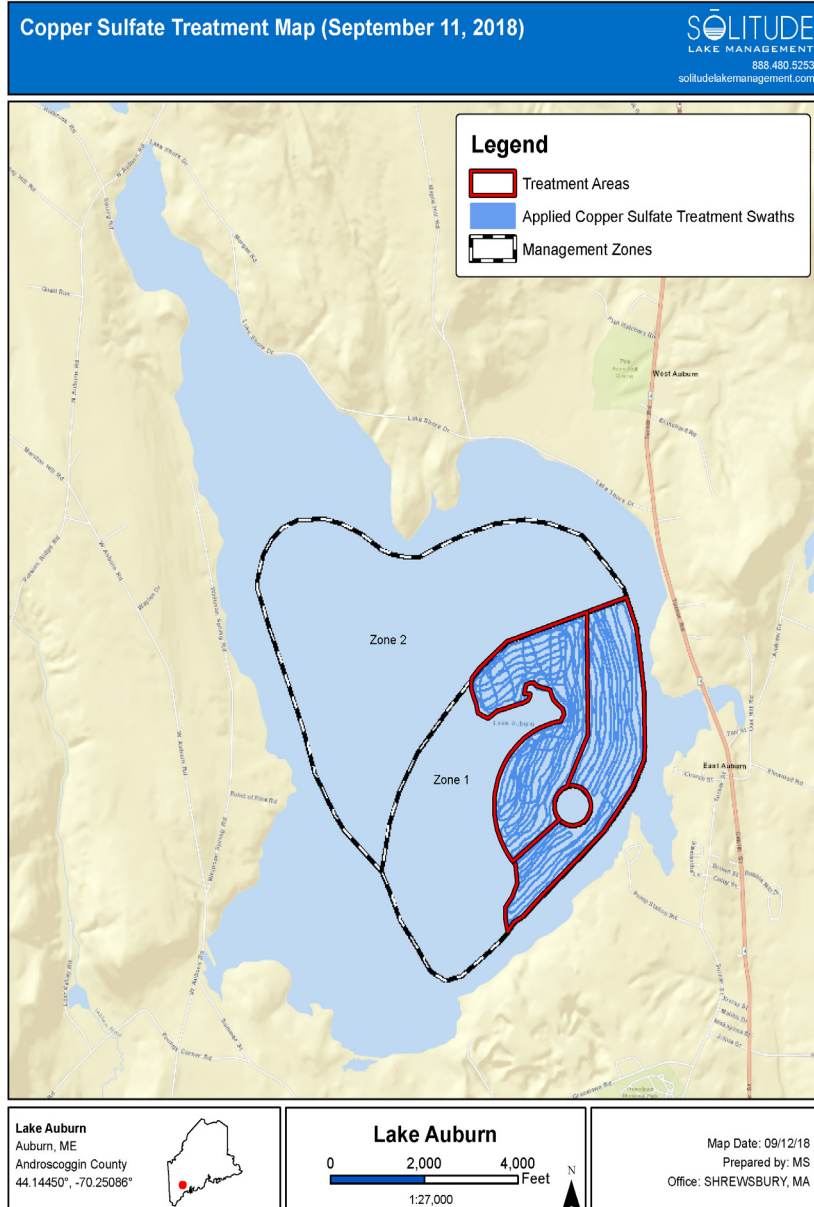
*Photo credit for pictures and range map - the Cornell Lab of Ornithol-*



# Algaecide Treatment in Lake Auburn

The algaecide application was done on September 11, 2018 on 300 acres around the intake pipe on the eastern side of Lake Auburn. Solitude Lake Management Company applied a dose of copper sulfate with a target of .075 mg/L. Copper sulfate kills cyanobacteria, causing them to drop out of the water column and to sink to the bottom of the lake, thus decreasing the turbidity of the water. This treatment was done because of rising turbidity levels throughout the summer months. Water samples collected during August and September showed blue-green algae growth at higher than

usual levels. Blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, can produce cyanotoxins, which can impact human health. After the application of the algaecide, no detectable levels of copper sulfate were found in the lake and the turbidity of the water decreased, as did the amount of cyanobacteria.





# INTERVIEW WITH ERICA KIDD

**WATERSHED MANAGER FOR AUBURN WATER DISTRICT AND LEWISTON WATER DIVISION**

**BS IN ECOLOGY FROM SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY**

**MS IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES FROM ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY NEW ENGLAND**

**STARTED AT AWD/LWD IN MAY 2018**



## **WHAT MADE YOU INTERESTED IN PROTECTING DRINKING WATER SOURCES?**

*I've always been interested in environmental protection, particularly for freshwater systems. As it turns out, many lakes, ponds, and rivers provide drinking water to the public, so getting into the field of source water protection was a natural fit for me.*

## **WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE IN THE LAKE AUBURN WATERSHED?**

*My favorite place to be is out on the lake during the summer. Getting out on the boat on a nice day is refreshing. Oftentimes you can see bald eagles flying overhead and loons swimming by, which I love.*

## **WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT LAKE AUBURN SINCE BEING IN YOUR NEW ROLE?**

*I've learned that it is a dynamic system, and that a lot of research has been conducted to better understand the internal processes of the lake, and the external factors that can affect water quality.*

## **WHAT IS YOUR SHORT-TERM FOCUS FOR THE WATERSHED?**

*My short-term focus is on sampling tributaries of the lake for total phosphorus in an effort to identify where major inputs are coming from. Through prior sampling efforts, our staff has identified high phosphorus sources in the Townsend Brook sub-watershed, and I want to expand that work to other areas within the Lake Auburn watershed.*



## Education and Outreach



In October 2018 Lauren Olson started as the new Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission. Lauren comes with a background of watershed outreach from a nonprofit in the Belgrade Lakes area of Maine and an undergraduate education in Environmental Studies from St. Lawrence University in upstate New York. When not helping maintain a high water quality or reaching out to community members, Lauren can be found enjoying Maine living by nordic skiing, gardening or drawing silly cartoons.

The new Education about Outreach position will focus on community interactions and connections while providing opportunities for residents to learn and engage in watershed related activities.



*The Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission has placed fun informational GeoCaches around the watershed for you to find! To check them out go to [geocache.org](http://geocache.org) for more information and to play the game.*





# WHAT IS A CONSERVATION EASEMENT AND WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH A FRESH DRINK OF WATER?

By SHELLEY KRUSZEWSKI, ANDROSCOGGIN LAND TRUST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Forests, fields, and other natural areas within a watershed play critical roles in keeping our water clean by naturally absorbing water and trapping sediments. For drinking water sources, it is especially important to ensure that land near the source is not overdeveloped so that the land can still provide vital natural filtration services. In a simple sense, a conservation easement on watershed land is a way to keep water clean for the present and future.

In more detail, a Conservation Easement is a voluntary agreement between a landowner and another party which is typically a non-profit land trust, government or a municipal organization such as LAWPC. It is a legal tool that can be used to perpetually protect land by restricting its use. Each easement is unique, customized to provide protection and flexibility based on the features of the property. In some cases, easements will restrict uses and/or development in order to support agricultural production, open space, outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, or water quality. In addition to protecting the watershed forever, the landowner also may be able to enjoy three important tax benefits (income, estate, and property tax) by entering into a conservation easement.



Erica Kidd and Shelley Kruszewski reviewing conservation easement plans

## Easement Monitoring Involves:

1. reviewing the relevant management documents
2. walking the full boundary of the property (often a great way to walk new places in the woods!) to check for encroachments, natural and man made changes to the property, new plant and animal activity etc.
3. filling out an annual report.

LAWPC currently holds 7 easements in the Lake Auburn watershed (about 89 acres conserved). Some easement properties have frontage on the lake and others are located on portions of the watershed. The land remains in private ownership, and as the holder, LAWPC is responsible for monitoring the easement property and staying in communication with the landowner about any changes to the property. Certain activities on an easement property may need approval from LAWPC depending on the terms of the easements.

The Androscoggin Land Trust (ALT), located in Auburn, currently conserves over 6,000 acres in the Androscoggin River watershed from Durham to Jay. ALT holds many easements and has 30 years of experience working with many partners including municipalities, businesses, volunteers and organizations to protect and steward land, as well as to educate and engage the public about land conservation and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. One such partnership is with LAWPC. ALT currently completes the annual monitoring for LAWPC properties in the Lake Auburn watershed; this close partnership is a useful way for both organizations to collaborate and plan for the land that supports a clean public drinking water source. For more information about easements, please contact the Androscoggin Land Trust at 782-2302 or [info@androscogginlandtrust.org](mailto:info@androscogginlandtrust.org).

*If this sounds like interesting work, please contact ALT to inquire about becoming a volunteer land steward!*



# Upcoming Events!

**Thursday February 21st**

**Salmon Point at 10am -12pm**

Get the kids and yourself outside during winter break and join Master Naturalist Paula Curtis-Everett and the Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission to learn how to identify trees during the winter months.

The event will be held at Salmon Point, part of the Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission public lands. The trailhead is at the intersection of Maple Hill Rd and Lake Shore Dr, parking is available near the trailhead. Please RSVP to [lolson@awsd.org](mailto:lolson@awsd.org)

**Tuesday April 9**

**5:00 - 7pm Lewiston Public Works**

**Wild Seed Project 'Why Growing Native Matters'**

Come join the members of Androscoggin Valley Soil and Water Conservation District and Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission to learn more about the Wild Seed Project and why we should plant native plants!

**Thursday April 4, 11 and 25**

**6-7:30pm Location TBD (Auburn)**

**Lyceum Forestry Talk Series**

The Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission along with other Forestry professionals will be hosting a series of talks on water quality, community efforts and forestry in Auburn. Stay tuned for more information.

**Monday May 6th**

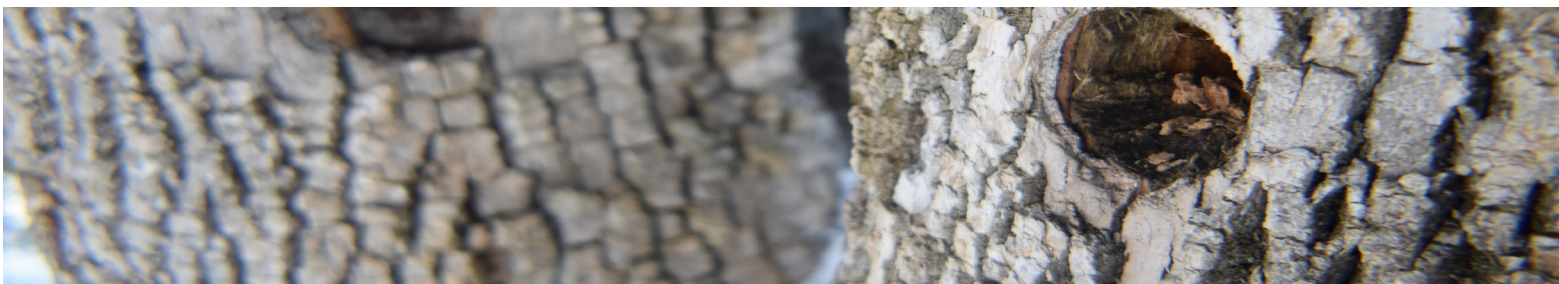
**Gritty's Auburn at 6pm**

Join the Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission at Gritty's in Auburn to test your watershed knowledge at their weekly Monday night trivia series. Come celebrate drinking water week with us, because you can't make beer without water!

**Saturday May 18th**

**Whiting Farm**

The Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission will be in attendance as part of the Androscoggin Soil and Water Conservation District's plant sale. Order forms for seedlings can be found at [www.androscogginswcd.org](http://www.androscogginswcd.org)





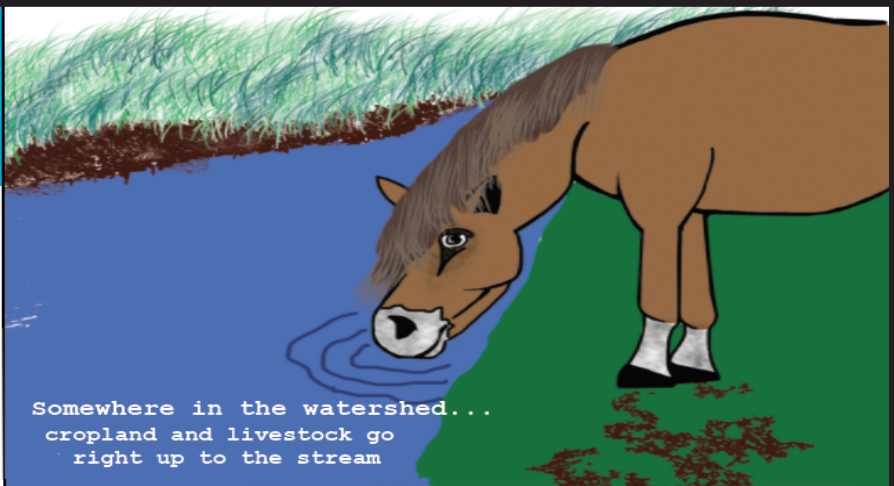
# WATERSHED ADVENTURES!

Helping to address issues  
in the  
Lake Auburn Watershed.

This week's adventure:  
LIVESTOCK and  
NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION.



A PUBLICATION OF  
THE LAKE AUBURN WATERSHED  
PROTECTION COMMISSION



Somewhere in the watershed...  
cropland and livestock go  
right up to the stream

This stream leads to Lake Auburn,  
Lewiston and Auburn's drinking source.  
The nutrient runoff is contributing  
to the non-point source pollution  
of Lake Auburn.

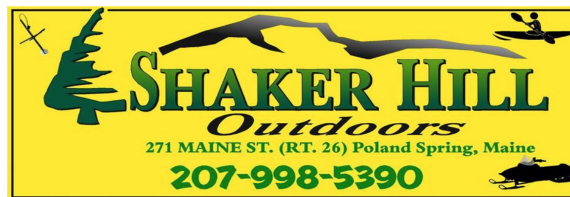


'Buffer plants and fences should  
help keep the water clean,  
and the runoff out!'



Comic Corner Created by Lauren Olsen

Thanks to our partner organizations and sponsors





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@lakeauburn



@lakeauburnwater

check us out at [www.lakeauburnwater.org](http://www.lakeauburnwater.org)

*Switching to an electronic newsletter will help us save more trees!*

*You can subscribe by emailing [lolson@awsd.org](mailto:lolson@awsd.org)*