



LAKE AUBURN
WATERSHED
PROTECTION
COMMISSION

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2023



Photo: Nancy Preble, Lake Auburn

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Upcoming Events

Invasive Bittersweet
Remediation at Salmon Point



September 16th, 2023
10am - 1pm

Nature Walk at
Whitman Spring Road



October 14th, 2023
10am-12pm

Native Plants: Seed
Saving and Sowing



November 10, 2023
3:30 - 6:30 PM
Location: TBA
Reservations
Recommended

Trail Maintenance Day at
Salmon Point



September 23rd, 2023
10am-1pm

*The Battle for Big Lake
Screening*



September 15th, 2023
@ 7:30 PM
4 Water St. Grand Lake Stream, ME



Scan for more information

SEPTEMBER PHENOLOGY

As September settles in and we see the last days of summer, it is time to welcome autumn. This is a time to take a reprieve from all the summer activities and welcome cool days. As the equinox approaches, and humans prepare for the shorter colder days to come, so does the natural world around us. In *Naturally Curious: A Photographic Field Guide and Month-by-Month Journey through the Fields, Woods, and Marshes of New England*, author Mary Holland describes September as a month of "preparation".



Image: Blue Jay David Young

"All our senses can detect a change in the air. There are fewer and fewer hours of daylight, more crickets chirping, fewer birds singing, and berries ripening. Creatures that are tuned in to the seasons to a greater degree than humans are preparing for the months ahead by migrating, laying eggs, breeding, gorging, caching food, and finding shelter."

In September, we will notice that songbirds are migrating. Even as the forests grow quieter, the familiar blue jay will be seen as they will be sticking around to brave the cold New England winter. They will subsist on seeds, fruit, and acorns for the duration of the fall and into the winter. The loons we see on Lake Auburn throughout the summer congregate. This behavior is known as rafting and is believed to improve their ability to feed before they migrate. Many loons begin shifting from their freshwater breeding grounds to coastal locations where they will spend the winter. Black bears start building nests, and foraging berries and nuts to prepare for hibernation.

Take a close look at American Beech trees in the forest. You may notice signs of bear activity such as claw marks. In a thinned-out forest canopy you may want to take a look up and see if you can spot the "nests" the bears have been working on, a clear sign of feeding activity. A sign of increased bear activity should warrant caution while hiking in remote areas. September also marks the start of the Monarch Butterfly migration to warmer climates. They leave New England to migrate south to the Transvolcanic Mountains in central Mexico. A 3,000-mile journey that takes the Monarchs 2 months to complete. They spend their winter soaking up the warmer climate on oyamel fir trees. As the Monarchs leave, another focal insect in New England remains active and busy this month, the Aerial Yellowjacket. This is the time of year where Yellowjackets no longer need to forage for nutrients for the queen and her larvae, and instead seek out food for themselves. September seems to mark a harvest festival for them to enjoy the fruits of all their hard work before hibernating in the winter.

You may notice that Goldenrods develop galls. The goldenrod gallfly causes a gall to grow on the stalk of a goldenrod. In the fall, the larvae of the goldenrod gallfly produce glycerol due to the cooling temperatures. Glycerol prevents the liquid interior of its cells from freezing. The galls form in the summer months, but really grow and become obvious this time of year after the eggs laid in the summer hatch and larvae grow. The larvae will continue to develop through the winter and hatch in late spring. As focal species begin to prepare for winter, and activity dwindles, it is important to notice these changes. Getting outside and keeping track of the things that stick out to you in your yard, or on trails, or while enjoying time spent outside can be insightful. Phenology can be more than just the study of changes in the environment through the year, it can be a grounding mindfulness practice that can help you stay connected to the landscape.

STORMWATER RUNOFF

What is stormwater runoff? Stormwater runoff is rain that falls on streets, parking areas, sports fields, gravel lots, rooftops or other developed land and flows directly into nearby lakes, and rivers carrying with it pollutants, nutrients, and debris which can negatively impact the health of our watershed.

What are some solutions to help mitigate stormwater runoff?

1

Rain Gardens:

Rain gardens are both aesthetic and functional concave gardens with native plants that filter stormwater runoff. Benefits of Rain Gardens include improved water quality, provides wildlife habitat, prevents erosion, slows spreads and sinks stormwater, beautiful, low cost and low maintenance. They provide Improved protection and resiliency of the landscape.

2

Permeable Surfaces:

Permeable Surfaces, such as stormwater friendly driveways, allow water to soak into the ground, where it is naturally filtered by the soil and can help replenish groundwater. Additionally permeable surfaces can help keep pollutants from running off into Lake Auburn. Other benefits include improved water quality, erosion prevention on your property, increased value of your home, and they are aesthetically pleasing.

3

Lakeshore Landscaping:

Due to the vegetative buffers, Lake Auburn benefits from:

- Phosphorus and nitrogen reduction.
- Recharging groundwater and limiting flooding
- Filtering sediments and trapping pollutants to keep our drinking water clean.
- Protecting banks from erosion.
- Aesthetic, recreational, educational, and research opportunities.

Natural shoreland buffers have been lost in many places. Restoring and protecting them can improve water quality, bank stability, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics.

4

No-Mow/Low-Mow

No-Mow and Low-Mow means to mow your lawn less frequently and at a higher blade height on your mower. Natural lawns increase capacity to slow and filter stormwater runoff.

These low-mow and no-mow areas are very effective filters and can help protect sensitive areas such as lakeshores, streams, wetlands, and woodland areas from runoff and erosion. They can also be established along ditches, roads, driveways, and other areas to help intercept and filter stormwater runoff close to the source.

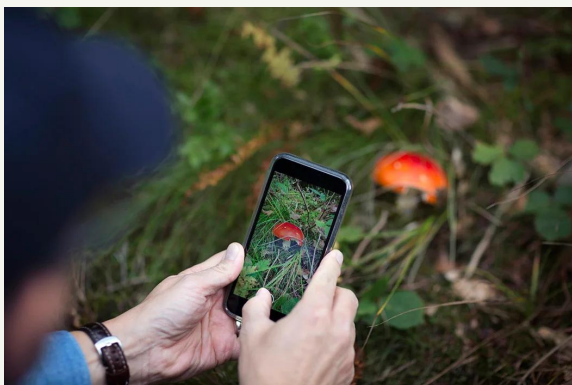
The benefits of low mow include improved water quality, low maintenance, low cost, visual appeal, habitat for wildlife, slow, spread and sink stormwater runoff, and increased resilience and health of the lawn.

SPOTLIGHT: iNATURALIST

Are you familiar with the apps iNaturalist and Seek? Curious about what kind of plants, bugs, or animals you may be seeing on the trails near Lake Auburn, or in your back yard?

iNaturalist is an online database and social network for sharing biodiversity information to help each other learn about nature. iNaturalist helps users identify plants and animals while simultaneously generating data for science and conservation. It also provides access to a diverse community of users, experts, hobbyists, and citizen scientists who will help you learn about species in your own backyard. You can even use it to brush up on your own identification skills by helping other users identify plants and animals they upload! By submitting your observations to iNaturalist, you are creating research-quality data for scientists working to better understand and protect nature.

All the data submitted to iNaturalist is submitted to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). GBIF is an international network and data infrastructure funded by the world's governments and aimed at providing anyone, anywhere, open access to data about all types of life on Earth.



Left: iNaturalist icon, Right: Seek icon

iNaturalist also recently launched another app, powered by AI recognition software, called Seek. Seek can identify plants and animals in real-time, award badges, and create challenges to make exploring and data collection more engaging. Seek offers a more kid and family friendly alternative to iNaturalist, while still allowing you to submit your findings to iNaturalist's database. This year iNaturalist officially became an independent non-profit organization!

iNaturalist can provide useful information on tracking native and non-native species in our area. As Maine cracks down on invasive species, it becomes even more important to track them, especially around Lake Auburn. Aquatic invasive species can impact lake and watershed health, and impact water quality, but did you know that terrestrial invasive species can, too? Lake Auburn is surrounded by approximately 240.70 acres of vegetative buffers which act as a barrier to the lake, protecting it from storm-water runoff and pollutants, providing habitat for native plants and animals who depend on the lake, and improve water quality. Invasive species can choke out native plants and impact the health of these buffers.

Some common terrestrial invasive species known in the Lake Auburn watershed include Asiatic bittersweet, Autumn olive, Japanese barberry, and Japanese knotweed.

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

Take a book, leave a book.

The newest little free library in Auburn is located on Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission property next to the Tot Lot. Back in June, high school students in the Androscoggin Valley Education Collaborative (AVEC) assembled and installed the library.



AVEC is a student group made up of students from Edward Little High School, Leavitt Area High School, Oak Hill High School, and other schools throughout the Androscoggin Valley. AVEC is dedicated to creating collaborative opportunities that will support the best education and experiences for all students in the Androscoggin Valley. These students also helped plant native plants around the library and continued work on a new educational trail that will provide connection from Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission property to the Tot Lot. This trail will also provide educational opportunities to learn about wetland and woodland ecosystems, watersheds, and responsible recreation.

Want to get involved? Our Little Free Library is hungry for more books, educational resources, and nature guides. If you have any books you would like to donate, bring them down to the library! Enjoy a picnic down by the Tot Lot and take a stroll over to the Little Free Library and grab a book!

LOON RESCUE



in the Lake Auburn Watershed

On Wednesday, August 9th, Community volunteer, Robert Crosby, is responsible Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) staff, Bill Hanson and Micah Miller; joined by community members Susan Beane and Robert Crosby set out into The Basin to capture a loon thought to be tangled in fishing lines and a lure.

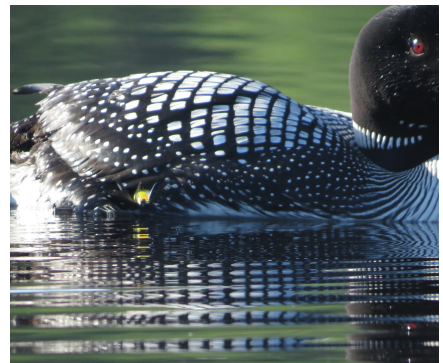
Spotted only a few days prior by Robert Crosby while exploring The Basin, Crosby contacted LAWPC and BRI to alert of the loon's condition.

BRI was able to quickly organize a Loon capture and successfully removed the lure from the female loon. The team was also able to capture a male loon, take blood samples, weight, and tag him.

We are happy to report The Basin's loon family is doing well and going along business as usual.

for installing and maintaining the fishing line recycling tubes that surround the lake. He decided to install the tubes after finding a bird's nest using the monofilament as nesting material and encountering tubes like ours in Florida.

Littering fishing lines and lures is dangerous for our wildlife and habitat health. Birds, reptiles, fish, and mammals can suffer from being tangled in fishing lines and stuck by hooks and lures. It is important to pack out your fishing line or use one of our many receptacles strategically located around the watershed to prevent litter and protect the health of Lake Auburn.



Did you see an injured loon?

If so please contact:

- The [Warden Service at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife](#): 207.287.8000.
- [Avian Haven](#), an excellent rehab facility that can answer questions about sick or injured loons and provide guidance on what to do: 207.382.6761.
- Biologists from [Biodiversity Research Institute](#) are sometimes out capturing loons and may be able to assist if it is convenient to their work site, 207.839.7600.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO
SUBMIT!

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!

FOR THE 2024 LAKE AUBURN WATERSHED CALENDAR

Guidelines

- Photos must be captured within the Lake Auburn Watershed + include Lake Auburn or one of its tributaries.
- Photos must be digital, high resolution (300 dpi minimum), horizontal/landscape, uncropped and unaltered (no watermarks, no adjustments, no filters, no enhancements)

How to Submit

Each photo submission should include your name, email, location of photo, time of year the photo was captured.

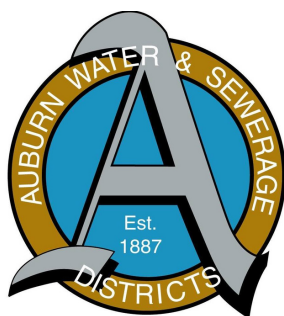
File title examples:

- JohnSmith_Winter_LakeAuburn
- JohnSmith_July_SunnyBasin1
- JohnSmith_LateSummer_SunnyBasin2

By submitting photos you are allowing LAWPC to use and credit your photos for use in the calendar and other materials.

DEADLINE: Sept. 22, 2023

email dhertzberg@awsd.org with any questions or concerns.





**THANK YOU
FOR READING**

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