



Calais Lakes and Streams COMMITTEE



FALL
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The landscape looked singularly clean and pure and dry, the air, like a pure glass, being laid over the picture, the trees so tidy, and stripped of their leaves; the meadows and pastures, clothed with clean dry grass, looked as if they had been swept; ice on the water and winter in the air, but yet not a particle of snow on the ground.

From Walden by Henry David Thoreau



Vermont Lake Wise Program

In a national survey, the lakes and ponds of Vermont were found to be in poor condition at the shoreline. In response, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation developed the Lake Wise program to provide lake associations and individuals with the information, recommendations and help to create lake-friendly landscaping practices.

Participation is voluntary. Once invited, the Lake Wise team helps evaluate the property in four categories: driveway and/or parking, structures and septic systems, recreation areas and shoreline. Participants receive advice and assistance for fixing erosion and dirty runoff problems, thereby protecting water quality of lakes and streams and on-shore and in-lake wildlife habitat. No one's property is assessed without permission. The program is educational, not punitive. Participants who manage their property well, receive Lake Wise award signs, which they can choose to post. Informational Lake Wise signs can also be posted at

approved public waterfront areas to encourage visitors to learn about good waterfront management procedures.

Here is how the program worked on Curtis Pond and Number 10 Pond--both in Calais. On Curtis Pond, Lake Wise representatives toured the Town Beach and the "Island" to assess their environmental impact. They were very impressed with how well the town beach shoreline is designed to allow access to the water while maintaining protective buffers. Parking, sanitation facilities, recreational areas, and the shorefront were all deemed Lake Wise. The team gave advice on "shoring up" the shoreline on the two grassy picnic sites to the west of the swimming area and on inserting water bars to control run off. Their reaction to the "Island" was similar, except that the lack of bathroom facilities for overnight campers was a concern.

Their visit to #10 Pond is an example of how they worked with a private property owner who had invited them to assess the property. Though the property was set back from the pond behind a well-

buffered shoreline, its large gabled roof area--an impervious surface--created run off, which, the Lake Wise team advised, could be controlled by the creation of a water garden.

Not only did Lake Wise representatives give advice, they provided labor to correct the problems. They connected with teams from the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VTYCC), who, mid-summer, did the following: On the "Island," they built a privy, cleared up the site at the lean-to, rebuilt the fire pit, and delineated a clear path to the privy, which is located about 50 feet to the west of the lean-to. At the public swimming access, they restored the eroding waterfront at the two grassy swimming areas west of the main access and built two water bars to prevent run off from further eroding this area. And next to #10, they built a 15-foot long kidney shaped water garden. All their construction followed guidelines established by Lake Wise, the Green Mountain Club, and the VT DEC. The free labor was available this summer to help promote



Rain Garden created to catch rain run-off from roof before it flows into Number 10 Pond



Privy on "island" with close up of sign over the seat



Eroding shoreline of Curtis Pond swim area
the Lake Wise program.

There are many ways for interested associations and individual owners to get help and materials in order to create Lake Wise properties. For an evaluation of your property, advice, and help in making lake friendly changes, contact Amy Picotte, at (802-490-6128) amy.picotte@state.vt.us. Another affiliated program is the Buffers for Blue Lakes programs, which gives buffer planting workshops and provides plants and technical and planting information. Contact Judy Davis at davisjud@gmail.com. The website www.vermontlakes.org connects you with FOVLAP, Federation of Vermont Lakes and



Shoreline reinforced with stones

Ponds, a statewide organization of lake and pond associations that provides information on all areas of waterfront and watershed management. While there are many opportunities for obtaining funding, not all change has to be expensive. Simply creating a no-mow zone in a large lawn or digging ditches to divert water run-off can make positive changes.

Vermont Shoreline Protection Legislation

Why Regulation?

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency has found that 80 percent of Vermont's large lake shorelands are in fair or poor condition, a statistic that puts us behind most other northeastern states. Currently Vermont relies on individual towns to enact regulations to protect shorelands, but only 48 of 184 municipalities with lakes of 10 acres or more have shoreland zoning that requires vegetative cover at the shoreline. Recognizing this risk to lakes, one of the state's most valuable and fragile economic and natural resources, members of the Vermont legislature have moved to protect naturally vegetated shorelands adjacent to lakes through state-wide legislation. Both Maine and New Hampshire have such regulations and their lakes are, as a whole, in better condition. The goal of the legislation is to prevent water quality degradation, to maintain healthy habitat, and promote flood resilience.

The Status

A “shoreline protection” bill, H. 526, was passed by the Vermont House of Representatives in March of 2013. When the legislature reconvenes in January 2014 the Senate is expected to take up consideration of the shoreland bill. At that time the bill may undergo significant changes. In Calais, there is shoreland zoning which requires preservation of vegetative buffers when *new* development or modifications to existing structures are undertaken along shorelines. Currently there is no buffer requirement for existing properties.

Learn More and Participate

For more information on the science behind shoreline protection and this legislation- what would be regulated, how it would work, how you can participate- go to: vtwaterquality.org and click on Lakes and Ponds. On this web page in the box to the right labeled, *What’s New?*, there is current information on the legislation and numerous studies and reports on the science of shoreland protection and the effectiveness of Maine’s shoreland zoning.

Comparisons between proposed Vermont bill H.26 and Maine and New Hampshire laws

Components of Lake Shoreland Regulations	Lake Shoreland Protection Commission, 2013		
<p>Three necessary elements of an effective shoreland management program are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> standards for undeveloped areas; standards for redevelopment of existing properties; and standards for non-conforming (small) lots. <p>Please compare how H.526, other states and the VLCT model would administer these elements.</p>			
	Undeveloped Lot	Redevelopment of Existing Homes	Non-conforming Lot
H.526 as passed the VT House of Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No permit required for new impervious surface or clearing less than 500 sq. feet ANR would create vegetation management standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing development would be "grandfathered" No permit required for new impervious surface or clearing less than 500 sq. feet 	All existing lots will be developable, provided that adequate mitigation measures are implemented.
Maine Shoreland Zoning Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a 50-100 foot wide buffer of natural vegetation Point system allows thinning and pruning, and includes an undisturbed duff layer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows a 30% increase in structures without a permit Allows structure replacement in the same footprint Natural vegetation must be maintained within 100 feet of water's edge 	Requires a variance if setbacks and buffer width aren't possible
New Hampshire Shoreland Protection Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a 50-100 foot wide buffer of natural Vegetation Point system allows thinning and pruning, and includes an undisturbed duff layer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a 20% maximum cover limit. Larger than 20% may require infiltration and plantings Development must be "brought into greater conformity" with planting and infiltration 	Allows a single family home, with conditions to "more nearly meet" standards
VT League of Cities and Towns Model Shoreland Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum impervious surface above buffer recommended at 20% Allows removal of dead or unsafe trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Non-conformance" can not increase with re-development Increase in size of structure may require mitigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommends towns to set criteria for variances Recommends "scaling down" of standards to fit lot

LSP Commission website: <https://leg2.vermont.gov/sites/legislature/LSP/default.aspx>. Comments by email: LSPComments@leg.state.vt.us. ANR Lakes and Ponds website: www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/waterq/lakes.htm.

Groundwater - A Precious Resource

Groundwater, the source of our well water, is an under-appreciated treasure. Its location beneath the land and the underground paths which it follows, are unseen and, hence, not a conscious presence in our daily lives. The fact that water flows in abundance from our spigots is one of the wonders that sustain us. In the past the Calais Lakes and Streams Committee has focused its attention on surface water, as our name indicates. However, current events, such as fracking and depletion of aquifers in other areas of the country, have brought our attention to this valuable resource. Because it is unseen it is easy to ignore its importance to our health and that of our environment and its integral connection to the well-being of the abundant lakes and streams in Calais. In a 2014 edition of the newsletter we will discuss groundwater and things that we need to learn about it. Preserving the quality of our groundwater is important to the ongoing prosperity of our Town.

Help Protect our Lakes and Ponds

Become a

VIP

(Vermont Invasive Patroller)

Learn how to recognize invasive plants and aquatic animals. Early detection is vital to preserving our waterways.

Workshops will be offered next summer. If you are interested in joining a workshop or gathering some interested folks and setting one up contact:

Bethany Sargeant:

802-490-6129

Bethany.Sargent@state.vt.us

www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/lakes.htm



These mushrooms were seen along Kent Hill Rd on the first weekend of October. Anyone know what they are? Please let us know!

vkingvt@gmail.com

Or discuss on Front Porch Forum



Calais Lakes and Streams COMMITTEE

To volunteer or for more information, contact:

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