

Branch Lake Association

Spring 2021 Newsletter



dba: Branch Pond Association

2021 BLAI Annual Meeting

Mark your calendar for this year's Annual Meeting. Last year's virtual meeting was attended by over 60 people! Whether in-person, virtual or both, please join - more details to follow.

Moore Community Center

125 State Street
Ellsworth, ME
August 5, 2021 @
6:30 PM

Watershed Survey What, Why & When

A survey of the Branch Lake Watershed (which includes Rocky and Harriman Ponds) will take place on Saturday May 1st and Sunday May 2nd.

Learn more on page 9

A COVID Summer at Branch Lake

How did it impact YOU?

As we look in the rear-view mirror at 2020, all of us were impacted in some way. Maybe you didn't make it to Branch Lake last summer. Maybe work/life balance (or out-of-balance) took on new meaning for you and your household.



We asked our readers how they were impacted by COVID-19.

See what they had to say on page 7

Branch Lake Assn., Inc.
P.O. Box 601
Ellsworth, ME 04605

www.branchlakeme.org



2021 Board of Directors

President: Chad Doebler
Vice President: Chris Warack
Secretary: Melanie Joy
Treasurer: Holly Griffin
Members-at-Large: Pam Dodge, David Edsall, Pat Edsall, Rand Griffin, Kelly Maltz and Alan Stinchfield

A Note From The Board President

Like many of us, I was glad to see 2020 turn into 2021 - on to a new year. Thanks to all of you who shared your story of the COVID Summer of 2020. Our story at your Lake Association is that in spite of COVID-19 and the challenges it presented in

Continued on page 2

MISSION STATEMENT

Branch Lake Association, Inc. is a 501c(3) non-profit organization founded to protect the water quality of the Branch Lake Watershed. A guiding principle of the Association is that property investment and recreational enjoyment of Branch Lake are secure only as long as the integrity of the Watershed is maintained. The Association is committed to the following:

- Enhance water quality and the livability of the lake environment.
- Respond to any perceived threats to the Watershed's health and well-being.
- Work in concert with the Branch Lake Road Associations in an effort to obtain reasonable services from the City of Ellsworth to correct run-off problems that endanger water quality.

A Note From The Board President (cont. from page 1)

working together, we were able to make a lot of progress on several fronts, all aimed at keeping Branch Lake one of the most exceptional lakes in Maine.

If you'd like to volunteer on one of our projects, learn more about our Board, or have something you would like us to focus on, contact us at info@branchlakeme.org.

Here's a highlight of what's **new**:

Watershed Survey: May 1st & 2nd. *Read all about it on page 1.* We need volunteers! Spend a fun day (or just a few hours) around the lake, before the black flies invade and make life miserable! For more info about helping to make a long lasting difference for Branch Lake, contact David Edsall

at edsalldw@aol.com.

Road Associations Partnership: We also are continuing our work with all of the Road Associations around the lake, helping them make certain road engineering improvements that will help mitigate the road's effect on the lake using the city Enviro-Grant funding process, as well as providing direct financial assistance. *See the article on page 10.* Rand Griffin at rand.griffin@yahoo.com will be happy to share details if you want to know more.

BranchSmart & LakeSmart: This voluntary and non-regulatory inspection of lakeshore properties helps property owners identify opportunities to reduce erosion

into the Lake, while still allowing their waterfront to be accessible and usable. If you'd like to have your property inspected (no charge) or would like to become an inspector, please let me know at info@branchlakeme.org.

As always, our **IPP and Loon Count teams** are busy watching over the water and wildlife. *Learn more below (IPP) and on page 11 (Loons).* To join the fun, *check out the Calendar on page 3* for more info.

Until we meet again, please stay safe, volunteer with Branch Lake Association and have fun!

Chad Doebler
BLAI President

INVASIVE PLANT PATROL—KEEPING YOUR LAKE SAFE FOR OVER 20 YEARS

Each year invasive plants are moving closer to Branch Lake. Last year, one of the worst plants almost made it into our neighbor, Toddy Pond. Now a large infestation has been identified in Big Lake, 100 miles to our north. This lake is frequently used by private planes for remote fishing. If these planes land in Branch Lake on their way home, then infestation is more likely. Reportedly they frequently stop at Beech Hill Pond 20, miles to our north. Big Lake is listed along with Branch Lake in popular fishing guides. Thus, the threat is increasing from lake hopping fishermen.

Our IPP Rangers did a great job in 2020. We welcomed 6 new Rangers for a total of 36! We spent over 230 hours training and inspecting and we covered each section at least twice. This is the 4th time since 2012 that we have covered more than 200% of the lake. In addition, the Rangers have been learning to spot algae growth. This year, we spotted 5 blooms, which were all benign algae types. In 2021, we will have an app on our smart phones to document the location and type of algae spotted. Training is now even easier with online courses by Lake Stewards of Maine. Come join the Team—see you at my house on **July 9th at 3:00 pm!**

David Edsall, BLAI Water Quality Committee Chair

Featured Speaker at 2021 Annual Meeting



Greg Burr, Regional Fisheries Biologist for the Downeast Region (which includes Branch Lake) of Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) will be our Annual Meeting keynote speaker. Greg, an avid outdoorsman who is a Master Maine Guide, enjoys fishing, hunting, hiking, canoeing and sea kayaking. Selected as Fisheries Biologist of the Year by his peers in 2007, he has been in his current position for over 10 years. Greg really knows Branch Lake, so conversations with him about fish, fishing and our lake are fascinating. From a fish history time-line of Branch Lake to what simple things we can each do to keep the Branch Lake fishery vibrant, Greg's talk will "cover the waterfront." Come hear him for yourself (I hope in person, at the Moore Center) or join us virtually.

Mark your calendar for the August 5th Annual Meeting!

Branch Lake Association 2021 Summer Calendar

May 1 & 2	Watershed Survey <i>Volunteers needed</i>	<p>To learn more about this important initiative, read the article beginning on page 1 of this newsletter.</p> <p>To volunteer or get more information, contact David Edsall, Project Coordinator at 207-356-5044 or edsalldw@aol.com.</p>
June 15	Pay your BLAI dues!	<p>Your contributions keep the good work of your Lake Association in action! Check the Membership Levels on page 4 of this newsletter, and contribute today! Mail your check in the envelope provided or NEW pay via PayPal on www.branchlakeme.org.</p>
July 5	Branch Lake Meet & Greet COVID-style (just in case) <i>5:00PM—7:00PM</i> <i>Cove Way Green space</i> <i>(on Cove Way)</i>	<p>Kick off the summer by joining your friends and neighbors for an outdoor, socially distanced get-together! BLAI will provide individually wrapped appetizers and you bring your favorite beverage. Discover what's happening this summer on Branch Lake. Don't forget to bring your chair!! Let us know you are coming—RSVP by June 15th to Kelly.R.Maltz@gmail.com.</p>
July 9	Invasive Plant Patrol Rangers Meeting <i>3:00PM</i> <i>248 Branchview Drive</i> <i>(1 mile west of state boat ramp—lots of flags)</i>	<p>BLAI's Invasive Plant Patrol Leader, David Edsall, will host an IPP Ranger meeting at his residence to review area assignments, ranger maps, and other important information. Newcomers are encouraged to get involved in the program and help protect our lake! Contact him at edsalldw@aol.com.</p>
July 17	Annual Branch Lake Loon Count <i>7:00AM-7:30AM</i> <i>Branch Lake</i>	<p>Please join us for the Annual Loon Count on Branch Lake! In coordination with the National Audubon Society, BLAI organizes a full canvas of the lake to conduct our loon count. For more information, contact Pat Edsall, Chair, at edsallpd@aol.com.</p>
Aug 5	BLAI Annual Meeting <i>6:30PM</i> <i>In-person at:</i> <i>Moore Community Center</i> <i>125 State Street</i> <i>Ellsworth, ME</i> <i>Virtual: details to follow</i>	<p>Join us for the BLAI Annual Meeting! Come gather with friends or join us virtually, to learn about current BLAI initiatives and the health of our lake. Our featured speaker will be Greg Burr, Regional Fisheries Biologist for the Downeast Region (which includes Branch Lake) of Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Social at 6:30PM and meeting starts at 7:00PM.</p>
Sept 5	Summer Send-Off <i>Rafting on the Lake</i> <i>5:00PM—7:00PM</i>	<p><i>We had so much fun doing this last year...</i></p> <p>Say farewell to lake neighbors and friends. Jump in your boat, kayak, canoe or paddleboard and meet in the "Shallows" (check your Branch Lake map or our website if you don't know where that is). We can "raft" together and toast to another summer gone by on Branch Lake. See you on the water!!</p>

Branch Lake Association Membership

Please support Branch Lake Association by renewing, or initiating, your membership. Membership in the BLAI is an important way to remain connected to news about the lake and community events while supporting important initiatives focused on the health of our lake. The Standard Membership fee is \$20 per person, which provides you with one unlaminated 11”x 17” Branch Lake map.

We encourage you, and other members of your household, to consider joining in 2021 at a premiere **CLUB** level, which includes membership recognition in our annual newsletter, PLUS the following incentives:

\$50 Trout Club - two *laminated* Branch Lake maps (*these make GREAT placemats!*)

\$100 Salmon Club - two *laminated* Branch Lake maps and a \$15 Café Press gift certificate

\$200 Loon Club - four *laminated* Branch Lake maps and a \$30 Café Press gift certificate

\$500 Eagle Leadership Circle - four Branch Lake maps and a \$75 Café Press gift certificate

Membership fees are per individual (not household).

Please return the enclosed envelope with your payment for each member, indicating the desired membership level and updated contact information, [by June 15](#) to:

Branch Lake Association, PO Box 601, Ellsworth, ME 04605

Or NEW pay via PayPal at www.branchlakeme.org

**Thank you to all 2020 Members who contributed above the Standard Level
(see page 5 for recognition).**

A big THANK YOU to our 2020 volunteers

Loon Counters:

Valerie Doeblér	Sandy Hillman	David Moores	Kim Skaves
Pat & David Edsall	Brenda Hopkins	Fred Morin	Jane & Alan Stinchfield
Leslie & Brad Fletcher	Barb & Walt Jonsson	Tina & Steve Osborn	Pilar & John Whitworth
Kathy & Rod Gillespie	Jocelynn Labrie	Kathy Pinkham	Anne Wight
Holly & Rand Griffin	Kelly & Rick Maltz	Kathy Pitman	Holly & Warren Williams
		Liza & Chris Quinn	Danielle Wyman

IPP Rangers:

Bob Beal	Susannah Hammersley	Nancy Morris	Betty-Ann Smith
Valerie Doeblér	Terry Holland	Tina & Steve Osborn	Gregg Tabbutt
Travis Dorr	Valerie Ice	Kathy Pitman	Karen & Chris Warack
David Edsall	Barb Jonsson	Liza & Chris Quinn	John Wedin
Lestor & Jack French	Jocelynn Labrie	Carol Robertson	Ralph Whedon
Carol & John Gabranski	Melanie & Win Joy	Sue Rylander	Anne Wight
Barbara Griffin	Mary Beth Maeder	Paul Shapiro	Laura Wilson
			Holly & Warren Williams

Membership Recognition

Thank you to those who contributed above the Standard fee level!!

Your Lake Association is grateful to the individuals that contributed above the Standard \$20 membership fee level. Even in the midst of the pandemic, with many families unable to travel to Branch Lake last summer, our membership continued to support us. In 2020 and 2019, we had **159** and **161 members**, representing **97** and **101 camps, respectively**. However, we still only have **34.5%** of the lakefront developed lots represented in our membership, as compared to 50% at nearby lakes. If you aren't currently a member, consider joining in 2021 (see page 4 for details). If you are a member, *thank you*, and please consider contributing at a higher level so we can continue our work to keep Branch Lake Clear, Clean and Healthy!!

Remember: All dues payments are 100% tax deductible.

LEADERS IN GIVING			
EAGLE LEADERSHIP —\$500	Rand Griffin		
LOON CLUB—\$200	Mikelle Lane	Deborah Levine	Cheryl Verrill
SALMON CLUB—\$100	Donald Additon Bob Beal Lynne Beal Sarah Bishop Tom Bishop Paul Burr Carol Butler William Cattelle William Dietz Bruce Dinwiddie Carm Dinwiddie David Edsall Pat Edsall Carol Gabranski John Gabranski	Barbara Griffin Philip Hammersley Susannah Hammersley Cheryl Jacobs Melanie Joy Carla Kiernan Phyllis Leeman Gary Lewis Grant Lewis Mary Beth Maeder Richard Maeder Kelly Maltz Rick Maltz Nancy Morris Steve Morris	George Parker Jon Pearson Phylis Mattheson Beth Smart Alan Stinchfield Jane Stinchfield Gregg Tabbutt Dean Vieira Terri Vieira Chris Warack Mary Weickert Ellen Whalen Kevin Whalen James Willey George Wright
TROUT CLUB—\$50 Ann Becker Janet Blair Patty Blair Bruce Bradbury David Bristol, Jr Basil Closson Patricia Corey Bob Dietz Merryl Dietz Chad Doebler Marsh Drucker	Martha Dudley Richard Dudley Mary FitzPatrick Brad Fletcher Leslie Fletcher Candy Gammelin Jeff Gammelin Rodney Gillespie Holly Griffin Bruce Hamilton Jean Hamilton Bruce Hardy	Robert Harris James Herbert Valerie Herbert Linda Higgins Sandy Hillman Walt Jonsson Winfred Joy Kevin Kenlan Kris Kenlan Jean Laub Grant Lee Ted Lennon	John Lyons Joe Nabozny Tammy Nabozny Stephen Osborn Tina Osborn Greg Sage David Skaves Jeff Sousnaud Sherryl Stientjes Romaine Turyn Dana Whitman John Whitworth

YOUR LAND—YOUR LEGACY



Ever heard of the Maine Woodland Owners (MWO) land trust? Wonder what that has to do with Branch Lake? You might be surprised to learn that several of our neighbors here on Branch Lake have generously donated their forested land to this organization for conservation and preservation purposes. In September 2020, Larry and Elaine Blethen, Cove Way, donated 120 acres located between Cove Way and Route 1A. “We are just delighted that Maine Woodland Owners is willing to take this land and continue to manage it with stewardship in mind. It makes us very happy to know that it will now, and forever, be conserved and managed using the best practices in sustainable harvesting,” said Larry. In July 2019, 60 acres off Winkumpaugh Road behind the Telephone Museum were donated to MWO by Charles and Sandra Galley. Per an article published in the Maine Woodlands Newsletter dated September 2019, “Without any children to continue the legacy,” reflected Charles, “I figured the best alternative was to put the woodlot in the care of Maine Woodland Owners to prevent development and maintain a healthy forest environment.”

Having two land trust parcels within a few miles of each other in the Branch Lake Watershed is a unique conservation opportunity. The land is now permanently protected from development and remains open to the public. The land is available for recreational activities – for example, the “Cove Way Green” (the 1-acre flat, grassed area that abuts Cove Way at the head of the cove) continues to be available to cottage

owners for overflow car parking, summer boat trailer parking, the annual Cove Way Road Association meeting, as well as ball games, dog walking (with clean up), etc. All properties under the MWO land trust are managed sustainably following the development of a long-term management plan using forestry harvest Best Management Practices for long-term sustainability.

Since 1990, the MWO land trust has been working with landowners to ensure that their property is always protected from development and is managed consistent with their philosophy of good stewardship. Donated lands also provide learning experiences for members and the public. All properties are open for public use and are often used as demonstration sites to promote good forestry. As of January 2021, the land trust now conserves 11,087 acres. For more information about the Land Trust and the many benefits of land donation, or to speak with someone about the options available to preserve the legacy of working forestland, contact Harold Burnett, Land Trust Forester at harold@mainewoodlandowners.org or call 207-626-0005.

So much of the land in the Branch Lake Watershed is forested and may be owned by individuals interested in preserving it. Something to consider as just another way of ensuring the health and beauty of
OUR Lake!

*Thanks to Larry Blethen, Cove Way
for his contribution to MWO and to this article*



Sailing Regatta every Sunday afternoon @ 1:00 PM

The buoys will be out for the First Sailboat Race on **July 4th**. Meet by 12:45 PM at the Committee Boat to determine the direction and any other details. All are welcome, no cost. Come join the tradition!

Details and pictures are on Facebook @ **BRANCHPONDSAILING**. For more information or to help, contact Ralph Whedon at 207-667-2005 or ralphwhedon@gmail.com.

A COVID Summer at Branch Lake (cont. from page 1)

Jane Ice, Phillips Way

My family and I quarantined most of the summer, going to Ellsworth for groceries once a week and walking to the mailbox to get out of the camp. However, we had a very clever and entertaining wild animal guest who visited very frequently. “Chippy” Chipmunk would scamper up the window screen to see what we were doing. He was always there whenever we had lunch on the deck, always looking for fallen crumbs. One day I cleaned out a cabinet and found an old coffee creamer container. I set it on the deck rail near the recycle bin. “Chippy” discovered the treat, popped down inside it and started eating the dried-up creamer. He’d pop up frequently to make sure no one could slap a cap on him. He entertained us for days with his quick in and out maneuvers. In fact, we are afraid he might find a way into the cabin for a cozy winter after we left. I imagine him turning on the gas, climbing on our bookshelves, getting a free education, and learning a language so he could chat with us next summer! We will see...



Carol Newcomb, Sunny Retreat Way (see photo on page 1)

After not missing our yearly Newcomb gathering in July for 50 years, we sadly decided to cancel...but we couldn't stay away! In September my daughter and her husband drove from Denver, Colorado in their new camper van and I carefully made my way from Florida to the Lake along with my sisters from NJ and Vermont. We even went swimming, pretending it was July. My son-in-law carried on his day-to-day work running his solar company back in Colorado via ZOOM meetings and phone calls. I taught online for the Fall semester for Florida Gulf Coast University and thankfully had very few problems with the technology and internet connection! We stayed until mid-October when our summer camp's Franklin stove could not out compete the ever cooler nights and days. It was an extra special experience getting to enjoy the splendor of Fall at the Lake so in that respect, the pandemic did have one silver lining...We learned how to winterize a camp!

George and Cindy Parker, Branchview North

Life had been pretty much shut down since mid-February, so we were looking forward to escaping to our refuge at Branch Lake. Maine's COVID numbers were impressively low so we felt like we were entering a protective bubble. In June, the first of our family arrived. Since all of our kids and grandkids had been remote learning/working since early March, it was like going from one bubble to another. The subtle sense of isolation had hung over us like a shadow when, one morning, we were all in the kitchen doing the usual breakfast routine and I suddenly stopped and realized that, “OMG, we're all acting like everything is NORMAL!



Social distancing—Parker style

We're hugging, being close to each other and having NORMAL fun.” It was a wonderful feeling! The rest of the summer was spent enjoying the lake and staying in our little family bubble. Needless to say, we were VERY sorry to see this particular summer end. Going back home to the COVID reality was definitely a let down. We are already looking forward to our return to Branch Lake and pray that by then, life will indeed be more normal for all of us so family and friends can safely gather once more.

Shoreline Improvements—What you can do for our Lake

A Neighbor's Story—Part 3 (the last in a series from prior year's newsletters)

If you have been following along, Part 1 of this adventure was the retrieval/return of large rocks to a stone jetty. Part 2 was the replacement of an old septic holding tank. Upon completion of those projects, we had a LakeSmart survey done for our property, which pointed out some areas where we could improve the lakeshore buffer and reduce erosion. We started looking at reclaiming an old boat launch that we no longer use for boats (just walking to the lake to swim). After some conversation with the LakeSmart surveyor (who had some good ideas) and my other gardening aficionados, I decided on 250 sq ft of a mixed low bush sod – a pedestrian tolerant mix of all native plants (Plants Unlimited [207-412-0613](tel:207-412-0613)) that holds soil well and is easy to grow and maintain.

After consulting with Ellsworth Code Enforcement (Lori Roberts [207-667-4910](tel:207-667-4910)), Maine DEP (John Cullen [207-941-4570](tel:207-941-4570)) and the City's Lake Steward (John Wedin [207-667-2155](tel:207-667-2155)), as well as getting the necessary permit, I applied for a City of Ellsworth Enviro-Grant, and got a \$650 award, which covered 50% of the total cost of the project. That cost included 15 yards of erosion control mulch (Savage Forest Enterprises [207-244-7223](tel:207-244-7223)), which was needed during the disruption of the soil in the lakeshore zone. The Enviro-Grant process is simple and easy. Find the application at www.ellsworthmaine.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Enviro-Grant-Application-2020.pdf. Our shoreline looks great, we still have good access to the water for swimming and fishing, and during a heavy rain, our new buffer stopped all of the runoff going into the lake that we had noticed before the project.

Special thanks to Valerie on Sargent Drive for sharing her shoreline improvement journey with us over the last 3 years. If you missed Part 1 and Part 2, you can read them in prior years' newsletters posted on www.branchlakeme.org.

Another Neighbor's Story—More good news for the property owner and the Lake!

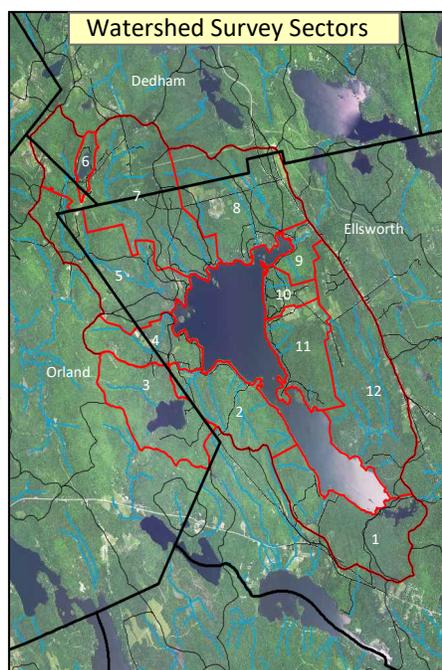
A neighbor on Walls Farm Way also undertook an improvement project over the last two years. The goal was to restore their shoreline to a more natural lake front. The concrete retaining wall and rebar had deteriorated and fallen into the lake. After it was removed, they discovered a pleasant surprise—they had a small, natural beach area, perfect for their grandchildren! Generally, all went smoothly, as all State permits were properly obtained and they worked closely with the City of Ellsworth Planning Department on the Enviro-Grant application and process. One piece of advice to share—be patient and expect some bumps in the road. The Enviro-Grant process requires 3 contractor estimates and businesses are very busy. While this work involves pages of paperwork and can be time-consuming, the value to your property and the impact to our Lake is **PRICELESS!**



Watershed Survey—What, Why & When (cont. from page 1)

How do I fill out the Survey? You may be expecting to fill out a paper questionnaire. This is **not** that kind of survey. This is a land inspection Survey of all the property in the 23 square mile Watershed, the area where any rain that falls makes its way into Branch Lake. Each property owner in the Watershed area will receive a postcard in early April 2021 indicating your inclusion in the Survey. Anyone can decline to have their property included in the Survey. While no response is needed to participate, you must contact the Project Coordinator, David Edsall at edsalldw@aol.com to have your property excluded. **

What can I expect as a property owner? The Watershed is divided into 12 Survey sectors (plus one sector that includes all the roads in the Watershed). The Survey will be conducted by a team of two or three trained people: one experienced state-trained surveyor and one or two local trained volunteers. **THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN. IF YOU ARE WILLING AND ABLE TO WALK OVER LAND PARCELS FOR SEVERAL HOURS ON ONE OR BOTH OF THESE DAYS, PLEASE VOLUNTEER AND WE WILL TRAIN YOU.** Sign up by contacting David Edsall at edsalldw@aol.com by April 15th. A team will spend about 15 minutes on each developed property in the Survey area looking for pollution sources that can affect the Lake. We call this Non-Point Source Pollution (NPSP). Gravel roads and driveways are the main source of NPSP. They contain salt, oils, chemicals and lots of phosphorous. All are bad for the Lake. In some ways phosphorous is the worst polluter, as it is fertilizer for algae and plants in the Lake.



What happens after the Survey? Information collected will not be used for enforcement or regulatory purposes. A follow-up letter will be sent to owners identified as having a priority watershed improvement opportunity on their property. A summary of all identified issues will be provided to all participants; however, individual sites potentially needing some remediation will remain confidential. A report of the findings will be used to apply for a 319 grant from the State of Maine. These grant funds would then be available to participating property owners and Road Associations to repair the identified NPSP issues. We hope to receive over \$100,000 or more. ****Note:** If you elect not to participate in the survey, your property would not be eligible to receive financial assistance from this grant.

Why is this Survey important? Erosion of soil is the main pollutant to Branch Lake. Gravel and other materials used on our roads can have high, low or no phosphorous. Most of the gravel currently used on our city and private roads has an extremely high phosphorous content. In addition to runoff from our roads, soil erosion from our properties into the Lake is an issue. Culverts, driveways, and roof drains should disperse their effluent in a method that lets it seep back into the ground and not dump it into a stream feeding the Lake. Lakefront property owners should be especially cognizant of how erosion is occurring on their shoreline. The Survey is intended to identify all the potential improvement opportunities so we can work together to remediate them and protect our Lake. *See what your neighbors are doing (page 8).*

Financial Support provided by Branch Lake Association, Maine Community Foundation, Lake Stewards of Maine and the City of Ellsworth.

Family travel around the Cove



Mac Hammersley –exploring

COVID Summer by Steve Osborn, Phillips Way



SPOTLIGHT: A Job Well Done and Greatly Appreciated



Andy Britt has been the Road Association President of Phillips Way for 15 of the 20 years he has lived on the Lake with his wife Anne. In August 2020, Andy retired after a job well done. Phillips Way has indeed been fortunate. Under his guidance, the road has continually been one of the best on the Lake. It has been in top notch shape through storms and heavy use as our area grew with new camps.

A civil engineer by trade, Andy knows about road construction and maintenance. Adding to this, is his love for equipment. He currently has a John Deere tractor with lots of attachments. What could be more natural for keeping an eye on the road? His contributions will be missed. But somehow, we don't think Andy will be just sitting around! Thanks Andy!!

Article and photo submitted by **Walt Jonsson, Phillips Way**

NEW in 2020—BLAI Establishes Program to Assist Roads

BLAI established a Road Grant Program (RGP) designed to encourage Road Associations, and non-organized roads (Road Groups), surrounding Branch Lake, to solve gravel road runoff issues that are the major contributors to Non-Point Source Pollution (NPSP) into Branch Lake. On July 27, 2020, several Road Association Presidents met with David Rocque, State Soil Scientist with the ME Dept of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry, to walk Branchview Drive and identify NPSP issues, with the intent to educate the Road Associations regarding the RGP and potential concerns on their own roads. The RGP augments the existing City of Ellsworth Enviro-Grant program by providing matching equity grants, up to a \$2,500 per request, to Road Groups that are endeavoring to repair drainage problems on their specific road.

Please urge your Road Association to carefully exam your road, and if major repairs are needed, initiate the process to seek a grant from both the City and BLAI.

For more information, contact **Rand Griffin** at rand.griffin@yahoo.com.



BRANCH LAKE ASSOCIATION MERCHANDISE

A portion of all Café Press sales goes to fund the good work of YOUR Lake Association!

SHOP AT CAFÉ PRESS FOR ON-LINE MERCHANDISE GALORE

Looking for a new sweatshirt for those chilly Maine evenings? How about matching tee shirts for the family reunion this year? Or, if you don't have a stylish Branch Lake mask, here it is!



Shop today for all these terrific items at www.cafepress.com/branchlakeshop.



BRANCH LAKE MAPS

11" x 17" laminated maps make perfect placemats - only \$8.00 each. The non-laminated version is \$3.00 each. Quantity discounts available!

Maps will be available for purchase at the Meet & Greet, your annual Road Association Meeting, the BLAI Annual Meeting and other social activities.

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LOONS

I sit here in early January looking out at the lake which is trying desperately to keep warm. But the Northeast wind today is relentless, trying to release what's left of the lake's summer heat into the atmosphere. The lake keeps a tenuous hold on it's liquidity...for now! Not having heard the loons' cry since November, I know that they have packed up and moved to their oceanic winter vacation homes just in time for the holidays. There, they will brave the elements and ride the waves like a surfer waiting for the big one. Which sets me to wondering - what do they do with themselves through the long, cold winter with no potential mates to impress, no chicks to rear, and no people to amuse? It turns out that winter affords them a much more simplistic lifestyle. No need to call out in defense of territory, no need to call out for mates since they will not be reunited until Spring. Their daily diet is more interesting as inward tides bring new fish on which to feed. Starting in January, molting of their gray, winter plumage gives way to their black and white attire, before Spring beckons them back to lakes and ponds after ice out, when they will, once again, become "ours" to admire and appreciate.

Thanks again to everyone who braved the dense fog during our 2020 loon count (see page 4). The official count was **22 adults**. Many will be interested to know that, although no chicks were spotted on count day, there was a juvenile spotted on the lake several times later in the season. See you on the lake!

Pat Edsall, BLAI Wildlife Committee Chair

2021 Loon Count—Saturday July 17th 7:00AM-7:30AM

Spring 2021 Branch Lake Association Newsletter

Your Lake Association has a **new web address**. Find us now at

www.branchlakeme.org

Non-profit organizations typically have a web domain address of **.org** (rather than **.com**). This new web domain allows us to communicate better with you, and you with us! Questions?? You can email us at:

info@branchlakeme.org
treasurer@branchlakeme.org

Check your email inbox for important information regarding the activities of your Lake Association from these new email addresses!

If you wish to be removed from this mailing list, please contact us at treasurer@branchlakeme.org.

Newsletter Editor: Holly Griffin

Thanks to all who submitted photos and stories. Visit www.branchlakeme.org to view more!

Branch Lake Association

**P.O. Box 601
Ellsworth, ME 04605**

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