

Saturday Pond Watershed Association Newsletter



Spring 2026

Otisfield, Maine

www.SaturdayPond.org

Issue 38

OUR MISSION

Preserve-Enhance Educate-Protect

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Julie Ywoskus, President
Steve Markarian, Vice-President
Amy Brown, Treasurer
Susan Haber, Recording Sec.
Susan LaFleur, Corresponding Sec.

APPOINTMENTS

Julie Ywoskus - Loon Counter
Amy Brown - Clerk & News Editor
Eric Williams - Archivist, Website
Steve Markarian - Water Monitor
William Young - Newsletter &
Water Monitor

Saturday Pond Watershed Assoc
40 Ridgewood Terrace
Otisfield, Maine 04270

President's Message

Hello Friends and Neighbors,

As I write this letter, it is another cold and rainy mid May day. However, it looks like next week spring will finally arrive! And the Saturday Pond Watershed Association activities are already underway for the upcoming season!

2025 was a great year for the Saturday Pond Watershed, our pond water quality was good, we found no invasive aquatic plants, our loon pair hatched a chick, we sent our first SPWA emails to members from our saturdaypondwatershed@gmail.com account, and more of you became SPWA members. We hope for an additionally great 2026.

This year's newsletter has a lot of interesting content for you. We feature how one of our pond residents finds Saturday Pond, the pond plunging activity of one of our trustees, and a very interesting look at dragonflies. We hope you enjoy them along with our typical updates of watershed activities.

We continue to invite you to join in our watershed activities. You can become involved in all areas, including invasive plant patrol, loon monitoring, information dissemination, and newsletter contribution. If you are interested in finding out more, please email or speak to us. We welcome your participation!

If you want to support the work we do for Saturday Pond, please consider renewing your membership or becoming a new SPWA member by completing the form on the back of the newsletter. Please include your email address as this is the easiest way for us to communicate important SPWA information with you.

Our SPWA annual meeting will be Saturday, July 11 at 10am at the Pond View beach on West Shore Drive. If there is rain, we will hold our meeting at the Otisfield Town Hall annex.

Looking forward to seeing you at the annual meeting and on the pond!

- Julie Ywoskus, SPWA President

Life on a small Maine pond is

less of a "serene getaway" and more of a high-stakes soap opera where the lead actors are all covered in feathers or fur.

The day begins at 5:00 AM with the **loons**. Their haunting, beautiful call is often described as the "voice of the wilderness," but anyone living ten feet from the water knows it's actually a 90-decibel dispute over who owns the lily pad next to the rock. It is the world's most elegant alarm clock with no snooze button.

By noon, the **snapping turtles** emerge. These are basically sentient, prehistoric boulders with bad attitudes. They spend their hours floating motionless, judging your choice of swimwear and waiting for a stray toe to pass by. They are the undisputed landlords of the muck.

Then there are the **black flies**. In Maine, we don't call them insects; we call them "the local welcoming committee." They don't just bite; they take a souvenir. You haven't truly lived until you've performed the "Maine Salute," which involves frantic, rhythmic swatting while trying to hold a lukewarm Moxie and maintain your dignity.

As the sun sets, the **bullfrogs** start their nightly bass competition. It sounds like a hundred tiny tubas being played underwater. This is the signal for the mosquitoes—which are

roughly the size of small drones—to begin their shift.

Life here is slow, damp, and smells vaguely of pine needles and decaying organic matter. It's a place where the drama between a kingfisher and a dragonfly is better than anything on Netflix. You'll leave with itchy ankles and a sunburn, but you'll already be planning your return.

- Abby Marble



Snapper Laying Eggs

- Jeff Marble

Invasive Plant Patrolling on Saturday Pond

Invasive aquatic plants have a negative impact on the health of Maine lakes. They can harm native plants and animals, and impact fishing and recreational activities and property values. Once invasive plants are discovered in a lake, it is difficult and costly to eliminate them.

They can be introduced by boats and equipment that

have not been inspected and cleaned before entering another water body. You can prevent the spread of invasive plants by cleaning, draining and drying boats and equipment. Many lakes and ponds in Maine have volunteer inspectors at boat launches.

Certified plant patrollers, called IPP'ers are trained by Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM) to survey and search for invasive species. There are 15 aquatic plants on Maine's "Most Wanted" list which was designed to help people identify and recognize the threat these invasive plants pose to the ecosystem.

Saturday Pond has a dedicated group of certified volunteer IPP'ers. They patrol the pond every summer to identify native plants and search for any suspicious, non-native or invasive species. We are fortunate that no invasive plants have been found on Saturday Pond.

Information about becoming a certified invasive plant patroller can be found on LSM's website at www.LakeStewardsOfMaine.org or contacting the SPWA at SaturdayPondWatershed@gmail.com

~ Susan LaFleur

“IT LIVES AMONGST US”

There is a creature with prehistoric origins that lives amongst us on Saturday Pond and it's the dragonfly. Some of its early ancestor's fossilized remains have been measured at two and a half feet in length. We have both dragonflies and damselflies here at the pond and generally the dragonfly is larger and stockier. For identification purposes when at rest the dragonfly wings are folded down like an airplane and the damselfly wings are folded up. There are 161 known species in the State of Maine in this insect order.

The dragonfly flight patterns are fascinating and quite bizarre.



They can fly in numerous directions and at speeds of up to thirty-five miles per hour.

Their four wings can articulate separately to allow them to move in the air as they deem fit. Consequently, their hunting skills are extraordinary, and they usually get their prey. They have been nicknamed the “Mosquito Hawk” for that ability. If you observe the dragonfly, they are forever challenging each other in flight. This behavior is based on them being very territorial in regards to

breeding and feeding. The real star of the show in my opinion is the Green Darner. They are the largest on the pond and the most colorful also, with a green head and shoulders and a blue body.

Finally I would like to dispel the rumor that I heard as a child and perhaps you did too, that the dragonfly is a flying darning needle waiting to sew your lips up for bad behavior. They're harmless to humans and great as natural pest control. Enjoy them and all their idiosyncrasies. See you on the pond...Phil King

Saturday Pond Loon Update

Last season, our loons began nesting on the loon raft in early June and a chick was hatched July 8. Many of us had the wonderful opportunity to view our pair and the new chick swimming around the pond. Unfortunately, we lost the chick a few days after it hatched, probably due to conflict between our loon pair and a third loon on the pond. It was a heartbreaking loss, but not an uncommon occurrence.



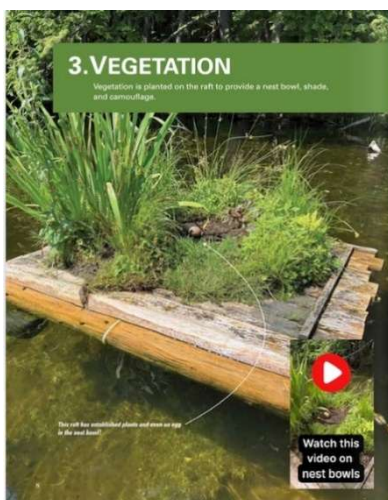
After the chick was hatched and the loons left the raft, we found out that there was a second egg in the nest that was abandoned when the first chick was hatched. Maine Audubon tells us that is a normal occurrence also.

In April 2026, right after ice out, we discovered that a muskrat had created a push-up shelter on the raft. The push-up was a pile about 2 feet tall on the raft and it consisted of aquatic plant matter, shells, and mud. Muskrats build push-ups for shelter in the

winter. We guess one of them thought our raft was a safe place to build one.

We were able to remove the materials from the raft and were happy to see that the previously existing plants and nest bed were still intact.

In May 2026, we worked to get the raft to float higher in the water and when we were finishing our work in mid May, the loons approached the raft and one climbed on. It was a little early to nest, but certainly a good sign that they continue to be interested and may nest on the raft again this season. Fingers crossed!



Our raft was featured with a full-page picture and video in the Maine Audubon “A guide to maintaining a CEDAR LOON RAFT” as a good example of good raft vegetation. You can see the picture and video and read about how we maintain our raft by scanning this QR code.

Just a reminder to keep your distance from nesting loons and to learn about signs of loon stress. Please observe with binoculars only from at least 150 feet away....if you can see a nesting loon with your eyes only, then you are too close.



“The Saturday Pond Plunge”

Written by Ellen Attaliades

If you live in the Otisfield area, you’ve probably seen an avid cyclist pushing up Peaco Hill Road, greeting everyone with a wave and a big smile. Meet Phil King! Phil and his wife, Diane, have been coming to Saturday Pond since Diane was seven years old - first visiting family, then renting a cottage on the lake for six years, and most recently purchasing a home in the northwest cove.

In addition to cycling, Phil is well known for faithfully taking “The Plunge” in Saturday Pond every morning — rain, snow, or shine.



This past year, he continued plunging until November 19th, when the water temperature had dropped to 34 degrees and the air temperature to 26 degrees. On some mornings, he even had to break through the ice to fully submerge himself. In 2026, he resumed his morning ritual on April 15th, when the water temperature reached 48 degrees.

Phil was initially inspired by an 80-year-old woman he met at his gym in South Portland who plunges regularly. She is part of a group of more than 1,000 women who participated in the Sixth Annual “Women’s Wave” plunge at Willard Beach on March 7th, 2026. Since beginning the practice himself, Phil has explored the tradition of cold-water plunging and discovered that many cultures around the world embrace it as part of a regular wellness ritual.

Phil has now plunged consistently for the past two years. He describes it as an extension of his happy place — Saturday Pond itself — and calls it a life-affirming experience. For him, the plunge is a mental jump-start to the day, much like that first cup of coffee is for others.

His enthusiasm recently got me into the water myself — without a wetsuit! I found the



water warmer than the air above it. It was invigorating, surprisingly manageable, and definitely made me consider starting my own morning ritual!

Phil and the Saturday Pond Watershed Association would love for friends and neighbors around Saturday Pond to establish an annual Labor Day plunge tradition beginning this year. At 9:00 AM on Labor Day, please join us in taking the plunge in front of your own home or at Sam’s Landing, and wave to fellow neighbors and friends around the lake.

Together, it can serve as a celebration of community and an affirmation of gratitude for the beauty of Saturday Pond and all that comes with it.

WORD SEARCH - By Susan Lafleur

L T Y P J F U K P J L L V B L N H Q Q N
V T J T D I U F M Y K C E L Y P Y F S L
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A S V N K A E J H I K I N G Q T O T S J
F L O U Y U Z G C L C V H Y K V M A E X
D M E M O R I E S V S T E A M E R S T P

Fourth of July

Saturday Pond

Blueberries

Bald eagle

Mosquitoes

Memories

Lily pads

Steamers

Sailboat

Sailboat

Campfire

Floating

Swimming

Turtles

Lobster

Friends

Cookout

Tubing

Pontoon

Sunset

Kayak

Fishing

Loons

Hiking

Maine

S'mores

Bass

SPWA

Ice In & Ice Out

Ice In

December 6, 2025

Ice Out

April 4, 2026

Ice In/Out is based upon 80% of the Pond

Remembering Jerry Haber

We would like to remember Jerry Haber who was an active member of the Saturday Pond Watershed Association and who performed many watershed activities including invasive plant monitoring, water testing, and contributing to the annual newsletter.

Thank you, Jerry....we miss you.....-



Water Quality has been measured on a regular basis going back to roughly 1984. The water quality has remained above average. I have personally been testing since 2012. Water quality testers get recertified online yearly and in person every four years.

The most cost effective way to measure water quality is by testing for clarity using a tool called a secchi disk. A secchi disk is a round metal 9 inch disk attached to a metric tape measure. It is painted black and white in alternating quadrants. The disk is lowered using the tape measure and observed as it descends using a scope made from PVC wide enough for a person's face to look through blocking all ambient light. As the disk goes out of sight, the depth is recorded in meters. The testing is done in the same place on the pond about every week to ten days from spring until fall. Water transparency is an objective way to measure turbidity caused by algae, zooplankton, and silt.



Since algae are generally the most abundant, measuring transparency indirectly measures algae productivity. Lower algae, lower chances of algae blooms and increased water quality.

We also test once in the summer for phosphorus, taking a sample and sending it to the Maine state lab in Augusta for analysis. Phosphorus is food for algae so low phosphorus readings are always good news. Saturday Pond phosphorus readings have been excellent, below 5 micrograms per liter for the last seven years (except for 2022 we were 7ug/l). The secchi disk and phosphorus readings are posted yearly on the SPWA website.

Sincerely Stephen Markarian

Saturday Pond Watershed Assoc
40 Ridgewood Terrace
Otisfield, Maine 04270



No Invasive Plants!

Annual Meeting will be held on **Saturday July 11th** at 10 AM at the Pond View Beach on West Shore Drive. Please join us for a mini-breakfast and the meeting.

If it rains, the indoor location for the meeting will be at: **Otisfield Town Hall Annex.**

Remember: Register your boat and get a Milfoil Sticker. Follow all Maine's boating laws, and no personal watercraft (Jet Skis) are allowed on Saturday Pond. Questions or Comments? Email us at: SaturdayPondWaterShed@gmail.com



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Membership Form **2026-2027**

Joining SPWA is an investment in the future health of our watershed and the beauty of Saturday Pond. **Today Saturday Pond is free of Invasive Plants.** Becoming a member will help keep it that way.

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ St _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Checks payable to: SPWA

Mail to: Amy Brown

651 New Gloucester Rd

North Yarmouth, ME 04097

Membership is \$20.00 per year

