7 Lakes Alliance thanks Smithfield voters for approving Town funding that supports conservation work in the Belgrade Lakes region. Smithfield’s support is critical to successfully addressing erosion control and the prevention and remediation of invasive plants such as milfoil. 7 Lakes maximizes Smithfield’s support by leveraging funding from other sources, including the state. Investing in lakes is smart – clean lakes support Smithfield’s tax base (reducing tax levies for taxpayers who do not own lakefront property), local jobs and the region’s economy.

Highlights of 7 Lakes Alliance’s work in 2022 include:

* 18 Adopt-a-Shoreline and Invasive Plant ID workshops in three locations.
* 50 new Adopt-a-Shoreline volunteers and 16 miles of shoreline adopted.
* 3 invasive plant paddles in search of new infestations. None were found.
* 5 trainings for courtesy boat inspectors. (All of the above increased over 2021.)
* 6,228 courtesy boat inspections with 0 invasive plant fragments introduced.
* Successful herbicide treatment of 19 acres of milfoil in Great Meadow Stream and Great Pond. 7 Lakes supported Maine Department of Environmental Protection in that effort.
* Successful containment of curly-leaf pondweed in 13 acres of the Serpentine and Old Mill Stream.
* 15 Youth Conservation Corps members built almost 100 best practices for controlling erosion on 50 properties across the watershed.
* $308,650 secured in Clean Water Act grants, resulting in infrastructure improvements that will total approximately $600,000, including 7 miles of gravel roads and driveways. Another $224,434 in grants have been secured for 2023.
* More than 1,000 water samples collected, tested and analyzed from all seven lakes.

Without the Town of Smithfield’s support, some of this work could not happen. For example, courtesy boat inspection expenses in 2021 were $90,513. Of that, lake associations contributed $63,264 and the State of Maine $21,800. Towns and private donors provided the $5,449 balance.

Town funds also support the work of the Youth Conservation Corps, which serves shoreline properties across the Belgrade Lakes watershed’s 180 square miles. Along with remedying erosion concerns, the YCC provided summer jobs for 15 high school and college students. The Town’s financial support of the YCC helps leverage diverse funding partnerships that protect the ecological, recreational, economic and cultural values of our community’s most precious natural resource – the lakes.



Laura Rose Day, President & CEO
7 Lakes Alliance