



2023 – 2024 Annual Report **April 2024**

Review of 2023 Activities

Invasive Variable Milfoil Management and Mitigation

BLIMP's mission has always been to mitigate the impact of invasive variable milfoil by controlling its spread via our DASH (Diver Assisted Suction Harvest) boat and herbicide treatments where allowed. We know that we will never eliminate the plant, but we strive to reduce it as much as possible. We carry out this mission in partnership with the States of Maine and New Hampshire, abiding by their specific rules and regulations.

The 2023 DASH operations spring season ran from May 8th through June 16th. The entire operation was once again ably managed by VP Kathleen Lisbon. The divers were supervised by Tom Eichner. The DASH team included two of our experienced divers (Steve Church and Dan Ramos) along with on-deck crew members – Bob Windsor and John Poland

For the first time in BLIMP's DASH history there was no fall season. This was a result of our regular divers (Steve Church & Dan Ramos) making a decision to remain at Lake Arrowhead for the rest of the 2023 season

- **See Appendix I – Milfoil Harvest**

Based on Amy Smagula's 2023 spring survey, there was agreement that no herbicide treatment of Balch would be required.

Funding and Financials

BLIMP is fortunate to be in a healthy financial position, finishing 2023 with a profit and reasonable reserves. Many thanks to our treasurer Ed Suleski for his work.

Our funding comes from three primary sources:

- 1) Camp contributions – contributions have been down for the last two years. Only 406 (64%) camps contributed in 2023, down from a high of 488 (77%) in 2021
- 2) State and local governments:
 - Maine DEP plant removal grant was in its second year of the award of \$13,300; however, only \$9975 was awarded due to the shortened DASH season.
 - New Hampshire DES grant total contribution was \$4,177. It was less than half of the award due to the shortened DASH season. For the 3rd year in a row, no herbicide treatment was recommended.
 - The towns of Acton, Newfield and Wakefield provided the same funding as previous years.
- 3) Fundraising events included annual Bake Sale, Swim/Paddle for Balch, Fishstock and calendar sales. Many thanks to all who coordinated these events including: Elaine Hall, Ann Willson, Susan Chaulkins, Gary Poisson, and Mike Moscaritolo

- **See Appendix II – Revenue**

Volunteer Support

Another great year of wonderful volunteer participation including:

- Science Committee – Under John Castellot's leadership the water testing programs have been expanded:
 - NH water sampling - Tony & Ginny Tagliaferro coordinated the water testing program in conjunction with AWWA and UNH. The results from 2023 will be posted on our website as soon as they become available. In the interim, those for 2022 can still be viewed there now.
 - ME water sampling - The committee also undertook a new program to test for over 200 undesirable chemicals working with the Maine lab, Kathadin Group. The results were very positive.
 - **See Appendix III**
- Fund raising – As mentioned in the Financial section, we had another good fund raising year. Special thanks to Linny Seaver who has headed up fund raising for the last 5 years. She has done a great job of coordinating all the events. Also, a big thank you to Gary & Laura Poisson for many years of FishStock.
- On Water Support - Kathleen Lisbon was fortunate to have Tom Eichner step up to supervise the DASH operation. Tom has been a great add to the team. And the quiet helpers - Dennis Racine for DASH boat commissioning, decommissioning, & storage and Jack and Ellen McAdam for once again allowing our dive crew to use their camp for the whole DASH season.
- Secretary – Bruce & Denise Bowden of the Ridge are doing a great job since taking over in 2020.

Planning and Goals for 2024

Invasive Variable Milfoil Management and Mitigation

DASH Operations:

- For the 1st time in BLIMP's DASH program, we will transition to outsourced DASH Operations. Following an extensive evaluation process including, support from both ME-DEP & NH-DES, BLIMP has selected Aqualogic (<https://www.facebook.com/aqualogic1>) as our new contractor. As part of that contract, Aqualogic will lease BLIMP's DASH boat, so you will still see it around the lake this year.. Unlike other years the harvest will take place within one 30 day session during the summer season.

Herbicide application:

- NH-DES has advised that herbicide treatment is necessary in Balch, Chicks & Woodmans. Accordingly, BLIMP has contracted with SOLitude Lake Management to treat approximately 60 acres with the herbicide ProcellaCOR. This is the same herbicide that was extremely successful in past applications. The treatment should take place in late June.

Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI):

- Boat inspections will continue at the marina on the days the marina is open

Funding and Financials

- Budget – 2024 – On March 25, 2024, via Zoom, the Board of Directors approved the 2024 budget. It is notable that we are budgeting a loss for 2024. This is principally due to the cost of ProcellaCOR treatments, as these are only reimbursed at only an approximate 50% rate by the State of New Hampshire. Fortunately, BLIMP maintains reserve funds for eventualities just like this. A summary of the budget can be found, at: <https://www.balchlake.org/>
- Camp Contributions – We would like to get the contributions back to 2021 levels this year. As a reminder, the recommended contribution is \$50/camp.
- State & Local Government – awards for 2024 are:
 - Maine DEP – Plant Removal - \$12,366
 - Maine DEP – CBI - \$ 1,100
 - NH DES – Balch – Herbicide & DASH – \$ 36,520
 - Towns of Acton, Newfield & Wakefield – \$ 7,750
- Fundraising – Donna Lefebvre has taken over fundraising from Linny Seaver. This year's events are still in the planning stages. The calendar sales, Swim for Balch, and the bake sale are in the works as well as a possible return of the Poker Run.

Volunteer & Board:

- This has been a year of transition for our Board of Directors. Linny Seaver stepped down from the Board and, Michael Kattman decided it was time to enjoy retirement more, so he has moved into an advisor role. Michael served as both treasurer and most recently president for many, many years.
- The Board of Directors consists of:
 - Sue Jackman, President
 - Kathleen Lisbon, Vice President
 - Ed Suleski, Treasurer
 - Denise & Bruce Bowden, Secretary
 - John Castellot, Science Committee
 - Tom Eichner, Invasive Species Control Committee
 - Donna Lefebvre, Fund Raising
- Board Committees always need volunteers. If you are interested in any of the following committees, please contact the chair directly:
 - Fund Raising – Donna Lefebvre - don_ox@yahoo.com
 - Invasive Species Control – Tom Eichner- engine8329@gmail.com
 - Science – John Castellot - John.Castellot@tufts.edu
- One of the Board goals for 2024 is to identify ways we can improve communication across all Associations at Balch.
- Website – www.balchlake.org - Jack McAdam - our webmaster. As always, PayPal contributions to BLIMP can be made via the website.

Important Dates

- **06/15 – 9-11 am – BLIMP Board of Directors at the Shady Nook Rec Center**
- **06/22 – 9-11 am – BLIMP Association Rep meeting at Shady Nook Rec Center**

Additional Notes:

- BLIMP is working very closely with the Loon Preservation Committee. If you observe a loon nesting place, please report it to Sue or Kathleen. This is very important in that there are rules we must abide by regarding our milfoil activities and the distance they must be from loon nesting sites.
- Avoid using lead sinkers as they and broken fishing lines are the number one killer of loons.
- PLEASE watch the wakes - more reports of dock, boat, wall, and shoreline damage are reported each year as a result of the large wakes.
- Any questions, comments, or needed clarifications please send them to Sue @ sjackman123@gmail.com

A special final thought, this past December we lost one of our founders, Nick Stadtfeld. Thank you to the many people who contributed in Nick's name. The board has created a special fund for memorial gifts and we are talking about ideas for meaningful ways to honor people like Nick. Please let us know if you have any ideas. As for me, I will think of Nick every morning as I look out on the lake he loved so much. Fair winds & following seas to a great guy.

Best regards,
Sue Jackman
President, BLIMP

Seasonal Contact Information:

Board Members:

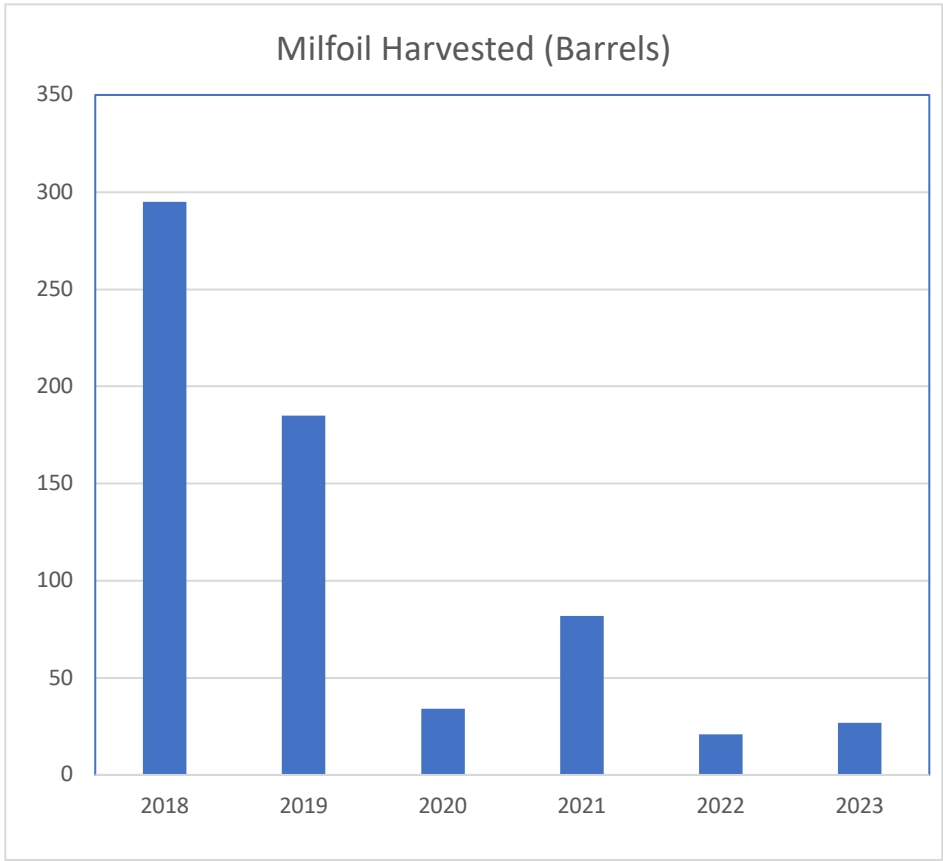
Sue Jackman, President – 207-797-2263 (Shady Nook)
Kathleen Lisbon, Vice President – 603-548-5261 (No Association)
Ed Suleski, Treasurer – 617-513-6561 (Wyman Point)
Denise & Bruce Bowden, Secretary - (978) 335-7442 (The Ridge)
Donna Lefebvre, Fund Raising - (781) 760-7808 (Shady Nook)
John Castellot, Science Committee – (617) 835-2660 (The Ridge)
Tom Eichner, Invasive Species Control - (631) 495-7704 (BaLak)

Advisors:

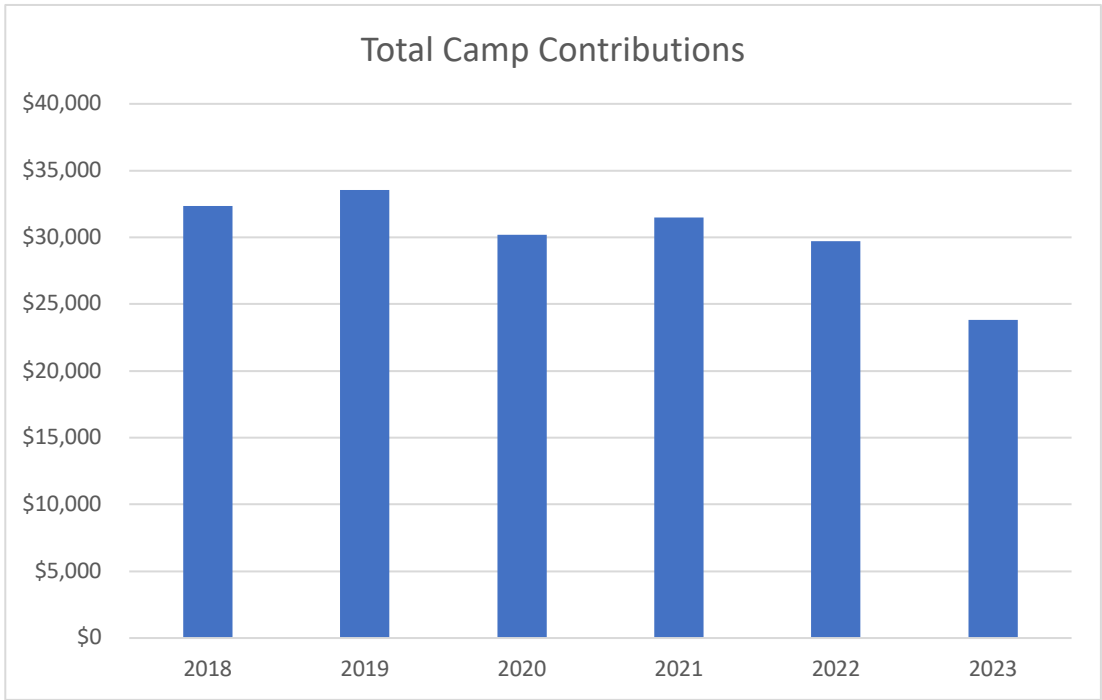
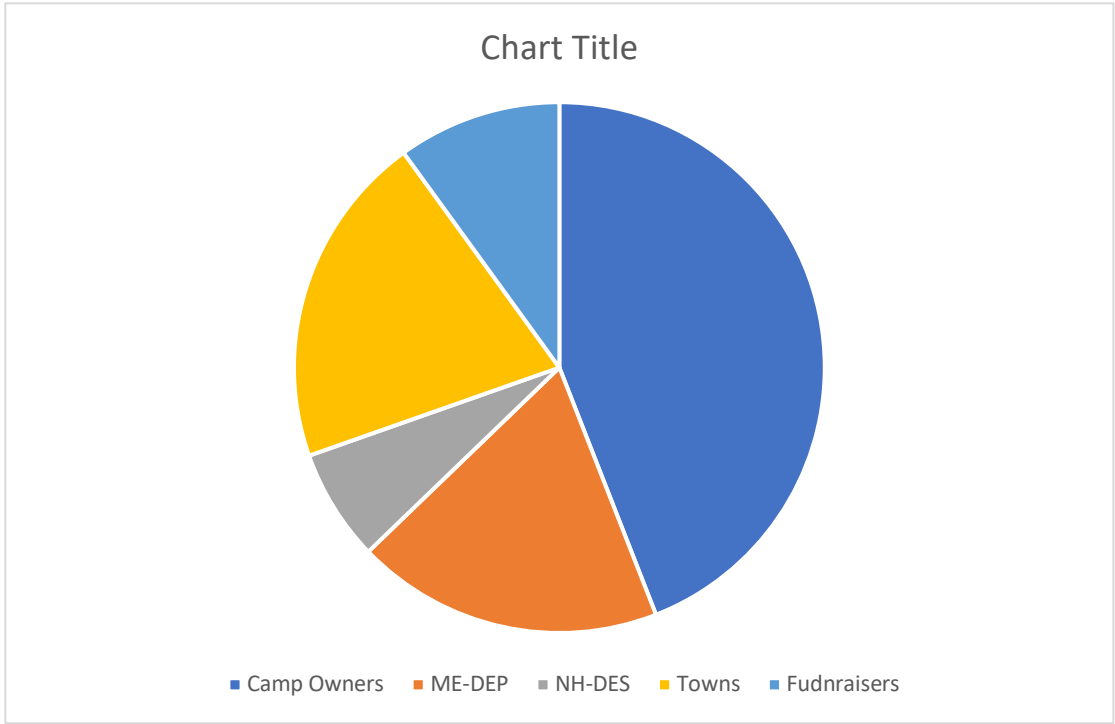
Lee Willson
Michael Kattman
Dennis Racine
Jack McAdam, Webmaster

Appendix I – Milfoil Harvest

Year Harvested	Barrels
2018	295
2019	185
2020	34
2021	82
2022	21
2023	27



Appendix II – Revenue



Appendix III – Summary of Kathadin Analysis – Fall 2023

Introduction. We collected water samples on October 18, 2023. They were analyzed by Katahdin Analytics in Scarborough ME. Katahdin Analytics is a Maine-registered and -approved testing facility, which means they use only US and Maine-approved, state-of-the-art methods. The mid-October testing date was chosen because it represented the “quiet period” on the lake following the busy boating season during the summer. Along with a future early Spring sampling date, these data provide what should be considered baseline values. Katahdin tested >200 different compounds, including heavy metals, herbicides, oil and gasoline-related compounds, and E. coli levels. Notably, they also measured “forever chemicals” that have been found in approximately 30% of lakes tested in the US, including New England.

The following is a category-by-category analysis:

Herbicides. A broad range of possible herbicides were analyzed, including ProCellaCOR, the chemical BLIMP is currently using with NH EPA permission and guidance. We tested for a broad range of other herbicides in case run-off from a landowner using excessive amounts of herbicides might be occurring. All the herbicides tested were undetectable.

Gas and Oil Compounds. Katahdin analyzed a wide range of compounds that could result from discharge of gas and/or oil into the lake. The data indicates clearly that there is no contamination in Balch—all such compounds were undetectable. Since the samples were taken in mid-October, it will be important to follow up during the height of the boating season in July.

Heavy Metals. A wide range of metals were analyzed, including all of the metals implicated in human health issues. All heavy metals tested were either undetectable or 50-1,000 fold below federal and state limits. We can be highly confident that heavy metals, including mercury, are not a problem in Balch Lake.

Organics. These are compounds like acetone, phenols, chloroethanes, and other small organic compounds that are known to have significant human health effects. They are commonly found in fingernail mineral spirits, rust remover, oil-based paints and stains, dry cleaning products, fingernail polish remover, etc. All compounds examined were undetectable using state-of-the art technology.

“Forever Chemicals”. This class of compounds represents a highly dangerous group because of their short- and long-term effects on human health, especially reproductive health, neurological/mental health, and cancer. Two different categories of “forever chemicals” were tested: BPA and similar man-made molecules often found in plastic bottles, plastic containers, and the lining of soda cans. The second category are the PFAS group of compounds, also man-made, which have been discovered in 20-30% of lakes that have tested for them nationally, including several in NH and Maine. Potentially dangerous levels of PFAS compounds have been found in the water supply of 34 Maine towns. Fortunately, none of these “forever chemicals” were detectable in Balch.

E. coli. This is a bacterium that is present in human feces. If detected above a very, very low limit, the water in which it is found is immediately quarantined from human use until the E. coli levels return to zero or near-zero. While a completely expected result, especially given the time of year the sample was collected, the level of E. coli in Balch Lake was zero.

Conclusion. Based on a thorough, state-of-the-art analysis, Balch Lake has an enviable level of water quality—none of the >200 compounds tested were detected or were orders of magnitude below regulatory limits. As planned, we will continue to assess these potentially harmful chemicals in the early Spring and mid-summer 2024. Based on recommendations from Katahdin Analytics, we are planning regular intervals of measurements going forward to ensure that our water quality remains high, and to ensure that we get “warning signs” early enough to intervene.