BALCH LAKE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE
PO Box 494 East Wakefield NH 03830

2024 – 2025 Annual Report
April 2025

Review of 2024 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 using divers to remove the milfoil plants 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 abiding by the rules and regulations of both Maine and New Hampshire.

2024 was a year of major transition for our invasive plant removal. BLIMP moved from hiring our own divers on our DASH boat to engaging the contract services of Aqualogic (https://www.facebook.com/aqualogic1/). Per our agreement, Aqualogic leased BLIMP's DASH boat for the 2024 season. Aqualogic was on-site diving from June 17-July 24th and September 16-20th. It was a very successful season with Tom Eichner providing supervision and direction. By the end of the season, Aqualogic also purchased our old DASH boat after affirming that our outsourcing decision was a good one.

Recognizing that BLIMP will continue to need a "work" boat for such things as surveying and diver coordination, helping with safety hazard marking on the lake, and assisting Loon Preservation with nests and surveys, we were fortunate that Jean & Doug Thompson were willing to sell their 20-year-old 15' Boston Whaler to BLIMP at a very affordable price. Having this boat made a huge difference in our season-ending activities.

- **See Appendix I – Milfoil Harvest**

2024 was also a year when Amy Smagula of NH - Department of Environmental Services (NH-DES) recommended treatment with ProcellaCOR for Balch and Chick's Pond. Based on our past successes, we again contracted with Solitude Lake Management to treat 35 acres on Balch Lake and 3 acres on Chick's Pond in late June. The Balch areas treated included Foye Cove and Stump Pond.

Funding and Financials. .
Our funding comes from three primary sources:

1) Camp contributions – contributions have been down for the last several years. Only 403 (64%) camps contributed in 2024, down from a high of 488 (77%) in 2021
2) State and local governments grants included:
   - Maine DEP (ME-DEP) plant removal & courtesy boat inspection (CBI) grant awards of $13,920
   - NH-DES grant awards of:
     - $20,235 for ProcellaCOR Treatment
     - $11,932 for 30 days of diver plant removal
   - The towns of Newfield and Wakefield provided similar funding as previous years.
3) Fundraising events, as described in our Fundraising Committee report, generated more than $6,600 of funds for BLIMP Many thanks to all who volunteered and supported these efforts!

- **See Appendix II – Major Sources of Revenue**

Our spending continues to be laser focused on both the harvest of invasive variable leaf milfoil and periodic herbicide treatments. Of our total 2024 expenditures of $95,000, more than 95% went directly to those efforts.

Volunteer Support

2024 was a year of transition of BLIMP leadership too. After many years of service Michael Kattman (president and treasurer) and Kathleen Lisbon (vice president and DASH operations) both stepped down from the Board of Directors. Fortunately, both remain active on the Advisory Committee. Two other long-term contributors and former presidents, Don Pierce and Lee Willson, have stepped down from the Advisory Committee. Thanks to all four for many, many years of helping BLIMP grow and thrive.

At the same time we have added two new members to our Board of Directors, Donna Lefevbre and Henry Lovejoy. Both are already making strong contributions to keeping BLIMP moving in the right direction.

Our committees' activites in 2024:

- Science Committee – John Castellot, Chair
    - UNH Water sampling – Tony & Ginny Tagliaferro again coordinated the water testing program in conjunction with the Acton-Wakefield Watershed Alliance ("AWWA") and UNH. This program monitors the general health of our lake's waters. We received a rating of "Excellent" across the three parameters that get tested.
        - **See Appendix III**
    - Katahdin Water sampling - For a 2nd year we worked with the Katahdin Group to test for >200 undesirable compounds, such as "forever chemicals" (including PFAS & BPA), heavy metals and gas & oil. The testing results again concluded that all of these compounds were either undetectable or at least 50-100-fold below the most stringent federal and state guidelines.

- Fundraising – Donna Lefebvre, Chair
    - After many years of both serving on the Board of Directors & coordinating fundraising activities, Linny Seaver stepped aside with Donna picking up those responsibilities.
    - As mentioned in the financial section, 2024 fundraisers and their coordinators included the annual Bake Sale (Elaine Hall), a new Fishing Derby (Brooke Peterson), Calendar sales (Mike Moscaritolo) and several concerts (Gary Poisson,Tom Turner, Mark Mauszewski and the Nazarian family).

- Communication and Education – Donna Lefebvre, Chair
    - In 2024, we began a concerted focus on Communication and Education for the entire Balch Lake community, not only to enhance awareness of BLIMP's role, successes and goals, but also to share information of interest to all residents. In August we began publishing a monthly newsletter containing information about our diving activities, herbicide treatments and water quality studies, as well as insights from our partners at AWWA on more statewide efforts. The newsletters will continue in 2025 along with other activities in continued partnership with AWWA, ME-DEP and NH-DES

- On Water Operations – Tom Eichner, Chair
    - Transitioning from our own divers to Aqualogic was wonderful with Tom Eichner doing a great job coordinating Aqualogic's daily dive spots. Having enthusiastic college students was an added benefit for all who met and/or feed them. Thanks to all who provided muffins, sandwiches, fruit, cookies, pizza – a great way to thank them and learn what & how they were harvesting invasive variable milfoil.
    - As noted earlier, for the first time in 4 years NH-DEP approved the application of ProcellaCOR for Balch and Chicks Pond. Woodman Pond was also approved, but a decision was made to not treat it due to an abutter issue. Significantly, NH-DEP allowed treatment of Foye Cove and sections of Stump Pond that previously had not been approved.

Planning and Goals for 2025

Invasive Variable Milfoil Management and Mitigation

Invasive Plant Harvesting: BLIMP and Aqualogic have again signed an agreement for up to 40 days of plant harvesting in 2025. This is a 10-day increase over our 2024 diving days. Harvesting will take place from mid-June through mid-July and late September.

Herbicide application: NH-DES has advised that there is no need for further herbicide applications in 2025

Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI): Boat inspections will continue at the marina on the days the marina is open

Funding and Financials

- On April 17, 2025, the Board of Directors approved the 2025 budget. A summary can be found at: https://www.balchlake.org/
- Camp Contributions – Contributions are continuing to be less than 2021 levels. Not only does the funding directly support BLIMP, but camp contributions also factor into the equation of some state grants that are of a matching nature. As a reminder, the recommended contribution is $50/camp and we have added PayPal to our website to accept contributions.
- State & Local Government – awards for 2025 are:
  - Maine DEP – Plant Removal - $14,200
  - Maine DEP – CBI - $ 1,300
  - NH DES – Plant Removal – $ 17,050
  - Towns of Acton, Newfield & Wakefield – $ 12,500
- Fundraising –This year's events are still in the planning stages. The calendar sales, Fishing Derby, Poker Run and the bake sale are in the works.

Other General Information

Office	Contact Name	E-mail
President	**Sue Jackman**	sjackman123@gmail.com
Vice President	**Tom Eichner**	Tom.Eichner.Blimp@gmail.com
Treasurer	**Ed Suleski**	ed.suleski.blimp@gmail.com
Secretary	**Denise Bowden**	bowden.family@comcast.net
Secretary	**Bruce Bowden**	bowden.family@comcast.net
Board member	**Henry Lovejoy**	henry@ecofish.com
Communications & Education	**Donna Lefebvre**	don_ox@yahoo.com
Science Committee	**John Castellot**	john.castellot@tufts.edu
Webmaster	**Jack McAdam**	captjack@gwi.net
Advisor	**Michael Kattman**	dmkattman@gmail.com
Advisor	**Kathleen Lisbon**	Kathleen.Lisbon@comcast.net
Advisor	**Dennis Racine**	DRacine999@aol.com

Important Dates:

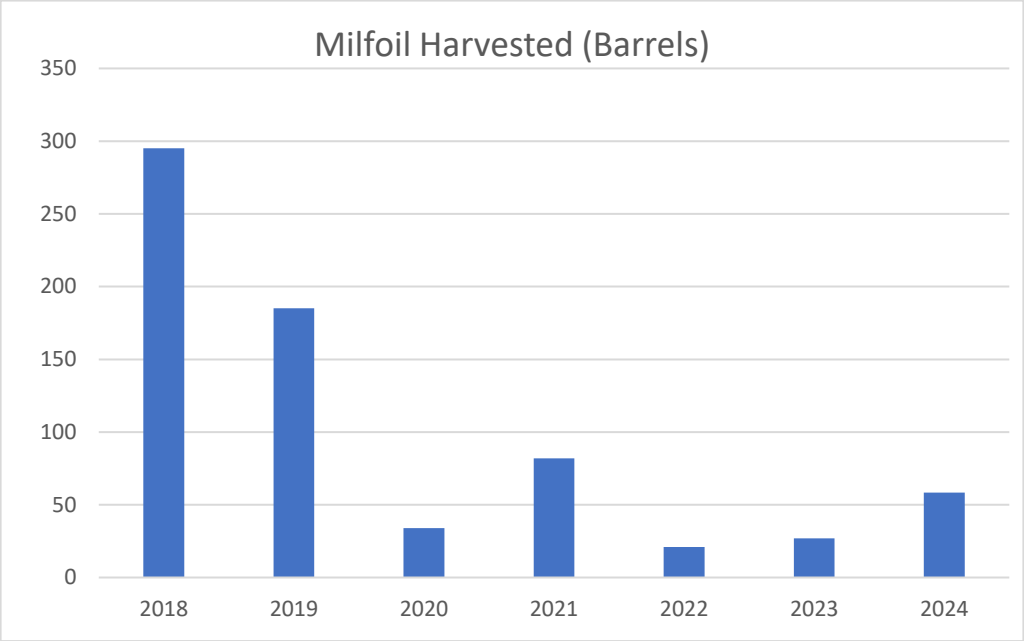
- **06/21 – 9-11 am – BLIMP Board of Directors and Advisors Meeting at the Shady Nook Rec Center**
- **06/28 – 9-11 am – Annual Meeting of BLIMP's Member Associations' Representatives at Shady Nook Rec Center**

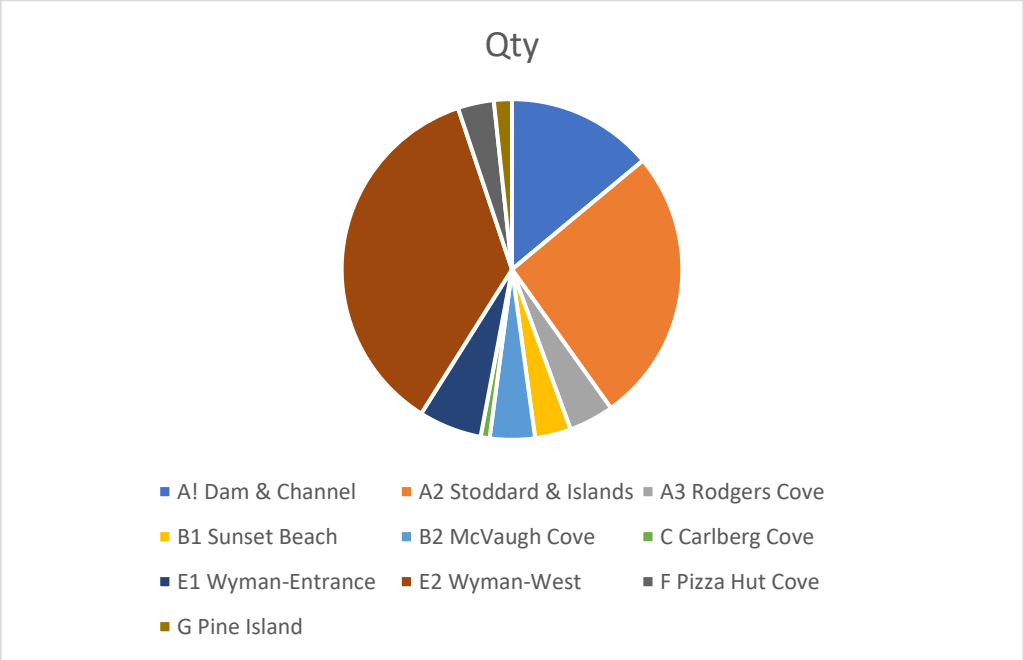
Additional Notes:

- BLIMP is always looking for new volunteers to join one of our standing committees, help with a fund raising event, or assist with data entry for courtesy boat inspections please contact any board member.
- BLIMP is working very closely with the Loon Preservation Committee. If you observe a loon nesting place, please report it to Sue or Henry Lovejoy. 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

Best regards,
Sue Jackman
President, BLIMP

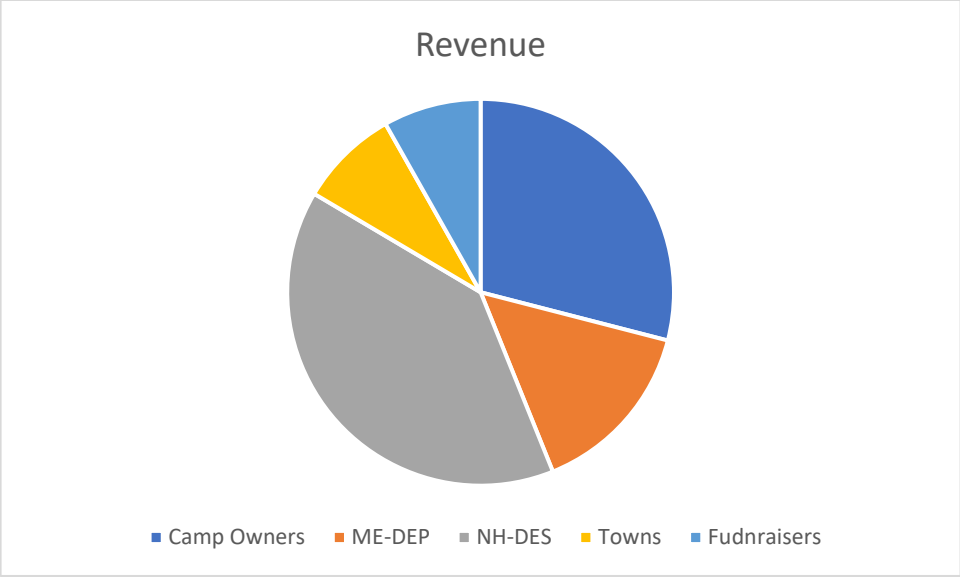
Appendix I – Milfoil Harvest

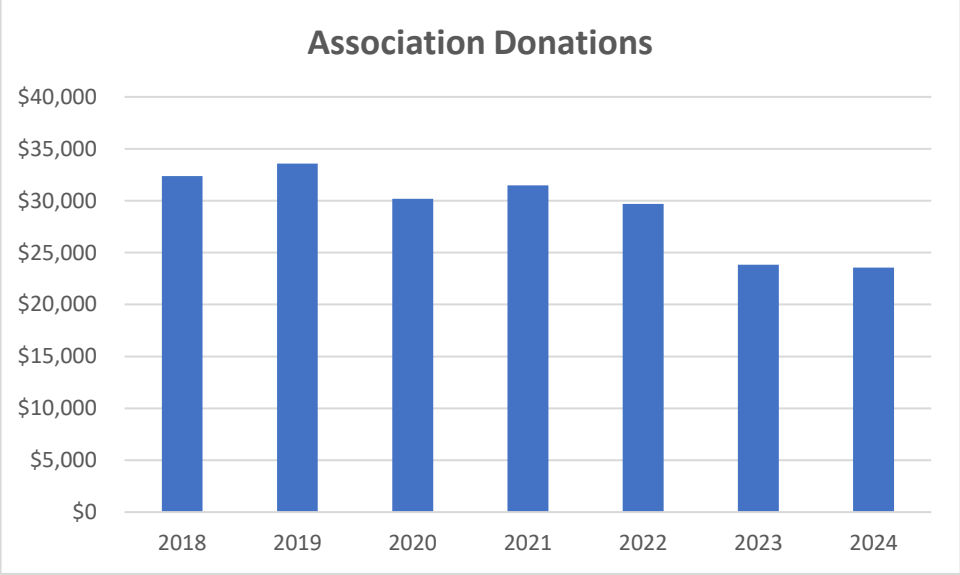




Appendix II – Major Soures of Revenue

Source	Amount
Camp Owners	23,565
ME-DEP	12,090
NH-DES	32,166
Towns	6,750
Fundraisers	6,646





Appendix III – UNH Water Sampling – 2024

BALCH POND

2024 SAMPLING HIGHLIGHTS

Station Deep

Wakefield, NH

Acton and Newfield, ME

Extension

Blue = Oligotrophic

Light Green = Mesotrophic

Dark Green = Eutrophic

Gray = No Data

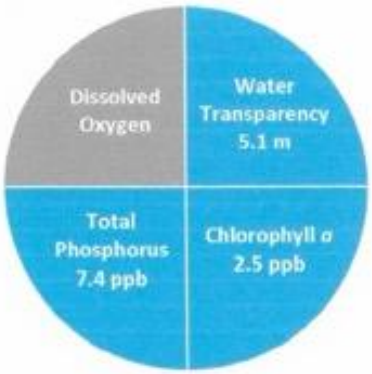


Figure 1. Balch Pond Water Quality (2024)

Water quality data displayed in Tables 1 and 2 are surface water measurements with the exception of the dissolved oxygen data that are collected near the lake bottom. Summary statistics are provided for samples collected between June 21 and September 16, 2024.

Table 1. 2024 Balch Pond Seasonal Averages and NH DES Aquatic Life Nutrient Criteria[1]

Parameter	Oligotrophic "Excellent"	Mesotrophic "Fair"	Eutrophic "Poor"	Balch Pond Average (range)	Balch Pond Classification
Water Clarity (meters)	> 4.0 – 7.0	2.5 - 4.0	< 2.5	5.1 meters (3.7 – 6.2)	Oligotrophic
Chlorophyll *a* [1] (ppb)	< 3.3	3.3 – 5.0	> 5.0 – 11.0	2.5 ppb (1.2 – 3.9)	Oligotrophic
Total Phosphorus [1] (ppb)	< 8.0	8.0 – 12.0	> 12.0 – 28.0	7.4 ppb (5.2 – 8.5)	Oligotrophic
Dissolved Oxygen (ppm)	> 5.0 – 7.0	2.0 – 5.0	< 2.0	Not Assessed	Not Assessed

Table 2. 2024 Balch Pond Seasonal Average Accessory Water Quality Measurements

Parameter	Assessment Criteria					Balch Pond Average (range)	Balch Pond Classification
Color (color units)	< 10 uncolored	10 – 20 slightly colored	20 – 40 lightly tea colored	40 – 80 tea colored	> 80 highly colored	22.5 color units (range: 20.2– 25.6)	Lightly tea colored
Alkalinity (ppm)	< 0.0 acidified	0.1 – 2.0 extremely vulnerable	2.1 – 10 moderately vulnerable	10.1 – 25.0 low vulnerability	> 25.0 not vulnerable	8.2 ppm (range: single value)	Moderately vulnerable
pH (std units)	< 5.5 suboptimal for successful growth and reproduction		6.5 – 9.0 optimal range for fish growth and reproduction			6.8 standard units (range: single value)	Optimal range for fish growth and reproduction
Specific Conductivity (uS/cm)	< 50 uS/cm Characteristic of minimally impacted NH lakes		50-100 uS/cm Lakes with some human influence	> 100 uS/cm Characteristic of lakes experiencing human disturbances		57.1 uS/cm (range: single value)	Characteristic of lakes with some human influence

Strategies to stabilize and improve water quality

Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) within the Balch Pond watershed to minimize the adverse impacts of polluted runoff and erosion into Balch Pond. Refer to "Landscaping at the Water's Edge: An Ecological Approach" and "New Hampshire Homeowner's Guide to Stormwater Management: Do-It-Yourself Stormwater Solutions for Your Home" and the Acton Wakefield Watershed Alliance webpages for more information on how to reduce nutrient loading caused by overland runoff. NH Lakes also provides a series of resources aimed at educating residents and protecting our lakes and ponds.