The Sampler

May 31, 2014

The Sampler is a monthly e-newsletter produced by the Volunteer Lake Assessment Program.

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Web Highlights

This month's featured lake website is the Pratt Pond Association, New Ipswich, NH

Recovery from Acid Rain Speeding up in Northeast Lakes

Surging Seas Tool

Clarity for Lake Researcher's Water Quality Questions

Upcoming Events

New England Lakes Conference
"Green Ideas for Blue Lakes"
June 13 - 14, 2014
UConn Student Union Bldg.
2110 Hillside Rd.
Storrs, CT 06269

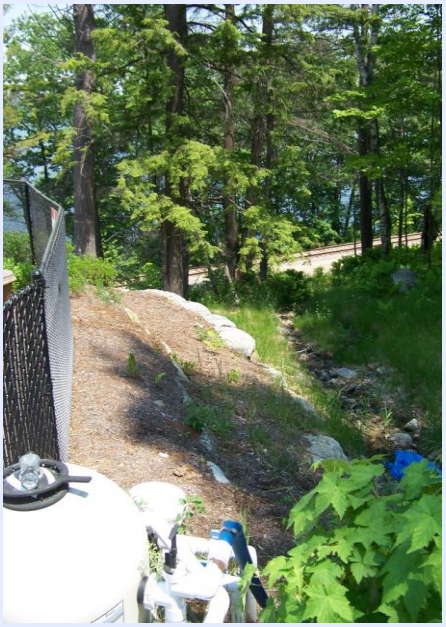
2014 Lakes Congress
Friday, June 27, 2014
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Church Landing at Mills Falls
281 Daniel Webster Hwy.
Meredith, NH 03253

Green Hills Bioblitz
July 12, 2014
North Conway, NH

Pool Maintenance Tips for the Homeowner

It is finally summer in NH, which means…swimming! I'm not talking about jumping into our lakes, rivers or your favorite local swimming spot. I'm talking about the backyard swimming pool; pool parties, grilling, family and friends…the epitome of summer fun. While swimming is one of the nation's most popular recreational activities, anyone that owns a pool knows that no one is going to get wet unless the pool water is sparkling clean. This means pool maintenance, proper disinfection and good filtration, but it also means an awareness of the environment around you. If you own a residential swimming pool and happen to live around a body of water, a pond, lake, river, stream, or any kind of wetland, you need to be mindful of the consequences of maintaining clean pool water. The make-up of pool water can be very harmful to the environment if it is not managed with care.

All pools have a filtration system of some kind (sand, cartridge or diatomaceous earth) and in order to do its job properly, filters need to be cleaned from time to time. This could simply mean backwashing the filter or manually cleaning the cartridge or diatomaceous earth (DE) elements (most often with chemicals). Pools may also have to be partially or completely drained to make repairs as the pool ages or to dilute built up chemical compounds that can't be chemically treated. In either case, this must be done wisely. The same chemicals used to keep your pool free of algae and bacteria can also destroy aquatic life in the waters around you.



LakeFest 2014: Raft-a-Palooza!
Sunday Aug. 3, 2014
Endicott Rock Park
Laconia, NH 03246

Grants

NRCS: Regional Conservation Partnership Program

SCC 2015 Conservation Grants
Check back July 1, 2014
Deadline: Sept. 26, 2014

Limno Lingo

Utricularia: Commonly called Bladderwort, a carnivorous aquatic plant found in most NH lakes. The distinguishing feature is its small bladders located on branches leaves. The bladders have small trigger hairs that open a trap-door when triggered by organisms such as zooplankton and insect larvae. There are approximately 10 species found in NH with flowers ranging in color from pink, yellow, white and green. Bladderwort is rootless and floats freely through the water.

Pool Filtration System Near Stream

Chlorine, bromine, algaecides, biocides, water conditioners, stabilizers, and other chemicals in pool water are toxic to fish and other aquatic life. Pool water with very high or very low pH can be equally devastating. Diatomaceous earth, cellulose fiber, and sand particles from backwash water can fill in the spaces in streambeds preventing oxygen from reaching fish eggs, young fish and all manner of aquatic life. Very high salt levels, 3,000 - 6,000 parts per million, can also be found in some pools that use a recently popularized chlorine generating technology. Salt water that finds its way onto vegetation and into the soil, groundwater, storm drains, and surface waters will have a significant impact on the environment. Please refer to this site for additional information on the impact of salt in the environment.

Pool discharge of any kind CANNOT be directed into storm drains. These are intended for flood events and there is no treatment of this water. Stormwater runoff is often discharged directly to wetlands, lakes and rivers. The federal Clean Water Act and the NHDES prohibit the discharge of pollutants to the waters of the State of New Hampshire without a permit.

The ideal way to dispose of pool water is on your own property. Pool water can be cautiously sent to a public sewer system, but better yet, it should go to a dry well, "dead end" gravel swale, or allowed to slowly percolate into the soil. It is very important that it doesn't run off the property or into wetlands, surface water or storm water systems. Before pool water is discharged to the ground it must be de-chlorinated to less than 0.1 milligrams per liter of disinfectant and the pH must be adjusted to near neutral, 6-8. Use your pool water test kit to verify these levels. In the case of "salt water" pools, it is best to use planned draining intervals. Slowly saturating the yard with fresh water after discharging a portion of the pool, will go a long way to reduce the impact of high salt levels on the environment. The take-away message is to drain your pool slowly and wisely.

A word about diatomaceous earth: powdered DE is very harmful to the respiratory system or if it comes into contact with the skin or eyes. When spent DE is backwashed to the ground, as the water dissipates, is the DE is left behind to become a powder again. Use a separation tank for DE and cellulose fiber filters to capture the filter media. The collected filter media can then be disposed of as a solid waste. For additional information visit the DES Public Pool and Spa Program website.

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