

## TAKE ACTION: LOCAL EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

- **Environmental stewardship is a belief that our surroundings require our care and attention but also involves translating that belief into action.**
- **There have been some outstanding recent Laurel Lake environmental stewardship projects that are outlined on this page.**
- **The Laurel Lake Association will continue to update this page with examples of high impact activities and resources that can become part of our individual and community environmental stewardship plans.**

Environmental stewardship is a belief that our surroundings require our care and attention but also involves translating that belief into action. Below are examples of local environmental caretaking activities conducted by Laurel Lake community members. This document also provides links to stewardship activities and initiatives occurring around the country. It is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the kinds of community and homeowner programs that can make a real difference in the health of our waterbodies.

### **Some Recent Laurel Lake Environmental Stewardship Projects** (source: 2024 *Laurel Lake Ledger*)

*Howeville Road Regrading and Culvert Replacement* – Erosion at the town beach, caused by runoff from Howeville Road, and clogged drainage culverts controlling the lake's water levels has been an on-going problem at Laurel Lake. Specifically, Howeville Road was sloped at an angle that directed water runoff towards the lake. After heavy rains, the water washed across the road to the area of the town beach, causing the sand to erode and wash into the lake, along with any contaminants in the runoff. This also pushed the sand and silt into the area where a culvert went under Howeville Road, causing it to be clogged and impacting the dam which controls the lake water level. Lake residents and LLA members Pat Deyo and Tom White engaged with the Fitzwilliam Highway Department to discuss the problem and explore options. Since Howeville Road was planned for repaving in 2024, the slope of the road and culvert replacement were incorporated into the repaving project plans. This project proved to be a great success in diverting runoff and town beach washout from running into the lake.

*Public Boat Ramp Upgrades* – The public boat ramp on East Lake Road is a frequently used entry point into Laurel Lake. Erosion to its sides and bottom created safety and property damage concerns for its users for several years. And, this erosion was allowing runoff contaminants to flow into the lake in an unimpeded fashion. LLA members Pat Deyo, Tom White, and others partnered with the Town of Fitzwilliam and secured funding and permitting necessary to get needed ramp improvements planned and completed. Concrete logs were added to the sides of the ramp, large dimension rock was put in place around the concrete logs to stabilize them, and the southern-most side of the ramp was extended to the water to allow a widened launching area. The results of this project include reduced runoff into the lake (and corresponding improved water turbidity), the addition of a sitting area next to the ramp, and a safer overall boat launching experience.

*Whites Grove and Castle Court Stormwater Mitigation* - Runoff down Whites Grove Road & Castle Court into the north end of the lake by Sandy Beach have gotten progressively worse over the past several years. Specifically, Whites Grove Road & Castle Court are fairly steep, straight dirt roads which bring dirt and silt-laden runoff down the hills and into the lake. Also, old culverts in this area had collapsed over time. Three major improvements were done in this area: (1) the culverts were replaced and rocks were installed to create a catchment area to collect runoff and allow it to slowly percolate into the ground, rather than flowing straight into the lake; (2) water bars – or road humps – were built along Whites Grove Road to slow down water runoff and divert it to the side of the road; and (3) a berm was installed at the edge of Whites Grove Road just before Sandy Beach to divert runoff into a wetland area. In all cases, permits were obtained from the State and impacted property owners were consulted for their permission and help.

with the work. Once again this excellent community stewardship project has resulted in significantly improved stormwater mitigation in that area of Laurel Lake.

*Town of Fitzwilliam Roadway Salt Reduction and Boat Ramp Parking Improvements* – Laurel Lake Association members, working with the Town of Fitzwilliam Highway Department, implemented a winter roadway salt reduction program targeted within the Laurel Lake watershed. This purposeful reduction of salt on our roads around the lake contributes to a beneficial reduction in related chemicals flowing into our lake water. Additionally, the Town of Fitzwilliam conducted clean-up improvements to the East Lake Road boat ramp parking area to reduce the muddy stormwater runoff entering the lake from that location. These partnerships with the Town of Fitzwilliam have a significant positive impact on our Laurel Lake water quality.

*Laurel Lake Watershed Plan Study Group* - The Laurel Lake Association is pleased to announce that it and the Town of Fitzwilliam are the joint recipients of an EPA Clean Water Act grant, via the NH Department of Environmental Services, to develop a watershed protection plan for Laurel Lake. LLA Board member Barbara Green has driven the grant proposal process for the past 3 years. NH's Southwest Region Planning Commission will administer the grant and perform most of the work which involves evaluating the physical area around the lake, identifying sources of potential or current runoff which can negatively impact the quality of the lake's water and wildlife, and developing a plan to mitigate those problem areas. This grant will allow us to examine the more obvious stormwater issues and identify other risk areas. Work on this project will start in early 2025. Updates on this grant project will be posted to the [LLA website](#) as it rolls forward.

*Lakefront Homeowner Projects* – There are many wonderful examples of stewardship efforts taken by Laurel Lake property owners. From rain gardens to riprap swales to removing invasive plants along the shoreline, our lake community has stepped up and engaged in activities and projects that directly improve the water quality and eco-system at Laurel Lake. One recent example of the impact of homeowner generated environmental stewardship was presented in the 2023 [Laurel Lake Ledger](#). Interested homeowners should check out the [NH LAKES LakeSmart](#) program which provides guidance and incentives for homeowner generated stewardship projects.

The Laurel Lake Association will continue to update this page with examples of high impact activities and resources that can become part of our individual and community environmental stewardship efforts. Take your own stewardship actions this year and send them to the Laurel Lake Association website so that these accomplishments can be posted to this site.

#### **Important Resource Links: Examples and Case Studies**

Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative: Case Studies - <https://greatlakesstewardship.org/case-studies/>

Michigan Shorelands Stewards Program - [https://www.mishorelandstewards.org/program\\_guide.asp](https://www.mishorelandstewards.org/program_guide.asp)

Washtenaw County Rain Gardens - <https://www.washtenaw.org/3845/Rain-Gardens-on-the-Map>

New Hampshire Shoreland Fact Sheets - <https://www.des.nh.gov/protected-shoreland-faq#faq30991>

Rain Gardens in New Hampshire - <https://extension.unh.edu/resource/rain-gardens-design-and-installation>

Soak Up the Rain NH - <https://www4.des.state.nh.us/soaknh/>

NH LAKES LakeSmart – <https://nhlakes.org/lakesmart/>

*Laurel Lake Ledger* - <https://www.laurellakeassn.com/ledger-newsletters>

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