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Wakefield/Acton lake projects important to area's economy

WAKEFIELD — The Acton and Wakefield Watershed Alliance (AWWA) held its annual meeting in Wakefield Opera House on Aug. 17, and after conducting a brief business meeting, there was a recap of the projects that have been carried out around the area's lakes this summer by a crew of students.

Program Director Dustin Johnson said that 20 projects had been tackled this year, and noted that since the Youth Conservation Corps project had started, in the summer of 2006, there have been 123 projects completed, and in total, they have incorporated 482 Best Management Practices.

"We have achieved 30 more BMPs than last year," Johnson told the meeting with satisfaction, and praised his crew as being the hardest working group to date. They included Jordan Shepherd (assistant crew leader), Samantha Wooster, Jimmy Polsinetti, Brandon Stanton, Ryan Nichols, Sam Wilson (assistant crew leader) and Anthony Stanton.

Their work has resulted, said Johnson, in reducing the amount of sediment washing into Wakefield's and Acton's lakes by over 216 tons per year, and bringing about a reduction in phosphorous of over 183 pound per year. It takes only a minuscule amount of phosphorous, measured in parts per billion, to contaminate a water body.

Great East Lake has been the site of 21 projects over the seven years (five in 2012), Lovell Lake has had a total of 52 projects (six this year) and the other water bodies of Belleau, Horn, Province, Pine River and Wilson have been the site of another 50 projects, including nine this year.

For the past three years, local businesses have been solicited to sponsor the YCC including Great East Docks and Raise-A-Dock, Crowell's Towing and Repair, Dayton Sand and Gravel, Real Estate 2000, Assets Realty, Dunn Deal, Hayes Real Estate, Lakes Region Septic Service, Profile Bank, Randall's Landscaping Supplies, Seven Lakes Provisions, and Seven Lakes Real Estate. Additional funds were provided by Key Day Construction, Sharper Image Salon and many individuals.

Local youth are offered meaningful employment during their summer vacation, which gives them valuable work experience and sometimes influences their career choices as they graduate from high school and head to college. Shepherd has recently been accepted into the Environmental Sciences Department at New Hampshire Technical Institute, and Wilson, with AWWA since its inception in 2006, has graduated from the University of Vermont with a degree in Environmental Sciences.

AWWA Vice President Jeanne Achille chaired the annual meeting, which included, in

addition to Johnson's presentation, a treasurer's report by Jon Samuelson, and an overview of the completed year by Executive Director Linda Schier.

In her remarks, Schier noted that as part of the watershed management plan implementation (with regard to roads), Langley Shores work had been done, Brackett Road was in the design phase and set to commence this fall, Hawk Road was in progress and Eagle Road was in the planning stage.

Half a ton of trash had been removed from Drew's Mill Pond, added Schier, going on to list community planning achievements, land conservation interaction with other agencies, and a variety of education and outreach programs accomplished in the past year.

"The Lakes offer many gifts — beauty, recreation, ecological integrity and they *are* the industry in this region. It is our job to speak for them, work to protect them, and help keep the economic engine stable for now and generations to come. How we use and care for the land is the key to preserving these priceless assets," said Schier.

A convoy of vehicles then headed out around the lakes for a tour of five of the 20 projects completed this summer, started with a site on Lovell lake Road, where infiltration steps and walkways have been built, along with three drywells, erosion control mulch and waterbars, to greatly reduce the amount of run off into Lovell lake, particularly in heavy rainstorm events.

"Their (the crew's) work benefits every homeowner in the towns of Wakefield and Acton," said Schier.
