

# Lake Breezes

Lake Rescue Association, P.O.Box 372, Ludlow, VT 05149  
www.lakerescue.org

June 2016

## Milfoil Situation: We Are Cautiously Optimistic

After the unusually warm winter it was hard to know what to expect when our divers, Shane and Cat Yoder, came for their first survey on May 20th. Some of us thought that the mild weather would have given the milfoil a jump on the growing season. But we were pleasantly surprised to learn that there were far fewer milfoil plants than last year. Whereas a year ago approximately 450 plants, some with multiple stalks, were removed from Round Pond, this year there are only single stalks growing in the two 'hot spots'. In all, 45 plants were removed from Round Pond, and only one plant was found in the northern part of Lake Rescue.

Based on these findings, we will not proceed with suction harvesting in the 'hot spots', as we thought might be necessary. We will be setting out small buoys to mark the locations of milfoil growth and ask that boaters stay away from these areas. This will reduce the chance of propellers hitting the plants and spreading fragments. We have contracted with our divers to come twice a week throughout this summer, beginning in early June. Hopefully, this close surveillance and quick removal of milfoil will improve our chances of reducing the spread of the weed. We dare not yet hope to eradicate it, but with luck it may happen.

We will once again have 'greeters' at the boat launch area on weekend mornings, when there is the most activity. The greeters will check boats for foreign plant material and provide information about areas to avoid.

## Identifying Milfoil



Detail of Eurasian Milfoil

Milfoil is not difficult to identify. It typically grows in shallow water (less than 20 feet) and the tops of the plant, both stems and leaves, are often red. It has a stem with whorls of four featherlike leaves. Each leaf is finely divided into 12-21 paired leaflets.

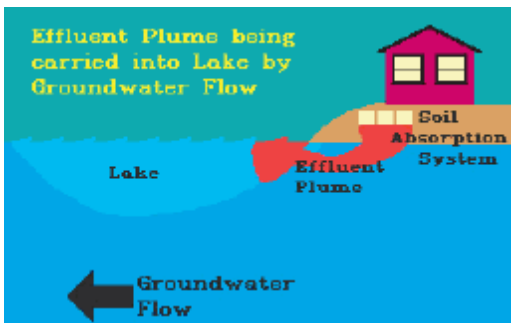
The plants grow up from the bottom up to the surface and can have many side stems.

If you see such a plant DO NOT try to remove it. Rather, email us right away with the location at [lakerescueassn@gmail.com](mailto:lakerescueassn@gmail.com).

We will have our divers come and investigate the next time they are at the lake.

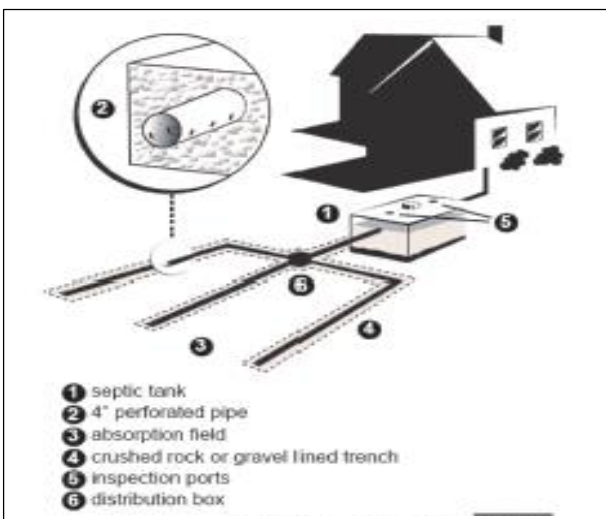
## Septic System Basics

Adequate treatment of household waste from camps is critical to maintaining lake health. Along a lakeshore, groundwater is usually flowing toward the lake, entering the lake water through the lakebed. If a septic system is not working correctly and leachate enters the lake, you and others may be exposed to high bacteria levels and potentially disease causing organisms



There are several ways a septic system can cause problems and maintaining it is the first step to avoiding them.

To maintain your septic system in optimal condition, first you must learn what kind of system you have. A typical system looks like this:



There are two major components: a septic tank and the absorption (leach) field. The primary

purpose of the septic tank is to separate the solids from the liquids. The solids, known as sludge, collect at the bottom of the tank while the oils and grease (scum) float on top. The sludge and scum remain in the tank and need to be pumped out periodically.

Liquids pass out of the tank through an effluent filter, designed to keep solids out of the leach field. The effluent is passed on to the absorption field through a connecting pipe and distribution box, which ensures even distribution to the parallel pipes of the leachfield. The absorption field contains a series of perforated pipes that trickle out effluent into the surrounding gravel or crushed rock trench. This provides the surface area on which biological, chemical and physical breakdown in the effluent occurs. After that, leachate enters the native soil. An adequate depth of soil below the leachfield is required to ensure effective treatment before the liquids reach groundwater.

### Why your system may not be working well:

1. You have an old 'system' that does not meet current design or site standards and thus is not effectively treating waste.
2. Your system has not been regularly maintained, i.e., regularly pumped out. When solids and greases are not regularly pumped out of the septic tank, they eventually get into the leachfield and clog it, often causing surfacing.
3. Woody vegetation has been allowed to grow up in the leachfield area, thus disrupting the flow or cracking the leachfield pipes.
4. The system has been misused through the introduction of excessive organic material (from garbage disposals), or through the disposal of chemicals that have killed the working bacteria of the system.
5. Use of a septic system additive that, while clearing out the tank, moved solids into the

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leachfield and clogged it.

6. The water usage of the camp has increased beyond the capacity of the septic system. If the flow into the septic tank exceeds its ability to settle solids and float greases, these materials get introduced to the leachfield and clog it.

#### **Testing your septic system:**

1. Learn where your system is and what kind of system you have. Have it inspected for proper function. Septic pumping companies are experts at locating systems and evaluating their condition.

2. Based on the location of the tank, the location of the leachfield can be estimated. Use this information to estimate whether or not there is adequate setback from the lake shoreline and elevation above groundwater. You can evaluate your septic system by downloading this worksheet and answering the questions there:

[http://lakeparker.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Septic\\_System\\_Self\\_Evaluation.pdf](http://lakeparker.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Septic_System_Self_Evaluation.pdf)

3. Observe plant and algae growth offshore of your property. If you have noticeably more than your neighbors, it's possible your septic system is a factor.

4. Bacteria testing in the lake has very limited ability to verify the proper working of your septic system. Testing your well water for bacteria is a good idea if there is insufficient distance between the septic system and well. **Taking care of your septic system:**

Learn where your system is and sketch out its location with measured distances from stationary objects such as the corner of the

camp.

2. Have your septic tank pumped and inspected at least once every three years. If your tank is small or the use is high, you may need to do it more often.

3. Do not use septic additives. They may damage your system necessitating expensive repairs.

4. Conserve water to avoid overloading the system. Use low-flow fixtures and appliances. Space out your laundry washings.

5. Keep roof drains, basement sump pumps and other rainwater or surface water out of the septic system.

6. Do not use caustic drain openers. Instead use boiling water or a drain snake. Use kitchen and bathroom cleaners in moderation.

7. Avoid the use of a garbage disposal.

8. Do not put grease, oil disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, tampons, paper towels, cat litter, paint or pesticides into your system.

9. Plant only grass or other herbaceous plants over your leachfield and keep trees and shrubs away from the edge.

10. Do not drive or park on the leachfield. It might crack an underground pipe.

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*Source: VT ANR, Lake Protection Series #4, Lakeshore Septic System Basics*

## Eagles on the Lake!

There have been a number of eagle sightings on Lake Rescue this spring. Even more exciting, there has been evidence of nest building activity by a pair of eagles!

If you see eagles or are able to snap a photo please post it on our Facebook page, Lake Rescue Association. And, be sure to 'like' us!

Lake Rescue Association  
P.O. Box 372  
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**Website:**

[www.LakeRescue.org](http://www.LakeRescue.org)

**Promoting Water Safety,  
Environmental Education  
&  
Improved Water Quality**

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*We're on Facebook!*

*Visit our Group Page:*  
Lake Rescue Association

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## Helpers Needed !

We are looking for additional help with maintaining our website and with other technology issues. If you have ability in this area please consider volunteering. Just drop us a note at [lakerescueassn@gmail.com](mailto:lakerescueassn@gmail.com).

Thanks!!

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The Lake Rescue Association is a 501c3 Non-Profit organization. All donations to the 'Lake Restoration & Preservation' fund are tax-deductible.

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