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# LAKE MANSFIELD

*Newsletter of the Great Barrington Land Conservancy*

## The Lake Mansfield We All Love ...

Christine Ward

Ready to go barefoot at Lake Mansfield? Are you itching to get going on the fun things that you do there? Before you know it, birds will be nesting, fish will be jumping, and kids will be swimming.

We all have special Lake Mansfield memories – morning paddles, a dramatic afternoon thunder storm... I remember bringing my two small girls to the beach in early April, I loved that they could have adventures in the same place their dad had learned to fish when he was a kid. Lake Mansfield means an awful lot to generations of children and their families. All hands are needed to take care of this treasured place. That's why I am reaching out to you.

Your support keeps us moving ahead as we make steady progress on keeping the water clean and the habitat healthy.

**We need you to pitch in: volunteer, be a lake advocate at public meetings, consider a donation for annual improvements – together we can protect our lake for the kids and families of the future.**



*Playing at Lake Mansfield is a wonderful part of every summer!*

Share a photo, story, poem .... Help to build a Lake Mansfield Memory Book.

Send things to share to [info@lakemansfield.org](mailto:info@lakemansfield.org)

# The Power of Volunteering: Working Together Builds Community

Friday June 15, 2018 – It was pretty exciting when thirteen boys from Monument Valley Middle School piled out of their bus, ready to get to work. It was the 3rd day of their Youth Engagement Service (Y.E.S.) project and they came equipped with lunches and fishing poles.

Leaders were ready, too. In the previous two days, they had learned just how much energetic middle school students can do! Tools and plants were staged for the last

installation phase of the pollinator garden, canoes and life jackets were lined up on the beach. Great Barrington land Conservancy (GBLC) worked with Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) and Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC) to provide these local kids with on-sight learning as an extension of their classroom curriculum.

Students learned about paddle safety and clean water principles from Alison Dixon (HVA). They paddled the lake edges, scrounging for litter. They learned about pollinators from Christine Ward, and they completed the installation of a new pollinator garden designed by Helia Land Design. They muscled sod to the forest compost area, then worked together to install 12 species of native perennials – 100 plants in all! They didn't quit till all the plants were mulched and watered.

It was clear that the kids loved the lake. At every break, they headed for the water. Many were equipped with folding fishing rods. They challenged each other for the biggest catch, and applauded each fish that was caught and released. The work day was a total success, and everyone involved planned future lake visits to enjoy the lake and check on the new planting.

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*Each Monument Valley Middle School student learned important paddle safety skills.*



*With sod removed, the buffer zone was improved with the new planting.*



*The garden was installed as a first step in Great Barrington's Pollinator Action Plan.*

# With Your Support: Our Favorite Trail just got Better!

Tuesday April 16-Friday April 19, 2019: An intensive four-day project brought major improvements to the trails at Lake Mansfield in the Conservation Forest. The trail system, originally installed in 2008-2010 has seen increasing use as walkers of all ages and abilities include the woodland in their daily rambles.

**The project goal: to complete the accessible trail bed of the loop trail and to apply a crushed stone trail bed to improve foot travel from Christian Hill Road to the bridge-boardwalk.**

The work couldn't have been done without a dedicated team of volunteers and a valiant Greenager Work Crew. New volunteers joined those who had worked on the original trail project. Greenager work crews have been essential to the maintenance of the Lake Mansfield Trails. This is the fifth time their energies have been essential to trail care. Great Barrington Land Conservancy is pleased

to be able to support this unique program that puts local youth to work on local trails.

**This project was made possible by donors like you and funding through the Community Preservation Act.** The work was accomplished because of the strong working collaboration between the town and GBLC's Lake Mansfield Alliance project. Chris Rembold, town planner, applied for and received a \$15,000 CPA trail grant. Match funding of \$10,000 for the loop trail and approximately \$5,000 for the Christian Hill section improvements came from Lake Mansfield Alliance.

A 2 p.m. a special Spring Trail Hike will be a feature of our May 5 Lake Day.

See project photos and complete information:  
[www.GBLand.org](http://www.GBLand.org)



*Peter Jensen, our trail designer and contractor, accommodated two concurrent trail improvement projects in the four days, making the trails even more accessible for all.*

# Improvements for Lake Mansfield

## Success, and Next Steps

Chris Rembold, Great Barrington Town Planner

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Many of you know that the Town of Great Barrington and Lake Mansfield Alliance have been working for over a decade to clean up and improve the Lake Mansfield area. Because of your volunteerism and your support, we have made great strides. Thank you!

**Boat Launch:** Last summer we completed the boat launch improvement project in a partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

This project has solved a huge stormwater problem at the southern end of the lake, where gravel and sediment (nonpoint source pollution) from the parking lot would wash directly into the lake during a storm. The paved parking area, stormwater retention basin, and native plants are helping to keep most of this pollution out of the lake.

**Knob Hill:** Last fall, we began the Knob Hill Road improvements project, where we are installing catch basins in order to capture and treat large quantities of nonpoint source pollution that runoff from the hill.

This project began in October 2018 and advanced steadily through the rock that underlies the road. The project will start up again in the spring. Some water mains need to be relocated to make room for the new drainage system, the last few catch basins will be installed, and finally the road will be paved. We anticipate this to be completed by summer. This project is funded in part by a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) under section 319 of the Clean Water Act. Thank you for your patience as we undertake this important project.



*DFG Commissioner Ron Amidon and volunteers celebrated the boat launch improvements with a ribbon cutting on September 17, 2018.*



*Improvements at Knob Hill are underway, when complete an enormous source of erosion-causing, unfiltered run-off will be eliminated.*

**Lake Mansfield Outlet:** Many of you are aware of the periodic flooding that occurs when the outlet pipe, at the north end of the lake, gets blocked. This situation is potentially dangerous for the road. **The Town has designed and permitted a plan to install a larger pipe that will accommodate overflows and is less likely to be jammed with debris.** When installed, the water level of the lake will remain the same, but it will require the section of road over the outlet pipe to be higher, and narrower, than it currently is, requiring drivers to yield to oncoming traffic. The Town has yet to identify the funding necessary to make this improvement.



*The current Lake Mansfield outlet is targeted for improvements to prevent flooding.*

**Watershed-Based Plan (WPB):** This past December, the Town and the Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force completed a Watershed-Based Plan with the assistance of MassDEP. **This plan identifies incremental improvements we can continue to make in order to protect and enhance the long-term health of Lake Mansfield.** And, while we already knew that nonpoint source pollution is a major factor that leads to weed growth and damages the water quality in the lake, we learned from the WBP that improvements can stop major sediment loads from entering the lake. Improvements to the beach area parking

lot could stop up 270 pounds of sediment per year and improvements to Lake Mansfield Road could stop 600 pounds of sediment per year. Needless to say, the next steps in improvement planning will be to stop pollution in these two areas. This spring the Town will apply to MassDEP for a planning/design grant in order to develop improvement plans for the beach parking lot area.



*Clean Water Grants are made possible with a strong comprehensive Watershed-Based Plan.*

**Lake Mansfield Road:**

Implementing improvements to the road, specifically correcting the drainage problems and filtering runoff before it enters the lake, will be more of a challenge. **After several years of outreach, comprehensive planning, and engineering, the Improvement Task Force is ready to recommend a solution to the Selectboard.** Primarily, we have learned that the road (specifically the section from the beach area south to the boat launch) must be made narrower than it is now. This is because the bank along the lake edge must be stabilized and new

## Improvements Continued from page 5

vegetated buffer must be installed where no vegetation exists between the pavement and the lake. This will reduce the width of the travelled way to a maximum of 18 feet. Within this narrow space, walkers, bicyclists, and cars will have to co-exist. **Over the coming months**

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*Currently Lake Mansfield Road is seriously impaired and having negative impacts on the habitat and water quality.*

**the Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force and the Selectboard will finalize a preferred design and begin to identify potential funding sources.** It is conceivable that if funding could be approved at the 2020 town meeting, work could begin in 2021.

The overarching goal for all of this work is “to provide improvements for the Lake Mansfield Recreation Area that will support the health of the environment and provide safe access and recreational opportunities for all.” Although each area presents complex challenges, we have made steady progress and our comprehensive improvement planning allows us to continue to move forward.

**Questions? More information is available at:**

**[www.townofgb.org/lake-mansfield-improvement-task-force](http://www.townofgb.org/lake-mansfield-improvement-task-force)**

**[Crembold@townofgb.org](mailto:Crembold@townofgb.org)**

**[www.GBLand.org](http://www.GBLand.org) (see the Lake Mansfield page)**

**[Christine@GBLand.org](mailto:Christine@GBLand.org)**



*The families of tomorrow are counting on the work we do today. Let's be sure the lake is protected for years to come.*

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## **YOU make a big difference.**

People like you bring annual improvements to the Lake Mansfield Beach Area and Conservation Forest Trails. Lake Mansfield Alliance is a project of Great Barrington Land Conservancy.

**Please consider a gift today:  
GBLC / Lake Mansfield. Thank you!**

Volunteers are always needed!  
[info@lakemansfield.org](mailto:info@lakemansfield.org)



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*People aren't the only ones that benefit from clean water. Muskrats and other creatures are important members of our Lake Mansfield community too.*

### **What you can do to prevent nonpoint source pollution:**

- (1) Do a soil test before using fertilizers, and use them sparingly
- (2) Never dump anything down storm drains
- (3) Avoid applying pesticides and herbicides
- (4) Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces
- (5) Pick up after your pet
- (6) Don't feed the geese

**Thank you!**



*We partner with Housatonic Valley Association to affix these labels to LM area drains*

## **2019 Summer Events**

[www.GBLand.org](http://www.GBLand.org) for complete details

**Sunday May 5, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Lake Mansfield Clean Up & Family Fun Day

**Summer Lifeguards, 11:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.**

Beginning on Memorial Day Weekend

Provided every day during school vacation

**Children's Swim Lessons**

Free to Great Barrington Residents

Session 1: July 9-25 (Tues & Thurs)

Session 2: July 30-Aug 15 (Tues & Thurs)

To register call Berkshire South (528-2810)

**Summer Yoga in July**

Mon, Weds, Fri, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

\$10 requested per class

A portion of proceeds donated to GBLC for Lake Mansfield.

Questions? [info@GBLand.org](mailto:info@GBLand.org)



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

You can help preserve, protect, and enhance Lake Mansfield  
as a vital habitat and community resource.

Lake Mansfield  
**Spring Clean Up & Family Fun Day**  
**Sunday May 5, 2019**  
**9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

Meet at the Beach – gloves recommended.  
Bring tools: rakes, wheelbarrows, hand trowels ...  
And enthusiasm!

Learn about next steps of the  
Lake Mansfield Improvement Plan

Spruce up our pollinator garden

12 Noon: Potluck Picnic & Community Meeting

2 p.m. Guided Conservation Forest Walk

Join friends and neighbors for a fun day of community action

