



The Acton-Shapleigh Youth Conservation Corps

What is the ASYCC?

The Acton-Shapleigh Youth Conservation Corps (ASYCC) is a 501c3 non-profit organization formed to protect Mousam Lake, Square Pond, Goose Pond, and Loon Pond known collectively as the Mousam Lake-Square Pond Watershed. The ASYCC is committed to providing education, community outreach, technical assistance, courtesy boat inspections, and accomplishing erosion control projects to manage and maintain water quality within the Mousam Lake-Square Pond Watershed. Our efforts are two-pronged: An Erosion Control Crew (ECC) whose job is to reduce phosphorous intrusion into our lakes, and the Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) program designed to prevent invasive plants from entering our lakes.

The ASYCC is funded by taxpayer money from the towns of Acton and Shapleigh, local lake associations, the proceeds from the annual golf tournament, and private donors like you. The ASYCC provides FREE labor for Environmental Landscaping, Education, Community Service, and Boat Inspections through these funds.

The ASYCC is overseen by a Board of Directors (BOD) made up of volunteers dedicated to a healthy lake. The BOD hires and trains local personnel (mostly teenagers) and directs the organization's activities and functions.

The ASYCC season runs from late spring to early fall, offering property owners within the Mousam Lake-Square Pond Watershed expertise on how to remediate erosion on their property and to monitor boats that enter and exit our waters.



Courtesy Boat Inspectors (CBI)

We all clean our boats in the fall and prep them in the winter for the next spring's boating season. But do we closely inspect our boats for plant fragments on the propeller, trailer, anchor, fishing gear or other surfaces before entering or leaving a lake? We hope you do, but we don't rely on that hope.

The Mousam Lake-Square Pond Watershed is surrounded by lakes with invasive aquatic plants that can destroy a waterbody. Non-native plants like Milfoil, Curly Leaf Pondweed, Hydrilla, Brazilian Elodea, European Frogbit, European Naiad, Fanwort, and Parrot Feather can and do invade lakes in the U.S. Our watershed is surrounded by several lakes that have been invaded by non-native aquatic plants. Just one small fragment of an invasive plant can create an entire lake invasion.

Invasive plants have no natural enemy to keep them under control and therefore reproduce rampantly. Yes, all waterbodies in the Mousam Lake-Square Pond Watershed have vegetation and weeds naturally, but these plants are native and therefore self-controlled.

With no natural checks for invasive aquatic plants and an increase in phosphorus contamination, these plants grow rapidly, stunting the growth of the native plants, and before long invade and dominate the entire plant zone in a very short time. Invasive aquatic plants inhibit swimming, fishing, motor boating, paddling a canoe or kayak. In other words, the lake becomes choked with invasive plants. To remove these plants is a very costly



endeavor, hundreds of thousands dollars are spent annually to reduce invasive aquatic plants from contaminated lakes, often without success. Bottom line: it is much easier to prevent the introduction of invasive aquatic plants than to rid an infested lake of these plants.

The ASYCC maintains a CBI program at the Mousam Lake and Square Pond boat ramps on a regular basis from Memorial Day to Columbus Day each year. CBIs visually inspect all boats entering and leaving Mousam Lake and Square Pond while maintaining records indicating date and time of entry and exit, last known lake visited. This data is important for tracking plant fragments found on boats and to better track invasive plants movement from waterbody to waterbody. When a plant is found, CBIs examine the plant fragment and if a question arises as to its identification, the plant fragment is sent to the Maine Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants for identification.

CBIs are not present at the ramps year round, so this leaves boat inspections up to the boat owners during the off months. Please do your part and inspect your boat every time you ENTER and EXIT a lake.

Erosion Control Crew (ECC)

In the mid 80’s to early 90’s water testing in the Mousam Lake-Square Pond Watershed revealed deteriorating water quality. The culprits were **PHOSPHORUS** and **SEPTIC INTRUSION**.

Phosphorus enters our lakes by rain event run off. Runoff from developed land occurs 10 times faster than from an undeveloped forest due to the compaction of soils, removal of trees and buffer strips, and the introduction of impervious surfaces, e.g. building, roads, and driveways, in addition to the overuse and abusing of septic system. These factors all cause rain water to carry phosphorus and waste contaminants into our lakes. Contamination of lakes and ponds by phosphorus can be reduced by re-vegetating and covering exposed soil. That work is the main focus of the ECC. With help from the ECC landowners can do their part in protecting our waters.

If you own a property within the Mousam Lake-Square Pond Watershed, and use a septic system, have paved driveways or other impervious surfaces, have lost trees or buffer strips, the ECC can help.



Before

After

The best way to fix the problem is to play detective during a rain event. During and after a rainstorm, look for areas where the rain creates gullies. Find where storm water enters and exits your property. Look for areas where pine needles or leaves have been pushed aside from the water path. If you find an “erosion footpath”- you have a problem, a problem with phosphorus run-off that needs remediation.

The ASYCC can provide **FREE assistance to help fix the problem!!!!!!** Our Technical Director will visit your property, provide you with a remediation plan, and if you decide to accept our help we will send our Erosion Control Crew to remediate the problem. The landowner is responsible for supplying the materials to accomplish the project.

The ECC crew is comprised of 5-6 local teenagers and completes on average 25 erosion control projects annually. Under the guidance of the ASYCC Technical Director the ECC will apply best management erosion control practices to correct your erosion problem.

Septic Systems

The Mousam Lake-Square Pond Watershed is unique in that we have sandy soils that allow nutrients easy access to our waters. For this reason, septic systems are a source of unwanted nutrients to our lakes. Year- round residents should pump their septic system every 2-3 years and seasonal residents every 3-5 years, In order to properly maintain your system use only the amount of water needed for a given task, e.g.:

- Do only 1 load of laundry a day
- Limit shower use
- Put nothing down the toilet except human waste
- Limit the amount of grease entering your septic system, scrap food from plates before washing, consider eliminating your dishwasher

In fact, attend or sponsor a SEPTIC SOCIAL and get the “poop scoop.” Septic socials are FREE and EDUCATIONAL.

Doing nothing to promote good water quality has a downside: your investment will suffer. Excessive phosphorus or waste encourages the growth of lake vegetation and algal blooms that inhibits swimming, fishing, and creates obnoxious odors, all of which decrease your property values. The ASYCC exists to help you and other landowners preserve and protect our local natural resources...as well as your investment.

ASYCC Stats from 2011 to 2008

ECC: Technical Visits

	2011	2010	2009	2008
ASYCC ECC	43	34	33	32

ECC: Projects complete per waterbody

	2011	2010	2009	2008
Mousam Lake	14	7	9	10
Square Pond	11	15	6	6
Goose Pond	0	0	1	1
Loon Pond	2	2	3	3

CBI: Number of Boat Inspections

	2011	2010	2009	2008
Mousam Lake	3638	2663	2316	1239
Square Pond	531	432	233	182

CBI: Number of Plant Fragments Found

	2011	2010	2009	2008
Mousam Lake	34	0	14	7
Square Pond	24	3	3	1

To learn more about the ASYCC please visit our website www.asycc.com