

Timeline

Below is a timeline of important events that were documented from 1982 until 2001. If you are interested in updating the timeline with more recent events, please send us an email. This could be a fun winter project.

The Branch Pond Association (BPA) looks forward to celebrating four decades of service to the City, the community and the State of Maine in preserving the beauty and bounty of this valuable natural resource, Branch Lake, Ellsworth, Maine.

- In 1982 concerned Branch Pond property owners held two informal meetings. The main concern was the reduced level of road service by the city.
- 1983 marked the first annual meeting and official formation of the BPA representing 138 member families around the lake. Concerns were seasonal road maintenance and the development of 800 acres in the lower lake.
- In 1984 a set of By-laws were written and approved by the membership at the second annual meeting. Work continued with the city to improve seasonal road maintenance.
- In 1985 the BPA convinced the city to abort a planned sludge dump within the lake's watershed.
- In 1986 the association began yearly testing of the water quality. A BPA member works with the Maine Volunteer Monitoring Program to collect lake transparency data.
- In 1988 it played a major role in halting the improper development of 800 acres on the lower lake.
- In 1989 petitioned the state to provide restroom facilities at Sand Beach.
- In 1994 the BPA reached a road maintenance agreement with the City. The city agreed to grade and plow the roads if the property owners would form road associations and maintain the roads. Five road associations were formed.
- In 1996 the Bangor Hydro desired to rid itself of ownership of the Branch lake's dam and the BPA became concerned that new owners might not maintain the dam in the best interest of the community. The city responded to a request we made that they assume ownership.
- In 1998, the Branch Pond Association partnered with the University of Maine Water Research Institute (now the Sen. George Mitchell Center) to sponsor an AmeriCorps Volunteer Leader. This AmeriCorps leader focused on raising awareness of environmental threats to Branch Lake. BPA members enthusiastically supported and participated in all projects and efforts coordinated by the AmeriCorps leader.
- In 1998 several members of the BPA participated in the University of Maine Cooperative Extension's Watershed Stewards Program. In return for receiving 20 hours of education pertaining to lake protection, these BPA members volunteered at least 20 hours each in the Branch Lake watershed. Many are still active in lake protection activities today.
- In 1998 the Watershed Stewards partnered with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension and the AmeriCorps Leader to perform a Watershed Survey. Twenty-two volunteers identified 150 problem areas where sediment (and attached phosphorus) had the potential to reach the lake. Grant money was provided by the BPA to assist road associations in correcting these areas.
- In 1999, partnerships were formed with the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. These partnerships resulted in additional grant funding used to correct problems identified in the Watershed Survey. Funding was obtained directly from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, and the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District received EPA section 319 grant funds through the Maine DEP to work on larger projects in the Branch Lake Watershed. BPA members formed the steering committee to guide the use of the 319 grant funds.

- In 1998/99/00 the City of Ellsworth obtained a grant from the Maine Department of Human Services Drinking Water Program to purchase shrubbery to form buffer zones along the Branch Lake shoreline to inhibit the flow of phosphorus and other nutrients into the lake. Many Branch Lake residents participate in this project. The BPA also promoted the use of phosphorus free fertilizer.
- In 1999 The BPA arranged for representatives of the road associations to attend a workshop on camp road maintenance sponsored by the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District and Maine DEP.
- In 1998 the BPA took its first steps onto the World Wide Web via an indirect connection to a Website created by one of our members. In 2001 we took the next step onto the Web and established www.branchpond.org . We are currently communicating Newsletters and other important information to about 50% of our constituents, and hope to see that number grow over time.
- In 1999 the BPA became aware of the invasive aquatic plant problem, considered ways of protecting Branch Lake and supported a legislative effort designed to protect all of Maine's 6,500 lakes and streams.
- In 2000 the BPA developed a position supporting a small supervised boat launch (like Hanson's Landing) but opposed the state's unsupervised boat launch by Sand Beach. Our recommendations were given to the city and they requested the state to withhold construction.
- In 2001 the BPA formed an Invasive Aquatic Plant Committee that attended a workshop on "Identifying and preventing the spread of milfoil and other invasive aquatic plants". Then they implemented a program which consisted of volunteers surveying the lake for milfoil, making courtesy inspections of boats at the city's public boat launch and posting "INVASIVE PLANT WARNING" signs around the lake.
- In 2001 the BPA published "A Handy Guide For Homeowners", which outlines what every camp owner should be doing to protect the water quality of the lake for their enjoyment and those who will follow.
- In 2001 the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District and the BPA arranged for the Maine Lakes Conservancy Institute to bring its floating classroom to the lake so our members could better understand and appreciate our lake's ecological system.
- In 2001 the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District gave a demonstration to city officials on buffer zones that were installed as part of the 319 grant project.