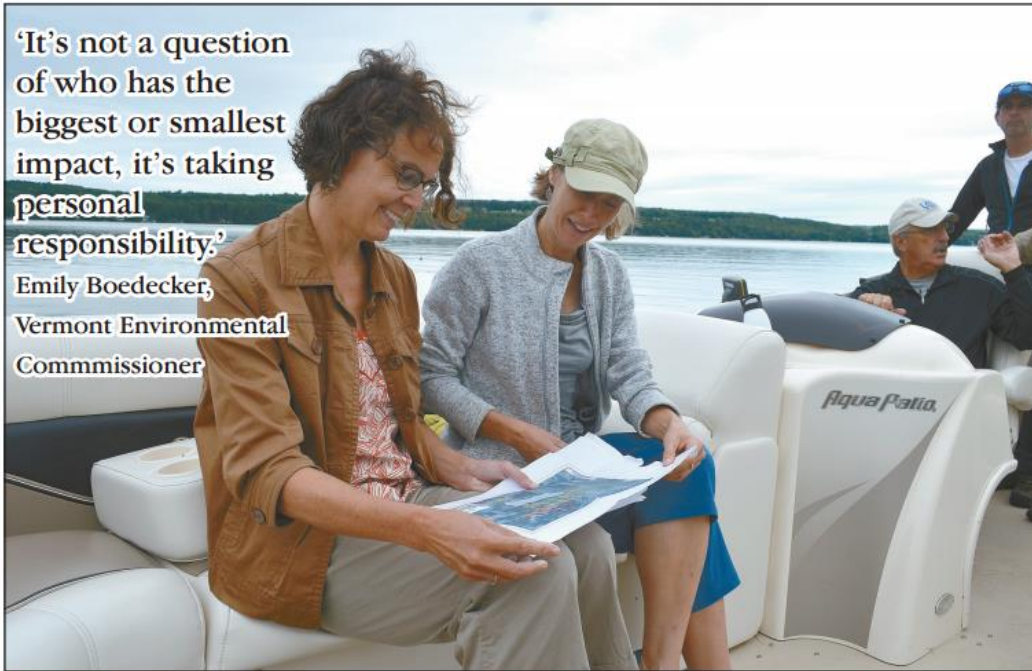


'It's not a question of who has the biggest or smallest impact, it's taking **personal responsibility.**'

Emily Boedecker,
Vermont Environmental
Commissioner



RUTH LAROCHE, Photo

Commissioner Emily Boedecker, right, goes over a map of Lake Carmi and its watershed area with colleague Sara Bates, the state watershed coordinator, Friday on Lake Carmi.

Working together for clean water

By **RUTH LAROCHE**
Messenger Correspondent

FRANKLIN — Vermont Environmental Commissioner Emily Boedecker was in Franklin on Friday to take a boat tour of Lake Carmi and meet with campers

and residents about the condition of the lake.

Carmi, like Lake Champlain, is impaired by blue-green algae blooms caused by nutrient runoff and is the subject of a TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) intended to limit the amount

of phosphorous reaching the lake. Phosphorous feeds blue-green algae blooms.

“All in is a phrase that we use, but it’s so much more than a slogan,” said Boedecker, “because whatever footprint

Lake

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we have in a watershed, whether it's a small camp footprint or a large farm footprint, we've all got things that we can do to help with the water quality and the things we want from the lake. With that it's not a question of who has the biggest or smallest impact, it's taking personal responsibility."

Boedecker took a boat tour of the lake and spoke with members of the Lake Carmi Campers Association (LCCA) and the Franklin Watershed Committee (FWC).

"From the state's perspective, Lake Carmi is one of those areas where we know there is so much engagement, whether through the camper's association, the local farmers, or the watershed alliance, we have all the pieces and parts. To my mind, we have all the ingredients for a successful recipe and we know what the end dish is that we are trying to make, we just need everyone to come together in the ways that they can be responsible to get those results," said Boedecker.

"From the agency's perspective, one of the reasons I wanted to come out here in person is so I could hear from folks who were working on the ground, to have the chance to say thank you and to celebrate the contribution, but also to hear what are the most important things that we as an agency can do," said Boedecker.

'We would like Lake Carmi to be the crown jewel of Vermont lakes and ponds. We would like to show that clean lake water can exist adjacent to an ongoing agricultural activity.'

Peter Benevento

can exist adjacent to an ongoing agricultural activity. We can accomplish this if lakeshore owners and farmers all strive to take care of the land they control, use and occupy. The objective is to keep unwanted soil and sediment from entering the lake. Lakeshore owners must ensure their shoreline is lake friendly and that it holds back soil and filters storm water the best it can. They must also ensure their septic systems operate properly," said Benevento

Members of the DEC encouraged landowners and campers to visit the Lake Wise portion of the DEC website and see what steps they can take to help reduce phosphorous levels in the Lake Carmi watershed area.

DEC members were pleased to see that a number of Lake Carmi camp owners had placed their Lake Wise signs on display. A property is granted a Lake Wise designation when the owners have worked to meet the state standards for a clean and environmentally friendly

We also encourage people to rent port-o-lets when they have large gatherings so their septic systems are not over stressed. Again, the FWC offers a \$25 rebate on all port-o-let rentals at the lake," said Benevento.

Benevento expressed his pleasure in news that he has heard from local farmers who have made investments in manure injector systems. These systems inject manure into the soil so that the bulk of it goes directly into the ground, reducing the potential for runoff into the lake.

"Farmers must do whatever they can to keep the soil and sediment on land where it belongs and does the most good. If we work together, we can get this done. There are only a half dozen farmers in the Lake Carmi watershed. This is an extremely manageable number. We want to know what is being done in the watershed to help us reach our goals. We need to open the lines of communication with the farmers. The only way we know if injection manure machines are used is if we read it in the news-

the water column. They are able to rise to the surface through the presence of gas vacuoles in their cell structure. When the algae rise to the surface and bloom, there is the potential for unsafe conditions because of the toxins released by the algae.

Blue-green algae blooms are not new to Lake Carmi, but over the years they have grown more frequent.

David and Diane Larose, camp owners on Lake Carmi, hosted the boat tour for the new commissioner and her colleagues.

"I think we are fortunate to live in a small enough state where we have access to our top government officials. The fact that we were able to have the commissioner and her team up here to view the lake firsthand and to get a sense of what it means to those of us fortunate enough to live here is wonderful," said Diane.

"My hope is that in my lifetime we will have a lake that is clean and safe to recreate and enjoy," said Diane.

"This was a very productive day. We got to show the Commissioner what our issues are and how we feel about the lake. There are a lot of people that care about Lake Carmi and want to see the best things happen for the lake. I think that the boat tour was very informative. We conveyed to Emily what we thought were the most important issues regarding the lake, and she was very receptive," said Peter Benevento, president of the LCCA.

The blue-green algae can be managed well when the phosphorous levels in the lake are controlled. Benevento pointed out that everyone has the opportunity to help keep the lake clean by reducing runoff containing phosphorous.

"We would like Lake Carmi to be the crown jewel of Vermont lakes and ponds. We would like to show that clean lake water

property. More information regarding these requirements can be found on the DEC website.

"The Franklin Watershed Committee (FWC) has partnered with VT DEC in the Lakewise Program to improve our shorelines. They have been a tremendous help. We have also partnered with VT DEC to hold Septic Socials at Lake Carmi. The Septic Socials focus on proper septic maintenance and give demonstrations on new, more efficient septic systems. Through the FWC we have distributed (for free) water saving showerheads and water saving devices for faucets. We also cost shared on the installation of low flush toilets. For more than ten years the FWC has offered a septic pump out rebate program. All owners who pump out their septic systems at the lake receive a \$75 rebate from the FWC.

paper or happen to see it being done in the fields. We ask, but no one tells us anything about the agricultural improvements. We want to know," said Benevento.

Another common cause of pollution to Vermont's waterways lies in impervious surfaces, such as roads, which generate runoff that can carry phosphorous and other pollutants into the lake.

The Franklin Watershed Committee has participated in two surveys of roads surrounding Lake Carmi, and the information collected has helped them identify which roads need maintenance to prevent excess runoff into the lake.

According to Angela Shambaugh, an aquatic biologist with the DEC, larger blooms take place in nicer weather, as the algae thrive in warm, calm water. These bacteria are able to regulate where they rest in

the water column. They are able to rise to the surface through the presence of gas vacuoles in their cell structure. When the algae rise to the surface and bloom, there is the potential for unsafe conditions because of the toxins released by the algae.

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