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## Greensboro lake stewards host septic social

Alison Gardner | Contributor

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Greensboro residents attended a program of the Greensboro Association to learn about how to keep Caspian Lake and the local watershed healthy.

Courtesy photo

As part of their lake protection and watershed education mission, stewards of the Greensboro watersheds, a sub-committee of the Greensboro Association, hosted a septic social, a community gathering focused on how septic systems work along with some snacks and fun.

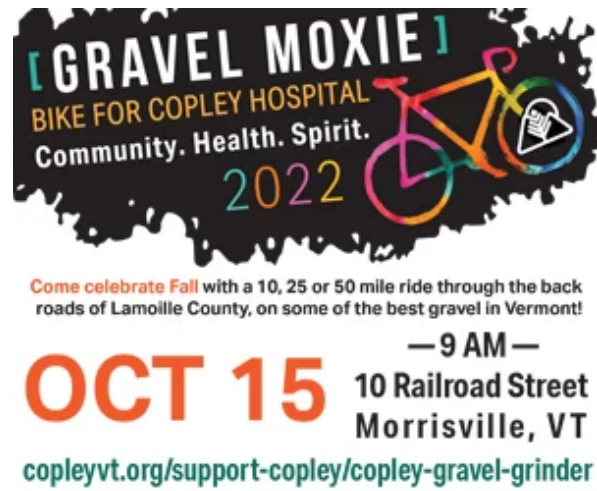
Thirty people listened Aug. 10 as Patrick Larsen, hydrogeologist and designer of many of the Caspian lakeshore's newer septic systems, described various types of state approved systems, the stringent rules to which wastewater systems comply and details on how septic systems work. Larsen also explained that many of the older septic systems are grandfathered and, while they are not technically failing, they are most likely not up to current standards and should undergo regular maintenance and improvements. These could be adding raisers to assist access and filters to extend quality and life to leach fields, all of which will ultimately protect the lake.

During his presentation, Larsen gave the audience a rough analysis of how much phosphorus Caspian gets from each lake home, comparing the difference a leach field that is working properly and one that's not.



The gathering was held on Beach Road at the prior home of Cassie's Ice Cream stand where an innovative, double filtration system was recently built, demonstrating that it is possible to obtain an effective, non-polluting system even on small lakeshore lots.

Hans Laggis, of Taplin Septic System Service and Repair, spoke about the maintenance and care of septic systems. He reinforced the importance of knowing where your septic tank and leach field are located and having the tank and leach lines checked to ensure that they are working properly.



He explained that well-maintained systems are less apt to malfunction and are more protective of the watershed. Another benefit of regular maintenance is that it extends the life of septic systems. Participants were reminded that it is recommended to have septic tanks pumped every three years, particularly at lake houses, noting that homeowners rarely have their septic tanks pumped as recommended.

To understand more about Caspian Lake's water quality, Stew Arnold, chair of the Greensboro Association's Lake Protection Committee, presented data from the lay monitoring program. Data shows a significant increase in phosphorus levels in Caspian Lake over the last 20 years. There are several factors related to this increase, with poorly functioning septic systems being among them as they leach phosphorus into the groundwater and the lake. Shoreline property owners are encouraged to participate in a Lake Wise assessment where more information can be personally presented on best management practices for water runoff, vegetation buffer zones and septic system enhancements.

For more information go to [dec.vermont.gov/watershed](http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed).

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*Alison Gardner lives in Greensboro.*

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