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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Square Pond Watershed Survey to look for erosion sources

A volunteer watershed survey at Square Pond will be conducted on **May 4th** with follow up through August. The survey is a joint project between the Square Pond Improvement Association (SPIA), Acton Shapleigh Youth Conservation Corps (ASYCC) and Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP).

Square Pond is a recreational gem for thousands of people in Southern Maine. The survey will focus not only on the lakeshore but also on the entire watershed. A watershed is the land that drains to a lake by surface runoff, tributary streams, springs, and groundwater recharge. Square Pond's watershed covers 4.3 square miles in the Towns of Acton and Shapleigh. (See attached maps.)

Through the survey, volunteers from around the pond will be looking for sites where polluted runoff is occurring. Eroding sediment carries phosphorus, a plant nutrient, as a hitchhiker. Activities like construction, road building, land clearing and even small residential areas with bare soil or sparse vegetation can release sediment into the watershed. If too much phosphorus runs off from the land and enters a lake, a chemical reaction takes place in the bottom watershed and a nuisance algae growth can occur. In severe cases, mats of algae choke out fish, and ruin water quality and recreation. Once these problems occur, they recur and are very expensive to fix.

It's not just lakeshore activities that could affect Square Pond water quality. Sediment may wash into the lake from sites high up in the surrounding hills. That's why the survey will look at the entire watershed.

SPIA and the ASYCC work cooperatively with landowners to protect our natural resources. Information collected in this survey will not be used for regulatory or enforcement purposes. Rather, it is the first step in a long-term approach to work with the community to correct pollution problems in the Square Pond Watershed.

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For information, contact Betty Smith, Program Consultant, ASYCC at betty@asycc.com.

Attach copies of the watershed maps.