

## Potential Reclassification of Seymour Lake and It's Watershed August 2021

Currently all Vermont lakes located outside of the Green Mountain National Forest and those below 2500' are, by default, classified as B(2). This type of classification is based on a lake's water quality. B(2) lakes have a water quality of "good" or better than "good".

The State of Vermont has asked SLA to consider filing a petition to reclassify Seymour Lake as an A1 water body to better reflect our high quality of water. They have also reached out to several other lakes in the state (including our neighbors Echo and Willoughby) that have high quality water. The reason the state is encouraging reclassification is because they've learned that once a B(2) water body is declared impaired, it is virtually impossible to reverse it and they are now taking proactive actions to preserve what high quality waters we still have.

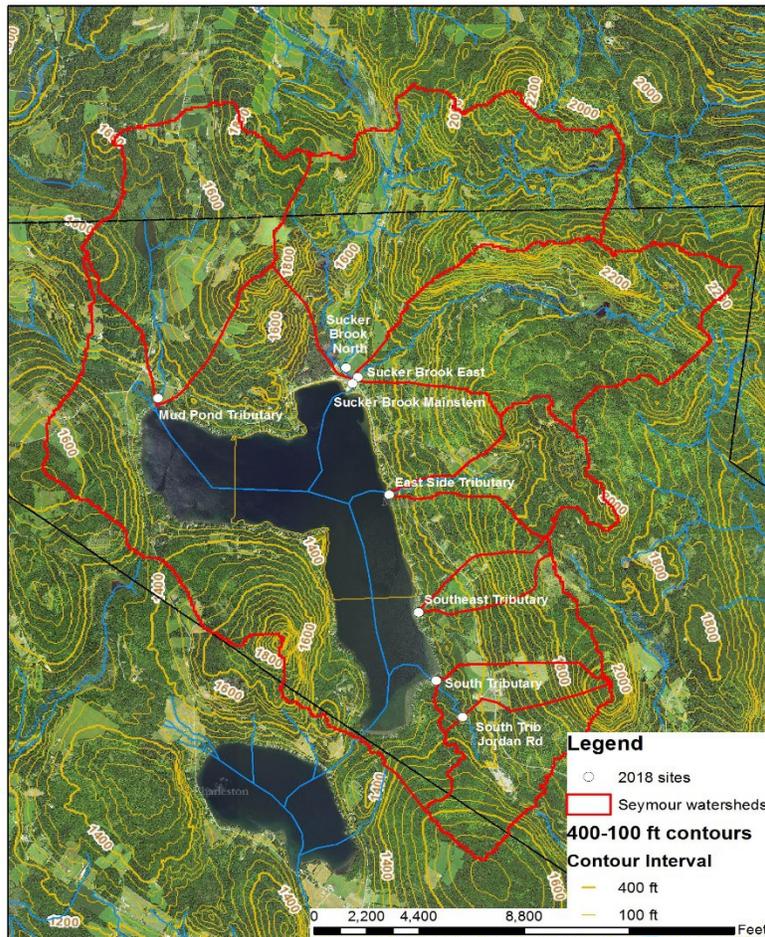
**Restrictions that would come with A(1) classification:** Currently there are 3 mandatory restrictions in VT Statutes for an A(1) watershed. It is prohibited to have a new septic system that discharges 1,000 or more gallons of water a day. It is also prohibited to discharge any wastes that, prior to treatment, contained organisms pathogenic to humans. Also, no siting of solid waste facilities or applications of biosolids or septage would be allowed in the watershed. The state recognizes that the septic system restriction may be outdated and has indicated they plan to seek legislative approval to change this restriction to only apply to land that is 2500' elevation or higher (of which there is none in our watershed).

**Benefits to reclassifying:** The principal benefit for reclassification is to place a lake into the appropriate class corresponding with its actual status and create a mechanism for a restorative action sooner if the lake becomes impaired for A(1) uses. Additionally, an A(1) lake could be eligible for technical assistance and funding to 1) keep its total phosphorus concentrations from ever exceeding the A(1) limits and becoming impaired and 2) to restore it to A(1) in the event that it does become impaired for A(1), similar to efforts made to restore lakes that are impaired for the B(2) class, like Lake Champlain and Lake Carmi.

### **What decisions has the SLA made to date?**

- Because reclassification would impact not just the lakefront properties but the entire watershed (for Seymour that is 13,226 acres – see map below), the SLA Board feels that if we were to proceed with filing a petition for reclassification, we would want the support of the Morgan Selectboard. We have begun discussion with the Selectboard on the topic.
- There are 2,004 acres in our watershed that are in the Town of Holland. We would also seek their support should we file a petition.
- Because the current septic limitation would potentially limit the ability of many uses such as stores, schools, inns, and restaurants we would want the change to limit this restriction to higher elevations to be approved by the legislature.

- We would not file a petition for reclassification without a positive vote of SLA's membership. Public information meetings would also be held to inform all property owners in the watershed and provide them an opportunity to comment.
- Finally, we have authorized the establishment of an A1 Investigation Committee which Peggy Barter (Water Quality Committee Chair) will Chair. They will continue to follow the state's progress in finalizing the restrictions that will apply to A1 watersheds; have conversations with water quality partners as well as neighboring lake associations and towns; follow the progress of any petitions filed by other lakes; and finally make a recommendation to the SLA Board.



Seymour Lake's Watershed is outlined in red

## MORE INFORMATION

- [Reclassification Fact Sheet](#)