

# Silver Lake Property Owners Earn First Lake Wise Award

**B**ARNARD — Barnard residents, Phil and Mary Lee Camp, are the first shoreland owners on Silver Lake to receive the new Lake Wise Award for lake-friendly practices on their shoreland property.

The Camps were thrilled to be recipients of the award, although they didn't feel they had done anything special to earn it. But, Amy Picotte, Vermont Lake Wise Coordinator, says "the Camps have been smart, especially living on a steeply sloped lakeshore, as they have left the native vegetation alone, and let it do its job of filtering stormwater, stabilizing the bank, and providing wildlife habitat. Way too often people over-manage shorelands, they clear them and then rid them of all their important, natural benefits to the lake."

The Camps' property has been in the family for many years. As a family, they have enjoyed the natural shoreland because as Phil Camp



Photo Provided

**Barnard residents Phil and Mary Lee Camp are presented with the first Lake Wise Award.**

says, "it just made sense to leave the shore in its natural condition and hope that we could live along the lake and have a minimal impact on it. Keeping the natural vegetation is

also low maintenance."

The Camps' property is better protected from storm damage as the canopy from the mature trees intercepts hard rains and escorts it

more gently to the earth. Tree roots stabilize the bank better than any man-made rebar. The understory is filled with shrubs, ferns and a duff layer of decomposing leaves and twigs, also important in shoreland health as these woodland layers filter out stormwater runoff before it reaches the lake.

The Camps' shoreland vegetation provides cover and homes for birds and other wildlife, while leaves and branches falling into the water become the food and structure that feed and protect aquatic insects and fish. Mown, suburban-style lawns do not provide any of these benefits and are not considered lake friendly practices.

Wandering down their meandering path (which unlike a straight path, will slow stormwater and be less erosive), the Camps reach their lake access and dock. The dock is the spot for sun, swimming, and a wonderful view of Silver Lake. Back up slope, they can retreat to privacy

with selected views of the lake.

It was Craig Hadden, avid canoeist and president of the Silver Lake Association, who first approached the Camps to participate in the Lake Wise Program. Hadden, acting as the local Lake Wise Lake Leader, hopes to get other properties participating in the Lake Wise Program as well.

"It's really important that shoreland property owners understand what a property looks like when lake-friendly practices are used. The Lake Wise sign and program can help recognize good lake stewards, like the Camps, and encourage others to use similar practices, so Silver Lake will always be well protected by its shoreland owners."

Trained Lake Wise evaluators assess the condition of a shoreland property by looking at four areas: driveways; structures and septic

systems; recreation areas; and the shorefront and lake access. The Vermont Lake Wise Award represents a model lake friendly property that uses Best Management Practices in all four of these categories. Qualifying properties receive an award certificate and the beautiful Lake Wise sign to display along the shore.

The Lake Wise Program helps landowners choose low-cost, low-maintenance, lake friendly alternatives to lake front lawns, and for solving erosion and stormwater runoff issues. To schedule a free Lake Wise visit on your property and learn more about how you too can earn the Lake Wise Award and help protect Silver Lake, contact Amy Picotte at:

Amy.Picotte@state.vt.us or 802-490-6128.