

WORKING TO PROTECT
THE QUALITY OF OUR LAKES



ISLAND FALLS
LAKES ASSOCIATION



SUMMER 2024 NEWSLETTER



SAVE THE DATE! KAYAK, CANOE, & S.U.P. RACE

On Sunday, July 28th the Island Falls Lakes Association will hold its 20th annual Paddling Race at Birch Point Lodge and Campground on Pleasant Lake. This family friendly event is fun for all ages to participate in. Paddlers can compete in canoes, kayaks, or stand-up-paddleboards. There is a 1.4 mile course for adults and children 15 and older and a shorter course for children under 15. Ribbons are awarded to First, Second, and Third place finishers. First place finishers also receive a miniature paddle. All participants

receive an IFLA Race T-shirt. Shirts are also available to purchase. Registration fee is \$15.00. Registration begins at noon. The Race begins at 1:00. This is a fun event for spectators so bring your lawn chair and cheer on the racers!

This event raises money for the Southern Aroostook Scholarship Fund through entry fees and donations. Volunteers are invited to help on race day. If you would like to volunteer please contact Tom Burgos at tburgos5060@gmail.com.

MEMBERSHIP & DUES

A Membership commences on July 1 and ends on June 30 of the following year, for example, beginning on July 1, 2024 and ending on June 30, 2025. We provide several touchpoints to remind our members to renew their support of our mission of working to protect the quality of our lakes. The Newsletters, Winter and Summer editions, have dues reminders and dues can be paid at any event such as the canoe/kayak race and the Annual Meeting. For your convenience dues can also be paid electronically and securely on our website.

Why pay dues? Your support means our messaging is reaching you and you want us to continue. Members receive informative newsletters every winter and summer, packed with water quality data and best practices for property owners on keeping our lakes healthy. Members also qualify for special programs we may offer like the \$500 grants we have made available to promote the Driveway Water Diverter Program.

IFLA ANNUAL MEETING & DINNER

In an effort to attract a broader audience and increase Member turnout, we have changed the venue and menu for our upcoming get together. Our Trustees will now have much more time to mingle and engage with our membership.

We have reserved "The Slice" for the evening of Wednesday, August 7th.

The agenda will be as follow:

5:00-5:30pm **SOCIALIZING**
5:30-6:00pm **IFLA BUSINESS + PROGRAM**
6:00-8:00pm **DINNER + DESSERT**

The Slice staff will be serving appetizers, a buffet dinner, and soft drinks. A cash bar will be available. Desserts will be provided courtesy of Trustees and Members. We encourage you to make reservations on our website islandfallslakesassociation.com or [RSVP HERE](#). We will also have a sign-up sheet at The Slice. We will collect \$25 per person at the door. Please bring your family, friends and neighbors so that they can learn about the mission and efforts of the IFLA.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Our lakes will benefit from bills passed in this last session of the Maine State Legislature:

LD 2101: Towns will have new tools to enforce existing shoreland zoning rules. They will be able to suspend or revoke permits and place liens on properties in violation of the shoreland zoning rules. This will better protect water quality and wildlife habitat such for nesting loons.

LD 2141: Will add 2 million to the Invasive Aquatic Plant (IAP) and Nuisance Species Fund which will help the state fight the most serious IAP infestations.

LD 1342: Will address the cost of the Lake and River Protection Sticker which all motorized watercraft must display in Maine. It will increase by \$10 in 2025 and another \$10 in 2028. This will generate hundreds of thousands of

dollars to fight the spread of IAP. IFLA received grant money from this fund to conduct Courtesy Boat Inspections last summer.

LD 2284: Will help lakes manage "Wake Surfing." A "wake boat" creates a very large wake which can be ridden on with a surfboard without a tow rope. Obviously the very large waves erode the shoreline, can swamp or sink other boats/kayaks, endanger swimmers, and wash eggs out of loon nests. These "wake boats" will be prohibited less than 300 feet from shore and in waters less than 15 feet deep. Maine Lakes' and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's research was asking for 500 feet from shore which would allow the energy of the huge waves to better dissipate. Vermont enacted a similar law this year limiting wake boat use to 500 feet from shore on all sides and in water over 20 feet deep.

RUN-OFF DIVERTERS & GRANT PROGRAM

Are you seeing sediment on the bottom of the lake in front of your camp? Are you noticing algae grow on the rocks by your shoreline? The root cause of this is higher phosphorus levels in the water.

Control phosphorus levels by controlling water run-off. Driveways, paths, camp roofs, open areas all lend themselves to water running into our streams and lake.

A very effective way to remediate this issue is to divert your rain run-off into the woods where it can be absorbed. The IFLA will provide you driveway diverters-free of charge-to any lake owner. You may also receive a \$500 grant for installation.

Not only will you be helping your lakefront be clearer, but you will also preserve your gravel driveway from washing out. Contact us today and we are happy to help! We are all in this together.

For more information contact the IFLA: info@islandfallslakesassociation.com

WANTED! Your **IFLA LakeSmart team** is looking for volunteers to have their property evaluated this summer season. There is no cost to the owner and no fees or fines. We just come to walk your property with you and look to see if there are any issues with regard to possible runoff that could end up in the lake water. If there is an issue, we will offer suggestions for how to remedy the situation. The biggest issue for many of us is a lack of a riparian buffer. The lake water and wildlife in it, benefit from at least 10 ft (from the high water mark), preferably more, of plantings consisting of at least three layers: canopy trees, understory trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants, and a layer of duff (dead leaves, decaying plant matter, mulch). **Check out the list of possible plantings in this newsletter.**



PLANTS CAN DESTROY LAKES; IT'S NO JOKE!

By Donna Davidge, Trustee, excerpted from the *Down East* magazine article by Jesse Ellison.

For many of us, our lakes provide a place of recreation, connecting with family and friends, a place to step back from the world. Many of us enjoy the feeling that being in nature sitting or being on a lake brings us. But do we think of the lake as a living, breathing ecosystem that can easily be damaged, destroyed or even killed? That sounds ominous but is exactly what is happening in lakes in Maine. Read below to learn more and how we can continue to make efforts to keep our lakes alive, well and healthy. Many people misunderstand the role of Lake Associations, which is to educate about and care for our lakes. Read below to see how this went for one Maine lake and how one Lake Association was vital when the lake became compromised.

Excerpted from Down East magazine

Plants can destroy lakes; its no joke! Eurasian Watermilfoil is one of the “worst” ones and Cobbosseecontee Lake is one of those lakes which has been hit by this subtle intruder.

“Once we learned how much damage it can do, there was a bit of an awakening, This isn’t just another plant.” - Jesse Ellison’s

In her May '24 [article](#), Ellison recounts how divers in wet suits spent hours “weeding” the lake. (As any of us know who have weeded, that sounds an impossible task underwater). She also explains how herbicides that can harm the lake are only a partial solution, as well as releasing carp to devour it, only to find out that they devour native vegetation required for the health of the lake.

“Folks, think about it like covid. It was the illness “over there’ until it wasn’t anymore. Often lake property owners are complacent until it is too late. For those of us on the Island Falls Lake Assn board our purpose is to care for and preserve the lakes with you; if your motivation is the value of your camp, know that this article noted drop in value by 20%, with some owners unloading their camps when the invasive species took over.”

As a result of this issue on Lake Cobbosseecontee their Lake Assn. doubled its membership and fundraising efforts raising 1.5 million dollars, however money alone could not do it. Part of the fund raising was for boat inspections, which will become more important as the issue persists. The State admits that eradication is unlikely. Removal costs on Lake Cobbosseecontee are between \$162,000 and \$290,000.

The article concluded with the quote “IF EVERY BOATER JUST FOLLOWED **CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY** WE WOULD SOLVE SO MUCH”. This is now a [law](#) in the State of Maine. The IFLA procured a grant in 2023 which supported courtesy boat inspections on Pleasant Lake and Mattawamkeag Lake last summer.

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SHORELINE FRIENDLY PLANTS

Looking for safe plant options to help protect and filter Maine lake shorelines? Consider these:

GROUND COVERS

- Bunchberry
- Ferns
- Lowbush Blueberry
- Bearberry

SHRUBS

- Highbush Blueberry
- Redosier Dogwood
- Common Winterberry
- Buttonbush
- Black Chokeberry
- Summersweet
- Juniper

SMALL TREES

- Shadbush
- Striped Maple
- Pussy Willow
- Common Witch-Hazel
- Northern Bayberry

CANOPY TREES

- Northern Red Oak
- Red Maple
- Yellow Birch
- Balsam Fir

This list is not exclusive, I’m sure there are other native species that are suitable for buffering.

RESOURCES:

- [Lakes.me/protect](https://lakes.me/protect)
- [Mainenativeplants.org](https://mainenativeplants.org)
- [Wildseedproject.net](https://wildseedproject.net)
- Maine Lakes Lake Book
- Lake Stewards of Maine





BROOK TROUT

By Mary Ardizzone, Trustee

- On 4/11/24, The Maine Department of Wildlife and Inland Fisheries stocked Pleasant Lake with 1,700 brook trout, all about 10 inches long
- Brook trout cannot be stocked at Mattawamkeag Lake because the water is too warm. Bass, perch and pickerel fare much better in warmer waters
- "Brookies" prefer cold streams and lakes and do not generally tolerate water temps above 65 degrees, they also need lots of oxygen in the water
- Brook trout mature in 2 years but may spawn after only 1 year, their lifespan is only about 2 to 3 years
- They are native to eastern North America in the US and Canada
- Brook trout have no teeth on the roof of their mouths
- Their predators include otters, Kingfishers, Mergansers, mink, herons, osprey and eagles
- Brook trout are most active around dawn and dusk and the best bait to use are worms, minnows, waxworms, maggots and mayflies
- If you fish and are NOT planning on keeping your catch, please make an effort to limit the time you spend trying to land the fish in order to reduce stress. This is particularly important as the fish gets nearer the surface and into warmer water. When unhooking the fish, handle it as little and as gently as possible and release it quickly. If taking a photo, do it fast and keep it in the water.

CLIMATE CHANGE & OUR LAKES

By Sue Burgos, Trustee

Our lakes are being affected by changes in the climate. Two areas of concern are particularly important.

The first is temperature change. Since the 1980's, lakes in northern New England have been warming by an average of 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit per decade (Maine Climate Council Report). Warmer water leads to less ice coverage. Ice-out trends (studied by USGS scientists) reveal that ice-out for New England lakes is occurring 9 to 16 days earlier since 1850.

Warmer water increases the period of summer lake stratification (when distinct thermal layers exist) which can impact how long the bottom waters are deprived of oxygen. This affects where certain fish can live and increases the amount of phosphorus release from sediments. More phosphorus means more algae.

Climate change is also altering precipitation patterns. As defined by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) "Weather is what you experience when you step outside on any given day. Climate is the average of weather patterns in a location over a longer period of time, usually 30 years or more." Significant rain events are a well-established prediction within models of human driven climate change. More rain over shorter periods of time leads to erosion, road washouts, and erosion of stream banks which brings large amounts of phosphorus containing debris into our lakes further feeding algae.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

1. Leave undisturbed natural areas and vegetation along your shoreline. This is called the Shoreline Buffer.
2. Minimize the size of your lawn. Lawns act like impervious surfaces and do little to absorb rain. No fertilizer is allowed within 25 feet of water.
3. Maintain roads and driveways. Poorly maintained roads and driveways are the greatest sources of phosphorus laden runoff. Stabilize ditches with vegetation and rock, and divert water into stable vegetated areas. (IFLA offers free driveway diverters).
4. Focus foot traffic. Consider a meandering path from house to shore. This prevents runoff from taking a direct route into the lake

Remember landowners on our lakes play a very important role in preserving them and mitigating the effects of climate change.





SOFT PLASTIC LURES

By Mary Ardizzone, Trustee

According to Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, over the years, soft plastic lures have been improperly used. Popular with bass fishing, soft plastic lures often end up on lake bottoms or in fish stomachs. To prevent your plastic lures from ending up in our lakes, secure the lures using O-rings, hooks with twist locks, super glue or even zip ties.

O-rings have been developed to secure lures and also to enhance performance of the lures! Soft plastic lures do NOT decompose in the water, so to preserve our water quality and fish population, please secure your lures.



FUN FACTS ABOUT EAGLES

By Mary Ardizzone, Trustee

1. There are about 800 breeding pairs in Maine
2. Eagles don't develop their white heads and tails until about age 5
3. They are full grown at 3 months
4. Eagles mate for life and lay between 1 and 3 eggs per year
5. A group of baby eagles is called an aerie
6. Eagles have a specialized mechanism in their feet that allow them to lock in position so they can sleep on a branch when not in their nest
7. They have wingspans between 7-8 ft and weigh between 8-14 lbs
8. Female eagles are larger than the males
9. The average eagle lives about 30 years
10. Fish are the staple of their diet, but eagles will also eat snakes, turtles, rabbits, and waterfowl
11. Golden eagles, which are much more rare than bald eagles, have been spotted at both Pleasant and Mattawamkeag Lakes.



ARE YOU A STAR GAZER?

By Candace Dudman, Trustee

DarkSkyMaine has declared Maine as a dark sky sanctuary; here in Aroostook County we are fortunate to live in a vast wilderness with little light pollution. On a clear night we are treated to innumerable stars.

What can you do to ensure our lakes, the residents of our lakes and the wildlife are protected from light pollution so we can continue to have this dark sky sanctuary we all enjoy? Keep in mind how outdoor lighting affects those around you and across the lake from you. You want to preserve the vestige of the dark sky.

Use only downward facing lights for outside. Keep in mind light glow spills over into neighboring areas. Install light shields for any outdoor lighting, direct light downward to a specific area. Make use of motion detectors.

DarkSkyMaine recommends only warm-appearing light sources be used for outdoor lighting.

Natural darkness should be the default at night. For more information visit darkskymaine.com