

WORKING TO PROTECT  
THE QUALITY OF OUR LAKES



## WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Greetings.

This letter is always about hope. We look out the windows at snowdrifts and reminisce about warmer months and the good times we share at camp during those few glorious months of Maine summer. There is hope too that in the coming summer we may get a chance to do some of those things we have always wanted but just never got around to. Maybe it's a trip to Bible Point or a paddle around the lake, or a project around the camp or a gathering of special 'summer friends'. Whatever your persuasion you have to admit that time spent at camp is special and that we are fortunate to have a small slice of such a beautiful place. I hope our children will enjoy it's beauty and soul rejuvenating karma as much as I do, and those that came before me. As much as this is about hope it is also about responsibility and we hope the Lakes Association can, in some small way, help all of us understand the forces of (man and) nature that affect our lakes and what condition they will be in when we 'pass them on' to the next generation.

2022 was a year of unprecedented levels of reporting about cataclysmic weather events. We've heard them all; drought, flooding and landslides in California, tornadoes ripping up the Midwest and South, massive snowfall and flooding in the Northeast, roads and buildings collapsing right here in our own backyard. Though we are relatively unscathed from major weather disasters, we too have seen some changes in what mother nature provides. It brings me to think about "tipping point". What is the moment or trigger that moves the needle from good to going bad, going downhill or breaking down? We need to better understand what happened to lakes in Maine (Annabessacook Lake, China Lake, Cobbosseecontee Lake, Echo Lake, Madawaska Lake, the Belgrade

Lakes, Sebasticook Lake to name a few) that changed from clean water to having algae blooms. We have good but limited data on water quality from Pleasant and Mattawamkeag lakes that indicate pretty stable conditions over the years. In spite of that many have expressed concern over the slimy layer of sediment along the shoreline of Pleasant and the increasing presence of metaphyton algae in Mattawamkeag Lake. We should take stock in what other lakes associations have discovered and that is 'water quality can no longer be taken for granted'. There are too many factors, both human and natural, that impact how healthy lakes work. We stress the importance of how one person can make a difference and we offer, again, our Lakesmart program and our driveway water diverter program as ways of helping to preserve and enjoy our precious natural resources.

We are excited also to announce a new and budding relationship with the College of Ecology and Environmental Science and the Climate Change Institute at the University of Maine. Through a collaborative effort with the Town of Island Falls (Selectman Tony Binotto), we have been included in a study to determine the effects of climate on algae growth. This study will hopefully give us yet another insight into the health of our lakes. With more information and with good habits at our lakeside habitats we can hopefully keep the tipping point at a distance.

Looking forward to seeing you all this coming summer.

Respectfully,  
Robert Guerette  
*IFLA President 2018-2023*

## VOLUNTEER LAKES MONITORING PROGRAM

By Mary Ardizzone

On June 17, 2022, IFLA Trustees Sherry Pettyjohn, Sue Burgos and Mary Ardizzone, attended a Lake Monitoring Certification Session at Nickerson Lake with other area volunteers. The training and certifications were provided by Lake Stewards of Maine as a part of their Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program. On a rainy day, we boarded a boat that took us to a locally owned barge to receive instruction and then perform simulated water quality testing in order to get certified. In Sherry's case, she was successfully recertified in dissolved oxygen and thermal profile testing, as well as secchi disc transparency readings. Mary and Sue received their initial certifications in secchi disc readings. "Dan Kinney, our volunteer on Mattawamkeag Lake, travelled to Auburn earlier in the season to receive his recertification." Volunteer water quality monitors go to both Pleasant and Mattawamkeag Lakes every two weeks between June and September to collect and record data that directly relates to the health of our waters.

If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about these important activities, please contact IFLA.



## CLIMATE CHANGE & THE HEALTH OF MAINE LAKES

By Bob Guerette

The Lakes Association and the Town of Island Falls have been included to participate in a 3 year study by the College of Ecology & Environmental Science and the Climate Change Institute at the University of Maine. The study involves core sampling at Pleasant Lake and Mattawamkeag Lake. Analysis of the core samples will provide information on how algae growth has responded to interactions between nutrients and climate over time. Core samples can capture as much as 125 years of historical data from the lake bottom. The research will use historical climate data to determine the effects of warming winters (and conversely the effects of warmer summers) on algae growth.

Cyanobacteria like *Gloeotrichia* (those little green spherical plants we see floating in the water in late summer) can bloom out of control and produce a highly toxic environment for other organisms and a serious degradation of water quality. Nutrient loading (primarily phosphorus) has long been recognized as the primary reason for algae blooms with increasing air temperatures as a secondary driver. Much research has already been conducted on this topic around the world and the University of Maine has contributed greatly to the knowledge base required to better understand the effects of climate change. For more information visit "Maine's Climate Future: A 2020 Update" at [www.climatechange.umaine.edu](http://www.climatechange.umaine.edu)

Being part of this state-wide survey benefits us greatly in many ways. It establishes a relationship with a scientific and research entity and gives us valuable data on a host of environmental variables like nutrients, temperature, pH and other water quality characteristics that can be used to promote responsible preservation, conservation, stewardship, development and public policy.

Stay tuned for news updates about this research project in future newsletters.

## AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION: INVASIVE SPECIES & OUR LAKES

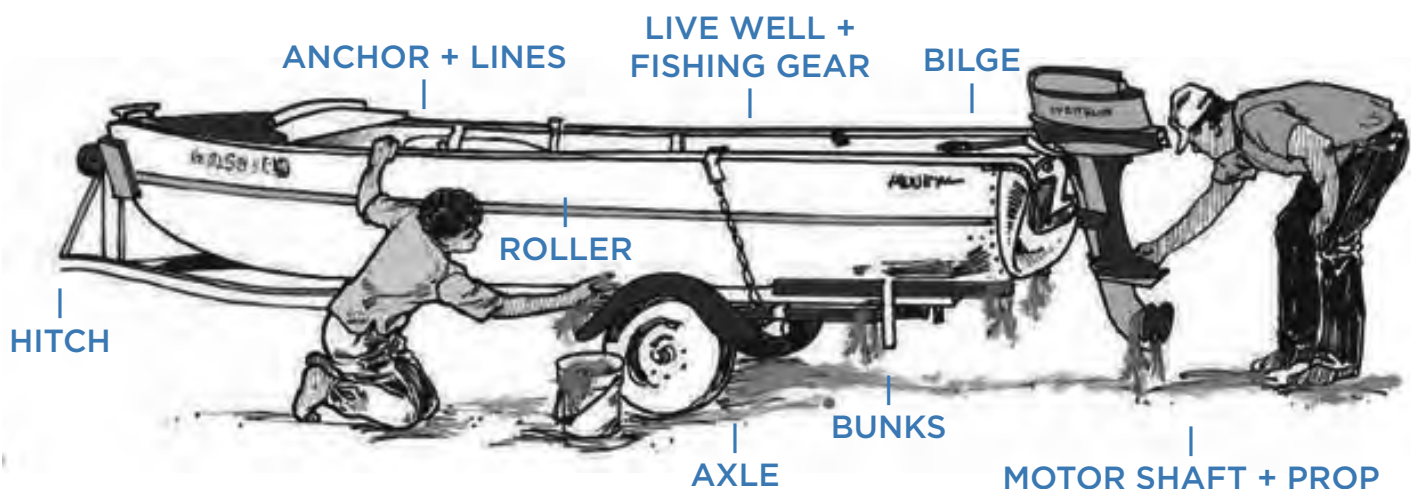
**K**eeping invasive species out of our lakes is a universal goal of municipalities and shore front property owners across the state of Maine and in most parts of the country. The reason for this is that invasive species **INVADE** and even a small fragment of a plant or a single living organism can start that invasion. Many invasive plants or animals have no natural competitors or enemies. They can grow out of control choking waterways and shorelines, they can produce toxic byproducts that are harmful to fish and other plants, they can deplete oxygen that a lake relies on to keep natural populations of plants and fish healthy. Another undesirable aspect of invasive species is their potential negative effect on land values and the fact that they are very expensive to control or eradicate. This is truly a scenario where an 'ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure' to quote an old Ben Franklin saying.

The Town of Island Falls has raised awareness of the detrimental effects of invasive species in its Comprehensive Plan and its desire to support the work of the Lakes Association to educate people about it. Consequently, we are hopeful to introduce a *Courtesy Boat Inspection Program* at the Mattawamkeag and the Pleasant Lake boat launches this summer. Initially, this is subject to obtaining necessary funding and the ability to provide shelter at each boat launch. If successful, what you can expect is a courtesy boat inspection by a trained individual prior to putting your boat in the water. This is an educational effort only and will benefit the boat owner and the natural resource.

Stay tuned for more information on our website, [www.islandfallslakesassociation.com](http://www.islandfallslakesassociation.com) or the 2023 Summer Newsletter.

## TAKE ACTION! CLEAN BOATS = CLEAN LAKES

- **CLEAN** off any mud, plants (even small fragments) and animals from boats, trailers, motors and equipment.
- **DRAIN** boat, live well, engine and equipment away from water.
- **DRY** anything that comes in contact with water
- **NEVER** release plants or animals into the water **UNLESS** you are sure they came from **THAT** body of water.





# SUMMER '22 KAYAK + CANOE RACE

By Thomas Burgos

On Sunday, July 31st, the Island Falls Lakes Association (IFLA) sponsored its 18th Annual Around-the-Pond Canoe/Kayak/SUP Races at Birch Point Lodge and Campground on Pleasant Lake in Island Falls. This year we had 27 racers, ranging in ages from 6 to 76. The paddlers raise money for the Southern Aroostook Community Scholarship program. The IFLA will award \$250 in Scholarships this year. The IFLA would like to thank all the paddlers and spectators who came out on that beautiful morning as well as its members who donated their time for the event. We would also like to thank Elaine Small and her SAC Scholarship volunteers for providing grilled hotdogs and treats for all the paddlers and workers.

*Below left:* Josh and Nathan Bears and Pete and Carol Blood in canoes Beth Poliquin on SUP (from left to right)

*Below right:* At the midpoint of the kids race.



## THE LAKESMART PROGRAM

Your IFLA LakeSmart team of Nancy Doherty and Sherry Pettyjohn conducted four LakeSmart Evaluations in September. None of the four were eligible for an award at that time, but the property owners were all very interested in doing the best they could to make their lake shore properties LakeSmart. Their concern for the health of our lakes is awesome. A concern that arose during the discussions centered on the Airbnb and rental's industry. Short term renters do not have the same respect for the land or the quality of the lake they are enjoying during

their stay. As more of our shorefront properties are sold, more are being used as an income source. Educating property owners remains a priority for IFLA. We will be contacting realtors and rental property owners in an effort to supply educational materials in their various properties.

# TOWN NEWS

## MATTAWAMKEAG LAKE UPDATE

The Mattawamkeag water level project is mired in an impasse concerning a conservation easement at the proposed dam site. The conservation easement is very clear about prohibiting any modifications to the river. It will require an act of the legislature to get the easement amended. For that to happen the Town will need to provide more compelling information about the positive impacts of an increased water level. There is some interest in launching a survey of property owners to document support for the project. Those interested in the project or in a survey of property owners should contact the Town of Island Falls

## AN UPGRADE ON PLEASANT POND

The Pleasant Lake boat landing is scheduled for an upgrade. The DEP has approved the replacement of the boat ramp planks. The Town will also erect a cedar rail fence around the parking perimeter and make a porta-potty available at the site. Work will be done this spring.

## EXPANDED DEVELOPMENT ON PLEASANT

The Town has made no decision on the sale of lakeside lots on the land it owns between the last camp on the South Shore Road and Sand Cove. The snow sled trail connecting the Lake Shore Road to the Dow Farm Road will be developed into a proper road for vehicle traffic. Selective logging will be conducted in the area, and the logging trucks and equipment will enter and exit via the Dow Farm Road. Road construction will begin this summer. Harvesting will be done during the winter months. In the future the Town is hoping to develop a picnic area and public access to the Lake known as the Two Lakes Trail and Picnic Area. They are encouraging lake shore residents to be involved in this project. Please contact the Town Office for more information.

## BEING MINDFULL ON THE WATER

By Esther Harte

Boating safety, consideration and kindness are critical to everyone using or traveling on our beautiful lakes. Whether you kayak, motor, paddle board, canoe, drive a personal watercraft or sail, there could always be an emergency. We need each other on the water. Please keep loons and fishermen a generous distance from your boat and ALWAYS give an easy pass to oncoming water

traffic. Having a functioning cellphone on board is probably as essential as having the right number of lifejackets and if you have room, a tow rope is handy, too. It is always a good idea to tell someone who is staying on land what your plans on the water might be, as well, and when to expect your return.

**Be kind to other boaters...one of them might be called on to save your life!**



## THE '22 DERBY WAS A GREAT SUCCESS!

By Suzanne Burgos

The Island Falls Lakes Association held it's annual fishing derby on July 9. Headquarters for the derby was the Snowmobile club on Route 2. Anglers of all ages fished on both Pleasant Pond and Mattawamkeag Lake. Though conditions were tough due to strong wind resulting in rough water, the anglers persevered and delivered their catch in time for weigh in.

The fish were then fried or grilled and accompanied by a full array of side dishes and desserts provided by Island Falls Lakes Association trustees and their families. Following the meal, raffle prizes were drawn. Prizes included a game camera, fish finder, kayak paddles and many other items as well as numerous gift certificates.

Among the big winners on the day was Cole Signoretti in the youth division who turned in the 1st and 2nd place small mouth bass as well as the 1st place salmon and 1st place trout.



In the adult division Kim Hagan took 1st place with an impressive small mouth bass weighing in at 3.63 lbs. and Jim Kelly took 1st place in the salmon category and 2nd place in the trout category each weighing 3.3 lbs and 0.67 lbs respectively.

*Jim Kelly and Kim Hagan display their cash prizes. Jim caught the largest salmon and Kim the largest bass.*

### SUMMER '23 NEWS

## THE JEFF WINGATE "TAKE A KID FISHING" DERBY

**The theme for this year's fishing derby is promoted in honor of former Trustee, Jeff Wingate, who passed away in 2022. Jeff was instrumental in organizing the Derby in the last 2 years. He loved to fish and, even more, he loved to take people fishing, especially kids. Jeff believed that introducing young people to fishing elevated their sense of self-worth and their appreciation for the natural world around us. He had a boat and wanted to share his passion with others. Consequently, we feel it is appropriate to name the Derby after him and to promote "take a kid fishing", as Jeff liked to do.**

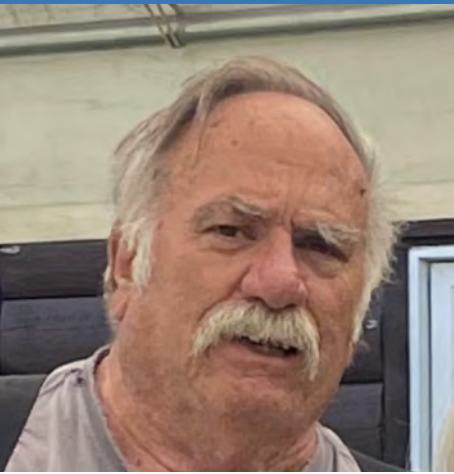
### A NEW DERBY FORMAT

- Anyone can register but only youthful fishermen age 16 or younger will be allowed to weigh their catch and receive prizes.
- **Volunteers will be critical.** Camp owners and boat owners to take their own kids fishing and camp owners and boat owners to take kids

without camps or boats fishing. Any and all adults interested in spending a half day or full day with a youthful fisherman can let us know by sending an email to [info@islandfallslakesassociation.com](mailto:info@islandfallslakesassociation.com) with the words COUNT ME IN, identifying the lake you would like to fish, either MATTAWAMKEAG or PLEASANT. We will coordinate with the local school department to create a list of kids interested in joining in.

- There will be demonstrations on how to clean and cook your catch, but there will not be a fish fry at the end of the day as there has been in the past. (Jeff led the filleting effort and owned all the cooking equipment used for the fish fry and that is no longer available.)

Join as a volunteer to make this special event a success! Visit our [website](http://www.islandfallslakesassociation.com) more information.



Jeff Wingate  
IFLA Board Member  
2017-2022

## Jeff Wingate, Remembered

By Donna Davidge

I first met Jeff a few years back at Pat Hunt's annual Pig Roast. He was calmly sitting in a chair. When I walked by, he said to me "By the way, did you know there is a tree fallen on the roof of your cabin?" I guess he got a kick out of my response, which I now don't remember. However, he was right. Bad weather had blown a tree onto my cabin. Luckily, the tree, though very tall, was not very thick so had not damaged my cabin roof. Dennis Drew went down and cut it up for me. Problem solved, thanks to Jeff.

Jeff was an integral part of our lives here in Island Falls. From attending Selectmen meetings to being on the board of the Island Falls Lakes Association, Jeff cared and was invested in his community.

Jeff hosted many gatherings at his camp on Mattawamkeag Lake. Whether you loved a good fish fry or enjoyed playing cards, Jeff welcomed you with a smile...and so did Brandy, Jeff's dog, as she raced up to you upon arrival like she had missed you for months!

I had sung along with his childhood friends as they strummed on their guitars at his camp, creating the kind of lake experiences with friends that we all hold fond in our memory. His gatherings brought us together and we all met wonderful people that care about our lakes.

I can say Jeff was a true friend who cared very much for the lake, ran many of the events for the IFLA—organizing, cooking and more. He was kind, funny, authentic, and matter of fact. He would stop by to say hi when each of us got into town, as any good friend does.

Jeff, I miss you. Many of us will miss you. I hope you find some good fishing up in heaven...we know that will make you smile.

Donna Sewall Davidge has been coming to her camp on Mattawamkeag since 1955. She wishes she were there more but spends as much time on the lake as she can while running Sewall House in town summers.





# SECURE YOUR LURES!

By Mary Ardizzone

Soft, plastic lures are popular fishing tackle; and just like all other equipment, it's our responsibility to maintain and dispose of them properly. Over the years, plastic lures have been improperly used and disposed of, consequently ending up on lake bottoms or in fish stomachs. Fish can ingest these lures off the bottom, negatively impacting their health. Soft plastic lures on the land or in the water also pose environmental concerns. Some lures end up in the water intentionally, while others fall off hooks unintentionally.

You may remember seeing the top photo on the right in last year's newsletter showing fishing lures retrieved from Pleasant Lake by Sue Burgos and Mary Ardizzone while snorkeling. It was an effort to raise awareness of the dangers of lures and steps to take to secure them. Sue and Mary snorkeled again this past summer and retrieved even more lures (photo bottom right).

**Let's see if we can reduce that number of lost lures by fishing more wisely. Do your part to help keep our lakes clean and fisheries healthy:**

- Properly dispose of soft plastic lures
- Secure your lure
- Check your bait often

**For more information and helpful tips visit:**

[www.maine.gov/ifw/fishing-boating/fishing/soft-plastic-lures](http://www.maine.gov/ifw/fishing-boating/fishing/soft-plastic-lures)



2021



2022

## IFLA DIVERTER & GRANT PROGRAM

The IFLA will continue to provide free driveway diverters to any property owner on both Mattawamkeag Lake and Pleasant Lake. These diverters steer water off of your driveway and into the woods where the water can easily be absorbed, preventing erosion of your driveway as well as keeping dirt and gravel from draining into the lakes.

Why is this so critical? Dirt, leaves, and gravel contain phosphorus. This phosphorus, when in our waters, can promote algae blooms which have a lasting negative impact on our pristine waters. Algae blooms are a huge threat to the fish, natural beauty, and water quality of our lakes.

If you would like to protect your driveway from erosion and help preserve the quality of our lakes, email us today at: [mpankratz@4Goals.net](mailto:mpankratz@4Goals.net) or [guerettes2@gmail.com](mailto:guerettes2@gmail.com)

We will provide diverters for your driveway and reimbursement of up to \$500 when installed by a certified contractor! Thanks for doing your part to keep our lakes beautiful!







Highlighting Our Business Partners

## BOWERS FUNERAL HOME

In a small community there is a tendency for people to help each other when needed. This neighbor helping neighbor spirit is what makes living in rural Maine so special. The Lakes Association has benefited in many ways from these goodwill collaborations and we have used this section of our newsletter to highlight and honor those businesses or individuals that have supported our activities and our mission.

This year's feature is dedicated to Tony Bowers and Bowers Funeral Home. In case you are wondering we have not 'preserved anything for viewing' (except the pictures we take at our events), nor have we 'prepared anything for its final resting place'. We have however organized and put on annually a fishing derby with a community fish fry and a lobster/steak dinner in conjunction with our Annual Meeting, which in some years also included a fundraising auction. At these events we have benefited from the goodwill and equipment of Bowers Funeral Home. Their large outside grill has made it possible for us to cook those fish from the derby and to cook those steaks for the lobster/steak dinner. Their portable canopies have kept our Trustees and volunteers in the shade or out of the rain at both of these events. No matter how busy, Tony has always found ways to make sure these items were available to us. And when it comes to hosting an auction, there is no greater crowd pleaser than Tony himself. His humor and cajoling have guaranteed that these events were successful for us.

We take great pride in honoring Tony and Bowers Funeral Home for showing that helpful Maine spirit. Your sense of 'community' and 'civic involvement' are exemplary and we offer a heartfelt THANK YOU.

[WWW.ISLANDFALLSLAKESASSOCIATION.COM](http://WWW.ISLANDFALLSLAKESASSOCIATION.COM)

## IFLA ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

The 2022 Annual Meeting of the Island Falls Lakes Association took place at the Island Falls Snowmobile Club on July 30, 2022.

A Treasurers Report was given by Gary McCue for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, condensed as follows:

Income:	\$10,678.18
Expenses:	\$7,966.62
Ending Balance:	\$20,312.64

Minutes of the 2021 meeting were approved.

Trustees approved a Grant Program to encourage installation of driveway water diverters.

Members approved the slate of Officers and Trustees for the following year.

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### 2022 OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES:

#### President

Bob Guerette (2024)

#### Vice President

Marcia Pankratz (2024)

#### Secretary

Candace Rupley (2025)

#### Treasurer

Gary McCue (2025)

#### Board Members:

Mary Ardizzone (2025)

Peter Blood (2024)

Suzanne Burgos (2025)

Donna Davidge (2025)

Jen Cogliantry (2023)

Esther Harte (2023)

Darlene Porter (2023)

No other Association business was conducted at this meeting.

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**ISLAND FALLS**  
LAKES ASSOCIATION

JOIN US!

For more information about volunteer opportunities,  
our events and activities, how to become a board member,  
and so much more, visit our website.

[WWW.ISLANDFALLSLAKESASSOCIATION.COM](http://WWW.ISLANDFALLSLAKESASSOCIATION.COM)