

WORKING TO PROTECT
THE QUALITY OF OUR LAKES



ISLAND FALLS
LAKES ASSOCIATION



WINTER 2024 NEWSLETTER

IFLA MISSION STATEMENT

The Island Falls Lakes Association is a not-for-profit organization established to protect the ecosystems of Mattawamkeag and Pleasant Lakes as well as their watershed by promoting an appreciation of natural resources and responsible preservation, conservation, stewardship, development and public policy.

Dear Members, Friends and Property Owners,

The Mission Statement, adopted by the Island Falls Lakes Association (IFLA), is as relevant today as it was when adopted generations ago. I would like to dissect it here for your benefit. Misinterpreting or misunderstanding what the IFLA is about may contribute to indifference or ambivalence about becoming a member. We want to be transparent about what we do and how we do it. Hopefully you will better understand that we only provide information.

First, “not for profit” means we are a public service organization recognized by the IRS as tax-exempt. This means we do not distribute funds to our members and revenue generated is put back into the organization to support our activities. Accordingly, our membership fees are modest (\$20/yr/family) and money is used to mail newsletters, awards for canoe/kayak races and building and donating driveway water diverters, for example.

Secondly, “to protect ecosystems...by promoting an appreciation of...” This is the core value that guides all IFLA business, programs and activities. The words “promoting an appreciation of” are critically important for both what it says and does not say. The IFLA does not condone, condemn, judge or enforce. The IFLA does provide information so our audience may appreciate the natural beauty and delicate nature of our lake ecosystems and hopefully take steps to preserve it for future generations. This includes acting to responsibly preserve, conserve, steward (manage), develop and implement public policy when it comes to our natural resources, ie, your camp lot, your camp road and/or the services you provide to owners of these assets.

The IFLA does it's promoting through Newsletters, the Lakesmart Program, the Driveway Water Diverter Program and grants, the information provided at our Annual Meeting and the clean water activities we do or have sponsored like the Fishing Derby, the Courtesy Boat Inspection program

and the Canoe/Kayak Races. In addition, our website hosts additional sources of information and best practices for the lakeside property owner.

In the news this past year have been stories of other Maine lakes (Belgrade, Cobbossee) and the Gulf of Maine experiencing their worst ever algae blooms. In short, the culprit always boils down to “so much rain and so much runoff.” We have been fortunate, but we are not immune to the forces of nature and changing climate. We can only do what other lakes associations across the state are doing and that is to emphasize lake-smart living. This means asking people to pay attention to their roads and driveways and to create a vegetative buffer to slow down run-offs.

Individually and collectively, either by ownership or association, we have accepted the responsibility to enjoy and preserve what we have and to pass it on to future generations. We thank you for all your efforts and concerns and the care you take to minimize your impact on the lake. For our part we will continue to host our summertime activities, (except for the *Fishing Derby*) to monitor water quality and to forge new relationships to help us better understand the science of water quality. The *Lakesmart Program* and the *Driveway Water Diverter Program* will continue to be the central focus of the assistance we provide.

I would be remiss if I did not address the continuing need for your support in the form of Memberships. Being a member validates that you are in alignment with preserving our lakes for future generations. We do not ask anything of you except to be receptive to the info we provide and use it, if applicable, to reduce your impact on the lake. Of course, volunteers are always needed and welcomed. Please renew or start your membership today!

Sincerely,
Bob Guerette, President



SUMMER '23 FISHING DERBY

This past derby was conducted for youth only and named the *Jeff Wingate Fishing Derby-Take A Kid Fishing*, in honor of past Trustee Jeff Wingate.

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.

Their enthusiasm was catching as our youthful registrants came in at the end of the day to weigh their catch and receive cash prizes.

Pictured here are L to R, Kirby Hartin, James Farnsworth, Abigail Farnsworth, Malachi Anderson and Cole Signoretti.

Special thanks to their adult sponsors who took them out for a day of fun!

IFLA HOSTS COURTESY BOAT INSPECTIONS

By Sherry Pettyjohn, Trustee

In the spring of 2023, the IFLA Board filed an application with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MeDEP) and the Lakes Environmental Association (LEA) for grant monies to begin a CBI program at our two lakes. We were awarded \$4600. Two student inspectors were hired for Pleasant Lake. From June through Labor Day weekend 204 inspections were conducted on Pleasant Lake and 5 inspections on Mattawamkeag Lake. Luckily, during all those inspections no invasive plants were found.

We are grateful to the IFLA Trustees who volunteered at every inspection day to set-up and take down the screened shelter we provided for the inspectors at the public boat landing. Kudos to Sherry Pettyjohn, Mary Ardizzone, Sue Burgos and Candace Dudman.

One of the requirements of the grant was for local supporting funds which IFLA provided in addition to The town of Island Falls who provided the porta-potties at both landings.



Student inspectors, Connor Edwards (above left) and Rowan Billotti, (above right) and IFLA member, Sherry Pettyjohn (middle). A view from the landing on Mattawamkeag Lake (below).

SAVE THE DATE!

July 28
Canoe/Kayak Races

August 7
Annual Meeting + Dinner

More information coming soon!

www.islandfallslakesassociation.com



LakeSmart: Preventing Run-off From Lakeshore Properties

By Sherry Pettyjohn, Trustee

The biggest threat to our lake waters is phosphorus, a nutrient that contributes to increased algae growth, both metaphyton and the slimy green stuff on shoreline rocks. Phosphorus sticks to soil particles that are carried into the lake waters by runoff from our properties. We all need to do our part to stop erosion and prevent that runoff. If there is a lawn on the property we ask that phosphorus free fertilizers be used.

LakeSmart is a voluntary program overseen by Maine Lakes (formerly The Maine Lakes Society and COLA, the Congress of Lakes Associations) of which IFLA is a member. Several IFLA members have been trained to evaluate our lakefront properties. There is no cost to the property owners and there are no fines or fees attached.

The evaluators look to see if there are any locations where precipitation could wash over bare ground and then enter the lake carrying dirt, gravel, chemicals, etc. The goal of the program is to prevent run-off on our properties that can carry pollutants into the lake water.

PROPERTY EVALUATION CATEGORIES

1. Assess all structures and appropriate septic systems with recommended routine pump-out schedules (2-5 years)
2. Roads, driveway, and parking areas
3. Lawn, recreation areas and footpaths
4. Shorefront and/or beach area, including docks and water access
5. Undeveloped land areas

Your IFLA LakeSmart team of Nancy Doherty and Sherry Pettyjohn were unable to conduct LakeSmart Evaluations this past season. Although we began the summer with two volunteer properties, both postponed until next year. Evaluations are planned to continue this coming summer season, but **we need more volunteer property owners!** We would also appreciate it if more volunteers would come forward to be trained to become LakeSmart evaluators in the future.

Workshops are provided by the LakeSmart team at Maine Lakes free of charge each summer at various locations throughout the state. You can also visit the Maine Lakes website (www.lakes.me) for more information and check out the videos which expertly explain why we should all care so much about our lakes (www.lakes.me/lakesmart-training-videos) or email info@islandfallslakesassociation.com

WWW.ISLANDFALLSLAKESASSOCIATION.COM

IFLA ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

The 2023 Annual Meeting of the Island Falls Lakes Association was held at the Big Valley Sno Club on July 29, 2023.

A Treasurers Report was given by Gary McCue for the period July 1, 2022 to June 30 2023, condensed as follows:

Income:	\$10,139.04
Expenses:	\$10,809.78
Ending Balance:	\$16,941.90

Minutes of the 2022 Meeting were approved.

Trustees reported on various programs and initiatives undertaken by the Association including Water Quality Testing, Lakesmart, Driveway Water Diverter Program, Membership, UMaine Collaboration, Courtesy Boat Inspection Program, Fishing Derby and Canoe/Kayak Race.

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

2023 OFFICERS & 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 Coglianry (2026)

Esther Harte (2026)

Sherry Pettyjohn (2024)

Darlene Porter (2026)

No other Association business was conducted at this meeting.

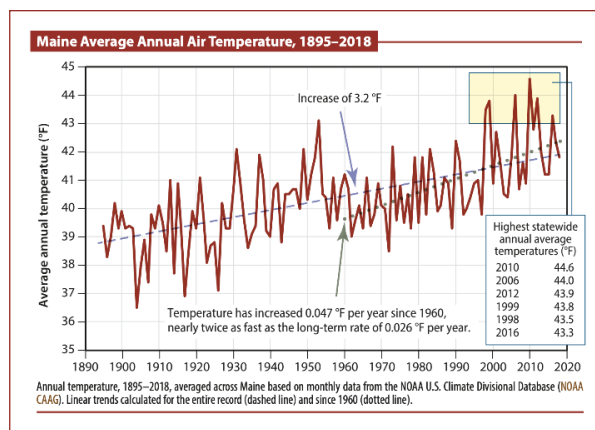
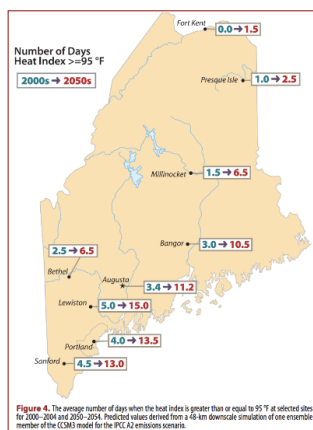
CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE HEALTH OF MAINE LAKES, INCLUDING OURS

By Sherry Pettyjohn, Trustee

Adam Zermans, the former Executive Director of Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM), gave a presentation recently discussing climate change, its effects on Maine lakes, and what we, as concerned citizens, can do to combat these changes.

Maine has some of the clearest and cleanest lakes in the world. However, that water quality depends on the health of the forested lake watershed, and those forests are being threatened by increased development and logging. But climate change may be the biggest threat to Maine's lakes. U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres, in his response to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes 2021 Working Group's Report, called climate change "a code red for humanity."

"The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable." And yet, we humans in the US failed to cooperate at the national level to even pass the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (ACES). As has been reported recently, big oil knew 50 years ago that the continued burning of fossil fuels would lead to a warming of the earth's atmosphere and chose not only to ignore it but spread advertising refuting that fact.



The two graphs (above) illustrate the influence of climate change on Maine. A wealth of information is also available from the publication "Maine's Climate Future: A 2020 Update" that is available at climatechange.umaine.edu. This IFLA newsletter in previous years has addressed the fact that ice-out is occurring earlier. For the past two years, Pleasant Lake, which historically iced up in early December, has not iced up until early January. It is even more evident in lakes in southern and central Maine. The duration of ice cover is shortening which allows for a longer time period for the lake waters to warm resulting in habitat changes for living organisms. Metaphyton, those green cotton ball algae growths, is prevalent in the warmer shallow waters of both of our lakes. The UMaine publication also presents information on the expected changes in snowfall we can experience which is already impacting local winter businesses.

More extreme weather events are already happening. Are droughts becoming more frequent? They can make some soils more impermeable and less absorptive. Some soils become less consolidated which sets loose the finer particles. Add to that the torrential rains we are also now experiencing and we get an increased possibility of erosion, floods, roads washing out, all of which we are experiencing now.

There is hope for the future and it will require human cooperation. Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM) already has well established preventative measures for which they provide training and support. They provide grants and training to conduct a watershed survey although that would be a daunting task due to the huge acreage and multiple towns included in the watershed for Mattawamkeag Lake.

If you are interested in more details from the presentation, a PowerPoint is available in a short + long version:

SHORT: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1rcvSifJNfCjJIEB0pkqCkQ3_hbJ22Bfj/edit#slide=id.p1

LONG: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1JKZday2i3A3IWbp9Xr5OQrYdimFrQUsc/edit#slide=id.p1>

IFLA LAKE HEALTH INITIATIVES

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

- Since 1972, the water quality monitoring program has been testing both clarity and dissolved oxygen levels every two weeks during the summer season on Pleasant Pond and Mattawamkeag Lake

COURTESY BOAT INSPECTIONS

- In 2023 the IFLA instituted a Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) program (see related article) where boats and trailers are checked for invasive plants and animals prior to entering the water on both lakes

RAIN DIVERTER PROGRAM

- IFLA's "diverter" program with grants available to member property owners will install water diverters on gravel camp roads to direct runoff into the surrounding woods.



INVASIVE ZEBRA MUSSELS GETTING CLOSER TO MAINE WATERS

By Mary Ardizzone, Trustee

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is warning Maine boaters to follow “Clean, Drain and Dry” procedures in an effort to prevent the possible spread of the highly invasive Zebra Mussel. This is especially significant since the mussels can spread microscopically through larvae.

Zebra Mussels live in fresh water and attach to hard objects such as boats and docks. They have been discovered in Canada, specifically Quebec and New Brunswick, near the Maine border.

Their larvae can live unseen in pools of water, making them easy to transfer unknowingly from one body of water to another. Cleaning and drying boats and equipment after every use can help prevent their spread.

NEW BOATING LAWS ENACTED JUNE 2023

By Mary Ardizzone, Trustee

In June 2023, “An Act To Minimize The Propagation Of Invasive Aquatic Plants” was signed into Maine state law. This new law directs boat operators to take further steps to properly drain water from their boats. It is now illegal to drain or release water held on or within a watercraft, allowing that water to enter any inland water body in the state of Maine.

The purpose of the law is to prevent boaters from inadvertently transferring water, plants, or other pollutants into Maine lakes and ponds.

We are all encouraged to practice “Clean, Drain and Dry”. All water and debris must be removed from boats away from bodies of water and then disposed of properly. Boats, motors, trailers, anchors, lines, fishing gear etc. should be dried by hand before entering another body of water.



TAKE ACTION! CLEAN BOATS EQUALS 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

Highlighting Our
Business Partners

K&T FIRE EQUIPMENT CO.

By Bob Guerette, IFLA President



K&T Fire Equipment Company started as a one-man operation 33 years ago in Island Falls. Owner Tom York is a mechanic by trade with experience at the Maine Forestry Service, Sherman Chevrolet and as a trainer at the Great Northern Voc Rehab Training Center. In 1991 he decided to pursue a lifelong dream of independence and entrepreneurship and began by selling supplies and mechanical repair services to local fire departments. The demand for repair and refurbishing fire trucks quickly set the pace for the company to evolve into a full-service repair, refurbish and fabrication business.

K & T Fire Equipment Co. repairs fire trucks and refurbishes firefighting equipment at its shop in Island Falls and provides mobile services to fire departments that cannot bring their equipment to the shop. Because of the technical nature of the work the company relies heavily on training provided by equipment manufactures and on the job training. This type of training and the development of specialized skills often leads to employees that make a career at K & T. The Company currently employees 8 people in Island Falls and a salesperson that covers New Hampshire and Vermont.

In a highly competitive environment, K & T also builds fire trucks from the ground up. This involves taking a new truck chassis into the shop and rolling out a completely outfitted, fully functioning fire truck that was ordered by a municipal fire department in Maine or New Hampshire or Vermont. The company's ability to build poly tanks for fire trucks, its relationship with fire equipment manufactures and its highly specialized work force enables them to compete in this market. Because of K & T's expertise and attention to customer service some of its work is for cities and towns that have purchased a new or used fire truck and at a later date may require repairs or upgrades.

The shop at 1143 Crystal Road is often the site of Summerfest barbeques and truck pulls. Their support of the community is also evident in the help they provide other fire departments in raising funds for their charities. It would not be unusual for the little league uniforms of a team in Patten or Oakfield, for example, to have been underwritten by K & T. At the Island Falls Lakes Association we are thankful for their support of our driveway water diverter program by donating used fire hoses used in the construction of our water diverters. As a partner in this endeavor, we thank you for your support.



IFLA 2024 RAIN DIVERTER & 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.

One major way to control phosphorus levels is to control water run-off from going directly into the lake. 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 runoff 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 the IFLA:

info@islandfallslakesassociation.com

SUMMER 2023

WATER QUALITY REPORT

By Sherry Pettyjohn, Trustee

The IFLA water quality monitoring team of Sherry Pettyjohn, Mary Ardizzone, Sue Burgos, and Daniel Kinney collected water quality data on our lakes from early June until late September. Sherry, Mary, and Sue collected data on Pleasant while Dan collected data on upper and lower Mattawamkeag.

A Secchi disc was used to measure transparency or the clarity of the water. As more sediment is added to the water or more algae grow as the water warms, the water becomes less clear and sunlight is restricted from reaching aquatic plants. Pleasant had an average transparency reading of 11.6 meters (38 feet) with a maximum of 13.4 m on July 6th and a minimum of 9.1 m on September 26th. It is normal for the transparency to decrease throughout the summer due to algae growth and run-off of sediment from roads, camp driveways, and properties, especially during heavy rainstorms such as those we now have frequently. 2023 was a rainy summer. Upper Mattawamkeag had an average transparency of 3.4 m (11 feet) with a maximum of 3.6m early in the season and a minimum of 3.05m late in the season. Lower Mattawamkeag had an average of 3.9m (12.8 ft) with a maximum of 4.45m and a minimum of 3.1m. Mattawamkeag always has lower transparency than Pleasant because of its “tea” color from the dissolved organic compounds from the decay of marsh grasses etc. from its giant watershed. Pleasant is a clear lake as it is spring fed and has a very small watershed.

Dissolved oxygen and temperature data is also collected every meter until the bottom. IFLA now has two DO meters with the addition of the new optical meter purchased in the fall of 2022. For example, on June 12th on Pleasant the surface temperature was 16.5 °C (62°F) with a DO of 10.0 mg/L. At 19 m the temperature was 10.6 °C (51°F) with a DO of 8.1 mg/L. Early in the season the water column has recently “turned over” which brings surface water with plenty of oxygen to the bottom of the lake for cold water fish. Wave action keeps the surface water oxygenated. But wave action only reaches a certain depth. At some depth the water is no longer warmed and the temperature decreases markedly. This depth is called the thermocline. Below that no more oxygen is being dissolved in the water and organisms are using up what oxygen was there. By September 26th the surface temp was 17.5 °C (64°F) with a DO of 9.2 mg/L. At the bottom of the lake the temp was 12.7 °C (55°F) with a DO of 0.5 mg/L. Any DO below 2-5 mg/L is not favorable for cold water fish. That DO was reached at a depth of 14 m (46ft). The highest surface temperature recorded at Pleasant was 24.7°C (76.5°F) in mid-July. Shallow areas would have been much warmer.

A wealth of data and information about our lakes and all lakes in Maine that are monitored can be found on the “Lakes of Maine” website available from lakesofmaine.org. Search by Midas number: Pleasant is 1728 and Mattawamkeag is 1686. Data from 1974 to 2022 is provided. There is also a link for data on the Loon Count through 2022.



10 FUN FACTS ABOUT LOONS

By Mary Ardizzone, Trustee

1. **Maine Audubon conducts annual loon counts and as of 2023, there are about 2,892 residing in the state.**
2. **Minnesota has the largest population of common loons in the continental US, with about 12,000 residents.**
3. **Loons can live to between 20 and 30 years.**
4. **Adult loons eat about 2 pounds of food every day.**
5. **Loons do not mate for life, but return to the same territory every year.**
6. **Baby loons stay with their parents for about 12 weeks.**
7. **Babies are called “loonlets”.**
8. **Loons have solid bones making them less buoyant so they can dive up to depths of 200 feet.**
9. **They need between 30 yards and ¼ mile of water in order to take flight. Loons can fly up to speeds of 70 miles per hour.**
10. **They can stay underwater for up to 5 minutes.**

KEEPING LURES OUT OF OUR LAKES!

By Mary Ardizzone, Trustee

Snorkeling in our lakes can be a fun way to enjoy a calm, sunny, summer day. Scouting for and identifying fish, exploring the rocky ledge, and a nice long swim are all benefits of snorkeling. A couple of our IFLA Trustees often snorkel with another purpose in mind: spotting and retrieving soft plastic lures.

Soft plastic lures are popular among bass fishermen but can wear out over time, get brittle, stretch, or rip, increasing the likelihood that they could fall off the hook. Fish readily feed on discarded or lost soft plastic lures. Soft plastic lures don't readily decompose in fish or in the water, and they tend to swell over time. Once ingested by fish they can alter feeding habits and adversely impact fish health.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife goal is to significantly reduce the number of soft plastic lures ending up in Maine's waters.

DO YOUR PART TO HELP KEEP MAINE'S WATERS AND FISHERIES HEALTHY:

- Properly dispose of soft plastic lures.
- Replace older ripped or brittle lures.
- Secure your lure. Simply putting a soft plastic lure on a J-hook is not enough. Use an O-Ring, Bait Stop, or a hook with a twist- lock device. Most fishing supply stores sell retention devices.
- Use heavy monofilament fishing line.

Taking these simple steps can reduce the number of soft plastic lures ending up in our lakes and adversely impacting fish health and the environment.



IFLA IS ON-LINE!

Get news about our upcoming events, pay your membership dues, learn about our initiatives and get involved. Have suggestions?

Visit us online!

www.islandfallslakesassociation.com

