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 pleasantlakeparkerpond



PLEASANT | PARKER *Lake | Pond* ASSOCIATION

MAY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Dear Members of the Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond Association (PL/PPA) and others who enjoy our lakes:

The environment is a seamless web and protecting the Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond watershed is critical to the future health of the water itself. Lake Stewards of Maine state that “90% of protecting/managing a lake involves protecting/managing the watershed.” This newsletter’s theme is identifying and remedying threats, and exercising stewardship over assets and opportunities, wherever they exist throughout the watershed. This includes community education and individual action regarding terrestrial invasive plants (page 3) and excessive phosphates (insert). I believe it is better to actively protect our watershed now to minimize water quality impacts in the future.

As a reminder, our Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, July 23 and is open to everyone: association members, residents of Casco and Otisfield, longtime visitors, and the curious! This summer’s topics include updates on Maine’s Loon Productivity Project, Purple Loosestrife, initiatives with the towns of Casco and Otisfield, and a discussion on ways to increase engagement of local residents with the PL/PPA mission.

If you have questions, ideas for new PL/PPA activities or programs, concerns, or anything else to communicate, please email me at plppassoc@gmail.com.

David Randall,
President
Pleasant Lake/
Parker Pond Association



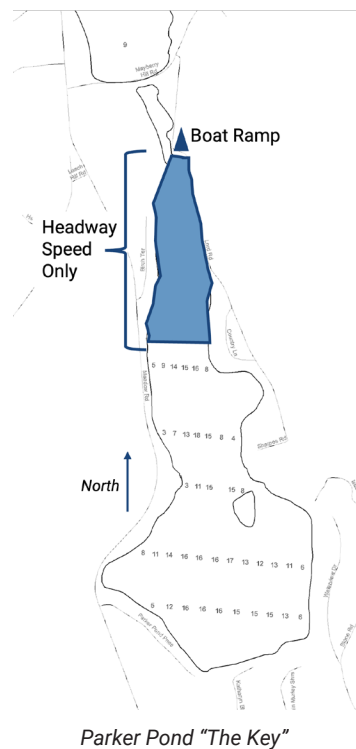
ANNUAL PL/PPA MEETING

The 2022 PL/PPA Annual Meeting will be Saturday, July 23, 2022, from 9:30-11:00AM.

Join us at the Casco Community Center!
940 Meadow Road, Casco

Membership is not required. ALL ARE WELCOME!

PARKER POND and “HEADWAY SPEED”



At 167 acres and a max depth of 19 feet, Parker Pond is a little slice of heaven. The shape of Parker Pond has been referred to as a “key” as the north end of pond is narrow, opening to a basin (with an island) on the south end. And at the north end of the pond is the public boat ramp.

As the north end of the pond is narrow, most of the waterway is within 200 feet of shoreline. This section of Parker Pond falls under the Maine state boating regulation: “You may not operate a watercraft at greater than headway speed while within 200 feet of any shoreline, including islands.”

While a “SLOW – NO WAKE ZONE WITHIN 200 FT SHORE” sign was approved and installed at the public boat ramp by the Town of Casco (thank you!), our community noticed too many boaters ignoring the rules. In the summer 2021, residents of Parker Pond requested placement of a buoy where the pond’s width narrows.

The state of Maine has developed guidelines, administered by the Warden Service, to ensure consistent deployment of “Headway Speed Only” buoys. As of this newsletter, we are pursuing approval for a “Headway Speed Only” buoy for Parker Pond and the guidelines require a site visit. If approved, the state will supply the buoy, anchor, and connecting hardware at no charge. We will keep you posted!

For more info on Maine Boaters Laws & Responsibilities: www.maine.gov/ifw/docs/maine-boating-laws.pdf

MAINE'S LOON PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT

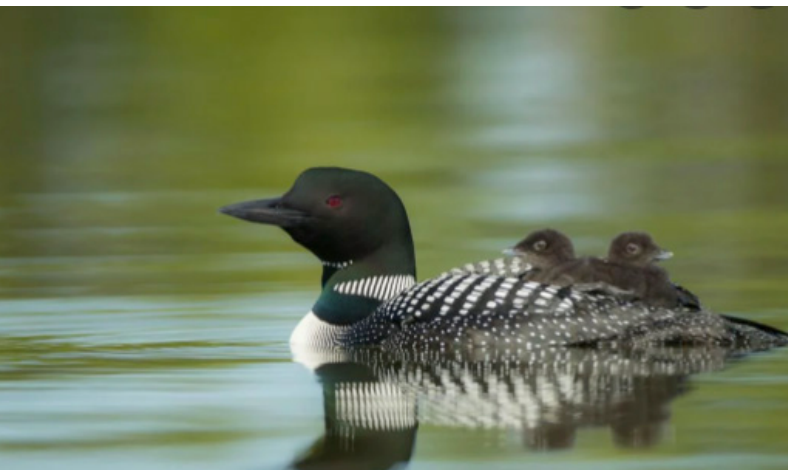
Late last fall, Maine Lakes -- in partnership with Maine Audubon -- announced **Maine's Loon Productivity Project**: "a five-year project, funded by an oil spill settlement, that aims to give Maine loons better chances for breeding success and reduce threats to their survival." (Maine Audubon calls it the Maine Loon Restoration Project.)

Goals of the Project: increase the number of chicks on Maine's lakes and ponds and decrease the number of deaths and disruptions.

The project aims to increase loon nesting success and decrease loon mortality by engaging volunteers in four key efforts:

- Placing artificial nests (rafts)
- Monitoring productivity of loon rafts
- Expanding Fish Lead Free programs
- Launching a Loon Rangers Program

Common loon adult, with two chicks



Additional resources to learn more about the effort:

- Maine's Loon Productivity Project
<https://www.lakes.me/loons>
- Maine Loon Restoration Project:
<https://maineaudubon.org/projects/loons/loon-restoration-project/>
- Maine's Loon Stewardship Project (YouTube):
<https://youtu.be/nBTe7KD6D1Q>
- Raft Building Webinar (YouTube)
<https://youtu.be/dfqFWUZteEw>
- Loon Monitoring Webinar (YouTube)
<https://youtu.be/ASj6BrTZhYQ>

Other key partners in Maine's Loon Productivity Project

- Lakes Environmental Association (LEA)
- Penobscot Nation
- Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

In 2022, PL/PPA needs volunteers to work with Maine Lakes to evaluate Pleasant Lake's suitability for this Project. The objectives are to monitor loon nesting activity in accordance with the Project's protocols, explore possible nesting sites to evaluate suitability and risks, identify PL/PPA members willing to lead the project, and prepare to deploy a raft in 2023 if we agree it makes sense to do so. The Project will supply prepared raft materials to build and deploy the raft.

Loon nesting raft



Monitoring requires commitment, every week, for the nesting season. Those interested in monitoring should review the Project's expectations and data gathering and reporting requirements. Maine Audubon provides a list of resources, including forms, reference sheets, and a ten-page Loon Nest Monitoring Instructions.

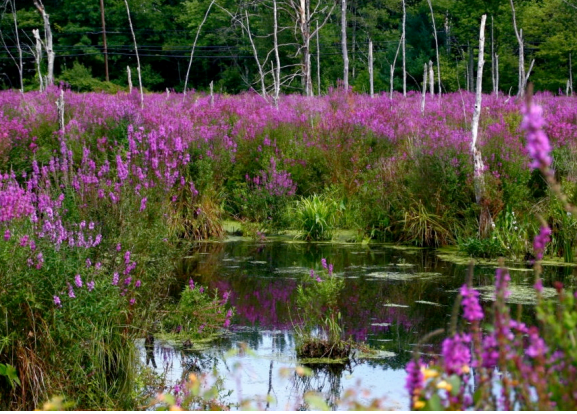
<https://maineaudubon.org/projects/loons/loon-restoration-project/#monitoring>

One concern is that the Casco Cove nesting location is a few hundred yards from the Casco boat ramp, proximate to considerable motorized and paddle boats activity. A nesting raft may attract curious boaters, who may unwittingly interfere with the nesting pair and their chicks. Minimizing the risk of such human interference is critical to the Project's success.



If you are interested in volunteering for our activities this year, please email at plppassoc@gmail.com with the subject line "Loon Productivity Project."





Purple Loosestrife



Japanese Knotweed



Asiatic Bittersweet

PROTECTING OUR LAKES BY PROTECTING OUR WATERSHED: AQUATIC AND TERRESTRIAL INVASIVE PLANTS

You may be familiar with aquatic invasive plants that can impact our waterways, such as variable-leaf milfoil, curly leaf pondweed, and fanwort. And our Invasive Plant Patrols (IPP) monitor diligently for the eleven invasive aquatic species that are illegal to import, sell, or transport in Maine. But did you know that there are terrestrial invasive plant species that can have a detrimental effect on our watershed and lakes if left unchecked?

First, what is a “terrestrial invasive plant?” An invasive plant is defined as a plant that is not native to a particular ecosystem, whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health. Terrestrial invasive plants include trees, shrubs, vines, and grasses.

The Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) – run by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry – maintains a list of non-native plants found to pose a threat to habitats and natural resources in Maine. Listed plants are identified through a scientific evaluation process that focuses on the plant’s ecological impacts and biological traits. Plant species identified as invasive are ranked in one of four categories from “severely invasive” to “potential to be invasive – monitor.” The Advisory List is an informal tool for landowners, wildlife biologists, foresters, land stewards, conservation commissions, and others interested in controlling invasive plants and preventing their spread.

In the latest published list from MNAP (2019), 52 plants received a ranking of “severely invasive” and 31 plants received a ranking of “very invasive.” In these two highest impact categories, three plants are of note to our PL/PPA Community:

- **Purple Loosestrife:** “very invasive, widespread”
- **Japanese Knotweed:** “severely invasive, widespread”
- **Asiatic Bittersweet:** “severely invasive, widespread”

On Pleasant Lake, we have had Purple Loosestrife outbreaks on the shoreline. (An overview of Purple Loosestrife was provided in our December 2021 newsletter: <https://plppa.org/home/newsletters/>) While Purple Loosestrife thrives in and near wetlands, it is terrestrial, not aquatic, and therefore has not historically been on our watchlist nor on other lake association watchlists. As for Japanese Knotweed, there are concerns that the long term spread of this plant increases water runoff and nonpoint source pollution in our watershed. Asiatic Bittersweet grows rapidly and aggressively chokes out other woody plants. The threat these species pose to the water quality of Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond is less immediate and obvious than, say, milfoil and algae blooms. But if 90% of protecting/managing a lake involves protecting/managing the watershed (as noted by the Lake Stewards of Maine), then shouldn’t we be aware of terrestrial invasive plants, too?

The challenge is how to get our larger community – those who are directly on Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond, as well as those in our watershed throughout Casco and Otisfield – to understand the potential impacts of these terrestrial invasive plants, identify outbreaks, and take action.

If you have invasive terrestrial plants on your property and want to learn how to remove them or have them professionally removed, you can email [Rona Fried](mailto:Rona.Fried), a Casco resident and PL/PPA member who has agreed to coordinate such requests. Please include the subject line “Terrestrial Invasive Plant” (or Purple Loosestrife, Japanese Knotweed, or Asiatic Bittersweet!), your name, local address, phone number, and copy plppassoc@gmail.com. If you see an infestation in our watershed, please let her know!

For more info from Maine Natural Areas Program visit: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/invasive_plants/invasives.htm



Photo: Lakes Environmental Association (LEA)

COURTESY BOAT INSPECTION 2022

Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI) at the Casco boat ramps in Parker Pond and Pleasant Lake will run from 7 AM to 5 PM every Saturday and Sunday beginning May 28 and ending September 28. CBI inspectors are trained to spot and remove fragments of invasive aquatic species on trailer and paddle boats entering and exiting the water, and to answer boater's questions about invasive plants and the CBI program. We thank the State of Maine for its grant of \$2,200 towards PL/PPA's CBI-related expenses. We also thank Lakes Environmental Association (LEA) for its guidance in the grant-application process and its day-to-day management of our CBI program, which includes hiring, training, overseeing, and administering payroll for inspectors. Say hello to our inspectors this summer. They are our front-line defense from invasive aquatic species!



PLEASANT LAKE SWIMS for PL/PPA

Congratulations to Ally Nick! She completed the Pleasant Lake swim on July 22, 2021, with a kayak escort from her mom (Jeri Nick). From Ally: "Cemented my status as a lake monster and completed the Pleasant Lake / Parker Pond Association swim challenge. The length of Pleasant Lake is 4 miles, and I swam it in 2 hours 50 minutes. It was so fun!" The tradition of swimming Pleasant Lake brings attention to the importance of preserving our lakes now and for the future.

CASCO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Town of Casco is creating a new comprehensive plan to "guide future decision-making about policies and investments." Between April 28 and May 2, the town held planning days to solicit input from interested parties. On Saturday April 30, there were special discussions at the Casco Community Center on "Woods, Waters, Trails & Open Space" and "Sustainable Future." Both were well-attended and addressed a myriad issues including preservation of and long-term public access to undeveloped land, connections between development, woodlot management, watershed protection, threats posed by invasive terrestrial plants, managing the inevitable march of economic development up the Route 302 corridor, initiatives to encourage younger residents to stay in or return to Casco, and steps necessary to enable older residents to age in place.

Casco's future affects every stakeholder in Pleasant Lake or Parker Pond. For more information or to enroll in email updates visit: <https://casco-gpcog.hub.arcgis.com/>

BECOME A PL/PPA MEMBER

Your support makes it possible for us to continue to do everything we can to keep our lakes healthy and clean for all to enjoy. You can donate:

- By check (Pleasant Lake / Parker Pond Association, Post Office Box 419, Casco, ME 04015)
- Online (debit, credit, or PayPal)
- Or a Qualified Charitable Distribution

Visit here for full details: <https://plppa.org/contribute/>



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 [pleasantlakeparkerpond](https://www.instagram.com/pleasantlakeparkerpond)



PLEASANT | PARKER *Lake | Pond* ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2022 EVENTS

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Thursday, July 14, 2022

3:00-7:00 PM

Pleasant Lake Boat Ramp in Casco

Come get the scoop on PL/PPA efforts and meet others who love our lakes as much as you do! Ice cream provided courtesy of PL/PPA.

*Bring the kids! Lake lovers of all ages welcome!
Membership is not required.*



INVASIVE PLANT PATROL (IPP) PADDLE

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

9:00 AM - Noon

Lily Brook/Parker Pond Boat Launch (Casco)

A perfect entry-level experience for those looking to get involved in the hunt for aquatic invaders.

Membership is not required but encouraged. Space is limited. You must register with the Lake Stewards of Maine. Visit the link below, click on "REGISTER HERE", then select the "Tues 7/19 Pleasant Lake or Parker Pond (Oxford) - Plant Paddle" with sign-up. <https://www.lakestewardsofmaine.org/invasive-plant-patrol-workshops/>



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9:30-11:00 AM

Casco Community Center, 940 Meadow Rd

Topics include updates on Maine's Loon Productivity Project, Purple Loosestrife, initiatives with the towns of Casco and Otisfield, and a discussion on ways to increase engagement of local residents with the Association's mission.

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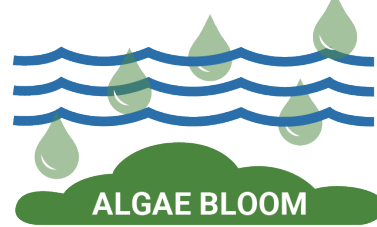
PROTECTING OUR WATERSHED: PHOSPHORUS IMPACTS TO OUR WATER QUALITY

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Phosphorus is a fertilizer. It is naturally present in soil and that's good for plants. When excessive amounts of phosphorus wash into a lake, it can fuel an algae population explosion called an algae "bloom." The algae blocks sunlight to beneficial aquatic plants, consumes oxygen (which may lead to fish kills), and can suffocate other aquatic life.

EXCESS PHOSPHATES

Runoff from fertilizer, detergents, soaps



WHAT CAUSES HIGH LEVELS OF PHOSPHATES IN OUR LAKES?

- Rainstorms and snowmelt wash pollutants high in phosphates (fertilizer, detergents, other soaps) into the water.
- Lawns and roads near the shoreline can increase surface runoff, creating a runway that sends phosphates straight into the lake without having a chance to be naturally filtered.
- Septic systems – even those set back from the shoreline – can leak into surface runoff after strong storms or if the tanks are not properly maintained.

"For lake water quality, there is no other issue that compares to phosphorus."

– Colin Holme, Lakes Environmental Association Executive Director

WHAT CAN I DO TO MINIMIZE PHOSPHATE IMPACTS?

LEAVE TREES/PLANTS

Shrubs and trees help to retain and recycle phosphorus throughout the watershed ecosystem. By minimizing lawns near the shoreline, you help ensure that we have the best chance of catching excess phosphorus naturally!



CONTROL STORM WATER

Maintain effective draining on your driveway and other areas of your property. Carefully designed ditches divert flow to woodlands (vs the shoreline) and help filter high volumes of water.



USE PHOSPHATE-FREE FERTILIZER

Most soils in Maine naturally have enough phosphorus to keep a lawn lush and green. If you use fertilizer, make sure it is phosphate-free (noted by the "0" in the middle number of the the fertilizer blend).



PUMP OUT YOUR SEPTIC TANK

Septic tank levels should be checked every 2 years. A tank should be pumped when it is half full, typically every 2 to 3 years for year-round residents and every 3 to 4 years for seasonal residents.



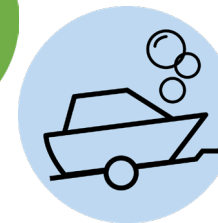
USE PHOSPHATE-FREE LAUNDRY, DISH, AND DISHWASHER DETERGENT

In Maine, it is illegal to buy household laundry detergent with phosphates. But there are no state regulations on dish and dishwasher soaps. Many brands offer phosphate-free options. Read labels!



USE PHOSPHATE-FREE HANDSOAP & SHAMPOOS

Make environmentally smart choices when buying personal cleaning products. Look for phosphate-free, biodegradable options.



CLEAN BOATS RESPONSIBLY

Wash boats at public car washes or areas where there is ample soil to infiltrate runoff water. Maine law prohibits washing vehicles and boats in lakes and ponds.