

CONTACT US:

Mail:
PL/PPA
PO Box 419
Casco, ME 04015

Email:
plppassoc@gmail.com

www.plppa.org

 pleasantlakeparkerpond



PLEASANT/PARKER Lake/Pond ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2023 NEWSLETTER

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

With the official start of summer just around the corner, it is great to see friends and families back on the lake. A roller coaster winter and wild spring rains led to significantly higher-than-normal lake levels in the region.

I pass the Pleasant Lake dam frequently, notice it now and then, and drive on. Occasionally I'll stop to admire its engineering and construction, and to thank Peter Barber and the Towns of Casco and Otisfield for ensuring its utility for many generations to come. Managing the dam requires contending with heavy rains and long dry spells, following state-imposed requirements on water level, ensuring that enough water flows past the dam to maintain the downstream ecosystem, clearing debris that accumulates at the gates and spillway, and balancing the interests of those who disagree about how high the lake should be. All that is accomplished by choreographing the placement and removal and spillway boards and the opening and shutting of the dam's gates. Thanks to Mike Genest, the Public Works Foreman for the Town of Casco, for handling all of this.

In 2023, we are pleased to reinstate the Courtesy Boat Inspection program at the Pleasant Lake boat launch in Otisfield. We also look forward to offering a pamphlet *Protecting Our Watersheds, A Guide for Home and Property Owners* in conjunction with the towns of Casco and Otisfield. More details on both of these efforts in this newsletter.

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.

I look forward to seeing you at the annual PL/PPA meeting on Saturday, July 22 at 9:30AM!

David Randall,
President
Pleasant Lake/
Parker Pond Association



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Our non-profit organization relies heavily on the efforts of our volunteers and citizen scientists. Their willingness to give their time and service is greatly appreciated!

What do our volunteers do? Here is a short list:

- Collect water quality and dissolved oxygen data
- Monitor for invasive aquatic plants
- Record annual loon counts for Maine Audubon
- Capture ice in and ice out data
- Work with Casco and Otisfield on matters that impact the lakes (e.g., dam management)
- Submit grant applications for funding/reimbursement
- Inform and educate our great community!

ANNUAL PL/PPA MEETING

The 2023 PL/PPA Annual Meeting will be Saturday, July 22, 2023, from 9:30-11:00AM.

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

Membership is not required. ALL ARE WELCOME!



DETERIORATING WATER QUALITY AFFECTS EVERYONE'S POCKETBOOK

Maine's lakes, ponds, and other bodies of water are economic engines for the municipalities in which they are located and for the state as a whole. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Land and Water Quality summarizes various research studies to conclude that "there is no single feature of lakes which affects people's enjoyment of the resource more than water clarity." (<https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/lakes/research.html>, "The Economics of Lakes - Dollars and \$ense.") Water clarity, which can deteriorate from algae blooms, storm runoff, and other causes, is a reliable proxy for water quality. Deteriorating water quality reduces lakefront property values – and shifts local tax burdens to non-lakefront owners.

For example, 60% of the Town of Belgrade's tax valuation comes from lakefront property. "If the average water clarity in the local lakes were to decline one meter, the town stands to lose almost \$10.5 million (5%) in total property value that should eventually be reflected in tax rates. Belgrade would have to raise its tax rate and the actual taxes paid by non-shoreline owners would rise by over 5%, while those paid by shoreline owners would decrease as they lost property investment value." (Maine DEP, The Economics of Lakes - Dollars and \$ense) While it is difficult to estimate the degree to which tax burdens would be shifted in a particular municipality, "the real losers are the taxpayers and landowners whose investments have been eroded" – even if those landowners and residents never set foot in their municipalities' lakes and ponds.

Lower property values and shifting tax burdens are not the only economic consequences of declining water quality. If the clarity of a lake declines its "access users" – Maine residents who do not own shorefront property on the lake – will swim, boat, and fish in other, cleaner lakes. Once they take their recreation dollars elsewhere, it is hard to get them back.

WATERSHED PROTECTION PAMPHLET

Over the winter, we redrafted and updated *Protecting Otisfield's Watersheds, A Guide for Home and Property Owners*, published in 2009 by the Otisfield Conservation Commission. The new pamphlet is titled ***Protecting Our Watersheds, A Guide for Home and Property Owners***.

Later this summer, the pamphlet will be available at both the Casco and Otisfield town offices and through PL/PPA. The only cost to the towns will be for printing. Our volunteers provided all research, writing, editing, graphics, and layout connected with the project.

The purpose of the pamphlet is to provide a consolidated resource for the community to understand how they can help protect our watershed. Information contained includes non-point source pollution mitigation, vegetated buffers management, responsible boat ownership, and state and local resources. This information will also be available on our website: www.plppa.org.

Our plan is to take sections of this pamphlet and create one-page handouts that can serve other stakeholders (e.g., daily lake visitors, summer renters). It is critical that we spread the word on important issues as we all have impacts to the watershed. We each can do our part to protect the lake ecosystem.



PLEASANT LAKE SWIMS for PL/PPA

The tradition of swimming Pleasant Lake brings attention to the importance of preserving our lakes now and for the future. Do you know of anyone who is planning to swim Pleasant Lake this summer? If so, please let us know so we can help support this wonderful effort and share the accomplishment!



COURTESY BOAT INSPECTIONS RETURN TO OTISFIELD

Our CBI program began Memorial Day weekend and will run every weekend until early October at the Casco Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond ramps and the Otisfield Pleasant Lake ramp, subject to availability of trained inspectors. We are pleased to reinstitute the CBI program in Otisfield, as our inability to staff the Otisfield ramp in recent years was frustrating for the Town and for the Association. (Note that Otisfield beach access monitors will NOT perform CBI inspections.)

Covering three ramps instead of two, raising the inspectors' salary to the minimum wage of \$13.80/hour, and adding another week of coverage in the fall, increases the program's budgeted cost by 58%, from \$12,960 for 2022 to \$20,520 for 2023. The State approved a cost-sharing grant to the Association of \$2,530, which reduces our portion of the CBI expense to \$17,990.

Please stop by the ramps this summer to thank CBI inspectors for helping to keep invasive species out of Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond!



INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANT UPDATE

In 2022, our Invasive Plant Patrollers were happy to report no invasive plant sightings. As the volunteer teams surveyed both Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond, they did find many non-invasive (GOOD) plants, such as pondweed, water weed, and naiads (see photos below). If you see vegetation that looks suspicious, please let us know! It's better to get a sample and identify it, then let an unwanted intruder multiply. Send us an email at plppassoc@gmail.com or message us on Instagram at [@pleasantlakeparkerpond](https://www.instagram.com/pleasantlakeparkerpond/); provide your name and the location of the suspicious plant.



PL/PPA FINANCES

In 2022, PL/PPA received 111 financial contributions totaling \$14,910 from 94 members, plus \$4,000 each from the Towns of Casco and Otisfield. Those numbers include contributions mailed in late 2021 that were deposited in January 2022. We deposited before year-end most contributions mailed in late 2022. For 2023 through April 30, we have received 28 contributions totaling \$3,525.

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/>

Or scan this QR code to contribute online and for other contribution options



WAKE BOATS

A bill introduced in the 2023 Maine Legislature would prohibit boats purposefully generating enhanced wakes within 500 feet of the shoreline and in waters less than 20 feet deep.

Officially titled “LD693, HP462: An Act to Protect Inland Water Quality, Shorelines, Wildlife and Public Safety by Prohibiting Operation of a Wake Boat to Create an Enhanced Wake Close to Shore or in Shallow Water,” the bill aims to reduce wake-caused erosion and sedimentation, keep lake water clean, protect fragile lakeside habitat, and keep shallow waters safe for families, swimmers, and other boaters. This is not a ban on wake activities and only applies when boats are using wake-enhancing equipment under certain conditions.

Wake boats are a newer category of motorboat that has tanks at the back of the boat that take on thousands of pounds of water to increase their weight. This design causes the boat to ride bow-up and stern-down. Coupled with powerful motors pointing their propeller at a downward angle, the boats produce strong high-energy wakes and propwash. Larger, more energetic waves need to travel a greater distance to decrease in wave height, energy and power. This is not an issue of speed, as slow boats can create the largest waves.

Many organizations and citizens submitted written testimony in support of the bill. Maine Lakes’ Executive Director Susan Gallo commented that the bill adds a critical measure of protection by “directing activities away from shore and to deeper water, improving the wake sport experience, reducing conflicts with other lake users, and protecting long-term lake health.”

Lakes Environmental Association, which also supports the bill, states the law “will reduce wake-caused erosion, keep lake water clean, protect fragile lakeside habitats, and keep shallow waters safe for families, swimmers, and other boaters. This is not a ban on wake surfing; it only applies when specialized wake surf boats generate excessive wakes.”

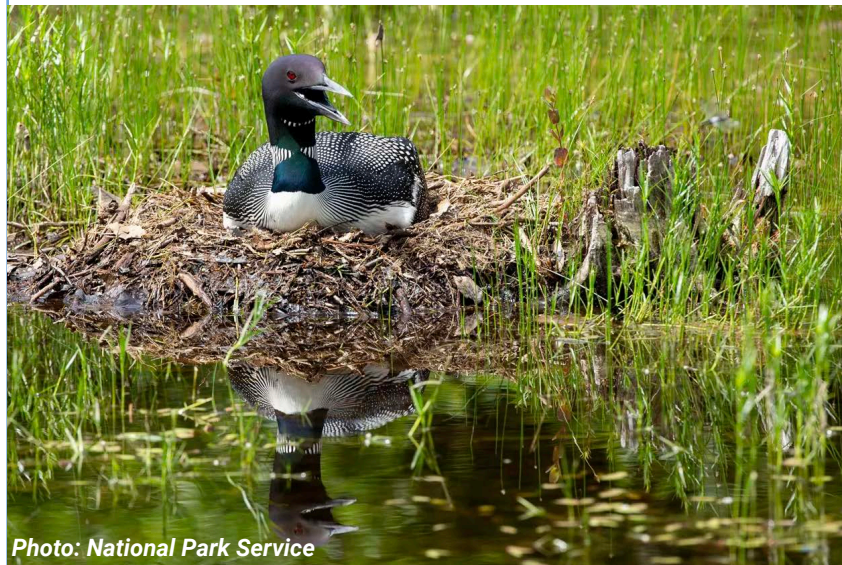
The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife opposes the bill and recommends further study in part because of the difficulty of ascertaining whether one’s boat is operating 500 feet from shore or in waters less than 20 feet deep.

To see the public testimony about this bill and the current status, see the Maine Legislature’s website: <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/> Type “WAKE” into the Title Search field.

SHARE THE WATER: LARGE WAKES IMPACT PADDLERS & SWIMMERS

What can you do to minimize the impact of boat wakes? The Maine Boating Impacts Coalition has pulled together a short list of things you can do to enjoy wake sports AND be a responsible lake steward:

- **Keep wake sports at least 500 feet from shoreline**
 - Minimize shoreline erosion
 - Protect animal habitats, such as loon nests
 - Prevent dock and moored boat damage
- **Perform wake sports in deeper water**
 - A boat’s downward-angled “prop wash” in shallow water stirs up sediment that can release phosphorus, feed algae blooms, and impact water clarity
 - Note: As Parker Pond has a max depth of 19 feet, it is not a good body of water for wake sports.
- **When you are within 200 feet of the shoreline, maintain headway speed or less ... it’s the law!**



GIVE NESTING LOONS SPACE

As the Common Loon favors large, clear lakes with rocky shorelines for nesting, Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond have been a great choice for loon pairs. Awkward on land, loons come ashore only for mating and nesting, and nests are very close to the shore. The female usually lays two eggs in May or June, and both parents incubate them for about four weeks until they hatch.

If you happen to come across a nest, please do not disturb it and give the loons plenty of space. As nests are on the water’s edge, they are vulnerable to boat wakes and to human activity. Whether by motorboat, canoe, or a kayak, always admire loons – and their chicks – from a distance.