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 pleasantlakeparkerpond



PLEASANT | PARKER *Lake | Pond* ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2024 NEWSLETTER

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

Oscar Wilde popularized the saying “everything in moderation, including moderation.” We love hot, sunny days with high clouds and no precipitation; but too many of such days leads to low water levels, exposed rocks, and drought. We love a dramatic thunderstorm or reading in a screen porch on a rainy afternoon; but too much rain washes nutrients, sediment, and pollutants into our waterways. Balance is key.

Per the National Weather Service (NWS), August 2023 was the wettest on record, and the summer of 2023 (June, July, and August) was the second wettest. Abundant rain contributed to eutrophication – high level of nutrients in a waterbody – that can lead to (1) algae blooms and cyanobacteria, (2) dark-colored water from increased sediments and dissolved organic carbon, and (3) bacterial contaminants such as E. coli. We saw some of those consequences last year, when Pleasant Lake’s dissolved oxygen and Secchi disk readings were relatively low compared to other years, particularly early in the summer.

The NWS predicts higher-than-average temps and average precipitation this June & July. Only time will tell whether the summer’s sun and rain were too much, too little, or just right!

Over the last six months, there has been much activity from our volunteers and those in our community who champion Maine’s lakes and ponds. This newsletter will highlight some of those efforts, and we can dive deeper during our annual meeting on Saturday, July 20th. I hope to see you there!

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.

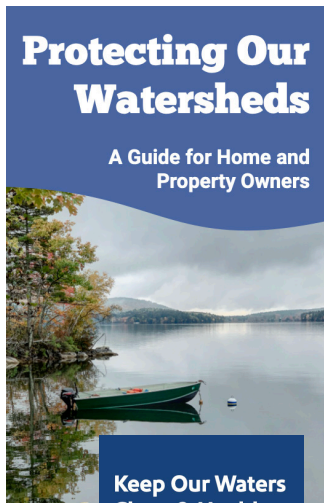
David Randall,
President
Pleasant Lake/
Parker Pond Association



WATERSHED PROTECTION PAMPHLET AND VISITOR’S GUIDE

We have published two resources on watershed protection: a multi-page pamphlet for home/property owners and a visitor’s guide brochure. Printed copies can be found at the Otisfield and Casco Town Offices, as well as other locations around town. Digital copies can be downloaded from www.plppa.org. During the summer months, our volunteers will be distributing these guides throughout our community to get this important messaging to home/property owners, renters, and daily visitors!

Thank you to all the PL/PPA volunteers that spent many hours on the effort’s research, content, design, and production, with leadership and support from the Otisfield Conservation Committee and the Town of Otisfield. These guides were printed with funding from a State of Maine Community Action Grant.



Keep Our Waters
Clean & Healthy

VISITOR'S
GUIDE



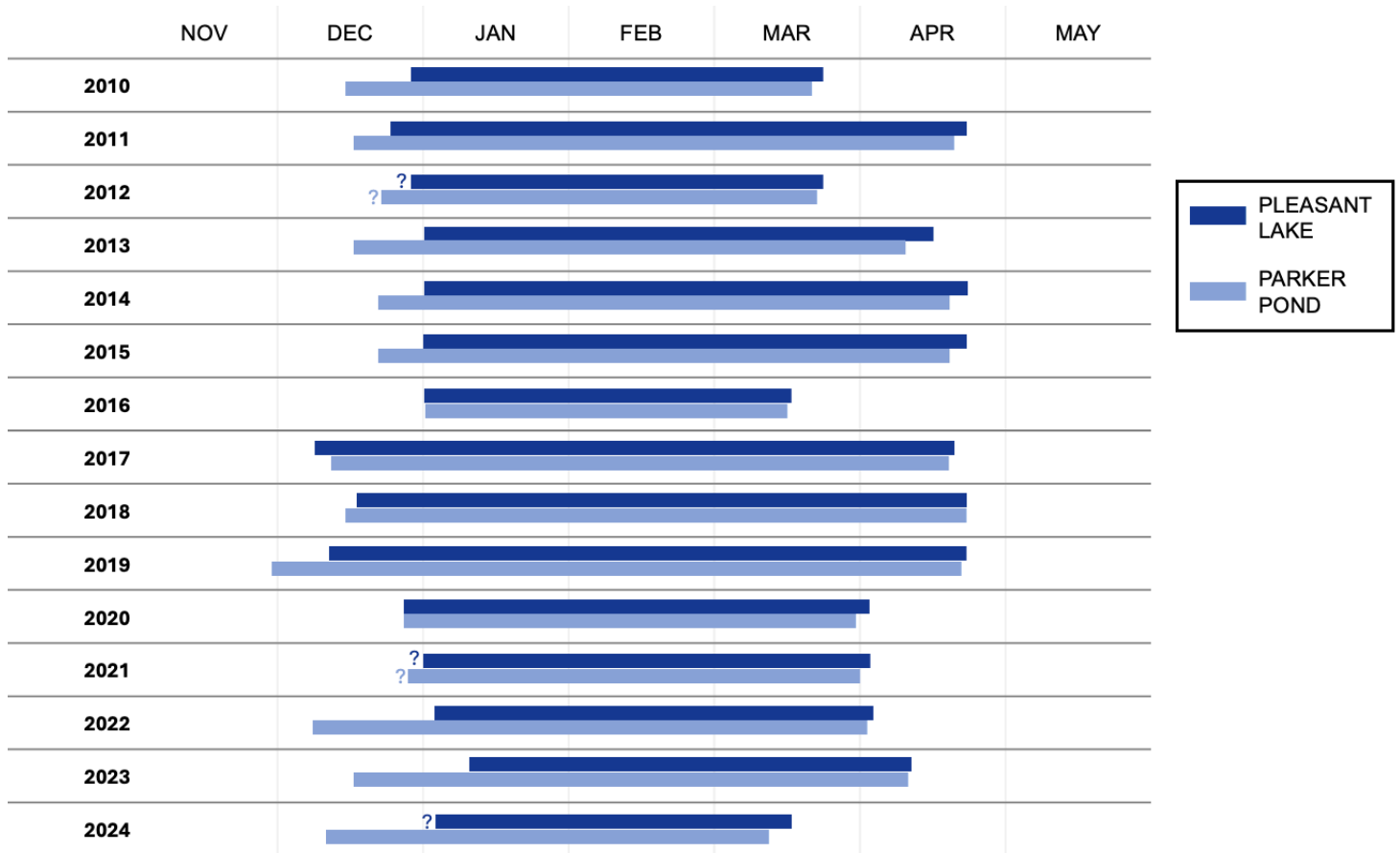
2024 Annual PL/PPA Meeting
SATURDAY, JULY 20, 2024
from 9:30-11:00AM

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

Membership is not required.
ALL ARE WELCOME!

PLEASANT LAKE AND PARKER POND ICE IN / ICE OUT DATA

Parker Pond iced over on December 11, 2023 and it was ice-free on March 12, 2024. While we don't have "ice in" data for Pleasant Lake this past winter, it was ice-free on March 19, 2024. The last time we had "ice out" around mid-March was in 2016! Below is a chart of the ICE IN and ICE OUT data for both Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond for the past 15 years. As you can see, Parker Pond typically freezes earlier than Pleasant Lake and thaws just a bit quicker. For more details, visit our website: plppa.org/resources/ice-in-ice-out-dates/



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



IMPACTS OF EARLY "ICE OUT"

The winter of 2023-24 was one of the warmer ones on record here in Maine. While "ice out" historically occurs for many Maine lakes in mid-April, the early warm temps led to "ice out" happening in mid-March. This cut the season short for those who enjoy ice related activities (fishing, skating, snowmobiling) and could have consequences for our lakes and ponds this summer. Earlier "ice outs" dates typically lead to warmer water temps in late spring and early summer which impact the lake ecology, such as the rate of summer oxygen depletion.

Our water quality efforts include annually installing a buoy in Pleasant Lake which has temperature sensors every 2 meters through the water column from the water surface to the deepest point. In addition, our certified water quality monitors check lake water clarity and dissolved oxygen every two weeks on Pleasant Lake. We will keep an eye on the data and report any impacts to this year's early "ice out."

INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANT UPDATE

In 2023, our Invasive Plant Patrollers were happy to report no invasive aquatic plant sightings. As the volunteer teams surveyed Pleasant Lake, they did find many native (GOOD) plants, such as pondweed, water weed, and naiads. If you see vegetation that looks suspicious, please let us know! It's better to get a sample and identify it, than 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.

PURPLE BLADDERWORT: NATIVE NUISANCE IN PARKER POND

Last summer, Parker Pond experienced an abundance of the native Purple Bladderwort. As other Maine water bodies reported their Purple Bladderwort findings, Lake Stewards of Maine saw a trend. "In 2023, record-breaking rains resulted in a significant increase in stormwater runoff into Maine lakes. With higher water levels and turbid conditions, many people encountered this plant for the first time, as disturbed mats of the plant drifted away from the lake bottom and deposited on the shore and around docks."

As we pointed out in our winter newsletter, you may remove Purple Bladderwort without a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) permit because it does not attach to the lake bottom; see below for more details on the appropriate protocol. Fingers crossed that this native nuisance stays dormant on the pond floor in 2024!



CAN I REMOVE AQUATIC PLANTS WITHOUT A PERMIT?

Homeowners can remove certain aquatic plants without a DEP permit if the plant does not attach to the lake bottom. If a plant does attach to the lake bottom then one must obtain a DEP permit to remove it. One may not engage in self-help with respect to rooted plants, whether pulling the plants out by their roots (whether invasive or not) or covering them with opaque barriers. Doing so risks spreading the plants by releasing seeds or fragments that can propagate, harming water quality by removing plants that filter contaminants, and facilitating growth of invasive species by removing their competition. Only the Maine DEP and authorized contractors under DEP supervision may remove rooted invasive aquatic species.

PARKER POND NEEDS AQUATIC INVASIVE PLANT PATROL COVERAGE!

Last year, we were not able to conduct an annual Aquatic Invasive Plant survey of Parker Pond due to lack of volunteers. We need 2-3 members of our community to look for suspicious aquatic plants along the shorelines of Parker Pond and report their findings on an annual basis. For those of you who love to paddle – kayak, canoe, row boat – this is a great activity! But you can also use a nimble motorboat if you like. We will teach you how to identify the "bad" plants and we can paddle alongside you to grow your confidence in the annual patrol. If you want to join our Plant Patrol team, reach out to us at plppassoc@gmail.com.



WHAT'S WITH ALL THE SNAILS?

Snails are once again being reported in the shallow waters of our lakes. These Chinese Mystery Snails – yes, that is their name! – are invasive and have been spotted in our lake for years. Our Invasive Plant Patrol team does report them annually to Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM); LSM currently manages a statewide database on reported sightings. They are called "mystery" snails because females give birth to young, fully developed snails that suddenly and "mysteriously" appear. These snails are native to Southeast Asia and have spread to many parts of the United States. If you see some of these snails and have the time, it would be good to dig them out. However please do not leave them in a pile on a beach or the shore as they have a bad smell. Just bring a shovel, dig a hole in the woods and bury them!



2024 MAINE LEGISLATURE WRAP-UP

Recent inland-waters protection bills show that effective legislation requires two things: teeth – methods to enforce its requirements – and funding – financing sufficient to carry out its goals. And while there was progress in some areas, others efforts came up empty handed.

LD 2101 – An Act to Strengthen Shoreland Zoning Enforcement: PASSED. This bill gives towns and Maine’s Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC) the necessary tools to help stop egregious violators of shoreland zoning, including the ability to suspend or revoke violator’s permits and file civil action to recover fees or penalties.

LD 1342 – An Act to Increase Funding for the Prevention and Control of Invasive Aquatic Species: PASSED. This bill adjusts the price of the “Preserve Maine Waters” sticker. In 2025, the in-state fee will be \$25 (up from \$15 in 2024) and the out-of-state fee will be \$60 (up from \$45 in 2024). In 2028, the in-state fee will be \$35 and the out-of-state fee will be \$75. These fees generate about \$1 million annually to control invasive aquatic species.

LD 2141 – An Act to Enhance Protections for and Better Address Invasive Aquatic Plant Infestations in Inland Waters of the State: NOT PASSED. Lawmakers failed to advance this bill that would require Maine environmental agencies to develop more stringent prevention and courtesy boat inspection measures. The bill would have also appropriated \$2 million in one-time funding to address the most serious invasive aquatic plant infestations.

LD 2284 – An Act to Implement Recommendations in the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife’s Report on Wake Boats: PASSED. The bill prohibits wake surfing activity within 300 foot from shore and less than 15-foot depth; wake surfing is defined as an activity that involves using a surfboard, wakeboard or similar device while being propelled by a motorboat’s wake. The bill also states that Maine’s Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) must report back to the legislature on enforcement mechanisms by February 1, 2027. While this act was passed, key recommendations did not make it into the final language and there is concern that IFW’s 2027 report may lead to a reconsideration of the new regulations.

There is still much work to do to increase funding, enforcement, and education regarding lake issues, and we are grateful for everyone who continues to fight the good fight. Special thanks to our friends at Maine Lakes, Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM), and Lakes Environmental Association (LEA), who constantly advocate for lake-friendly policies!

NEW BOATING REQUIREMENTS ARE IN EFFECT!

On January 1, 2024, new regulations regarding who may operate a motorboat went into effect. These regulations are based on the engine size (horsepower), age of driver, and boat safety certification. For a complete overview of Maine’s regulations, view pages 32 and 33 of The Boater’s Guide to Maine’s Boating Laws and Responsibilities: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/docs/maine-boating-laws.pdf>.

	Up to 10 HP motorboat	More than 10 HP motorboat
Person UNDER 12 years of age	May operate boat without supervision or completion of an approved boater safety and education course.	May not operate a motorboat unless under supervision of person who is at least 16 years of age AND that person has completed an approved boater safety and education course.

	Up to 25 HP motorboat	More than 25 HP motorboat
Person 12 years of age or older	May operate boat without supervision or completion of an approved boater safety and education course.	Has completed an approved boater safety and education course AND possesses and presents a boater safety and education course certificate.

	Personal Watercraft (PWC): jet ski, sea-doo, water scooter
Person under 16 years of age	May not operate PWC
Person 16 years of age or older	Has completed an approved boater safety and education course AND possesses and presents a boater safety and education course certificate.

Persons born before January 1, 1999, are not required to complete a boater safety and education course to operate a motorboat or to supervise a youth operator.



THE VALUE AND LEGACY OF MAINE LAKES

For decades, Maine’s lakes and ponds have faced challenges such as development, invasive species, and climate change, prompting a reassessment of their economic value to effectively guide conservation efforts. In April, Adam Daigneault and Melissa Genoter published the results of a three-year study evaluating the role of our lakes in our state’s economy. Their research pegs the net economic value of Maine’s lakes at \$14.1 billion and estimates \$3 billion annually in related spending. Visit Maine Lakes to see the study’s findings: www.lakes.me/valuing-lakes