

HOSTING A LAKESMART PROGRAM

Living lightly on the land for the sake of our lakes

Welcome to the LakeSmart program and congratulations for taking the first step to educate lakeshore homeowners about protecting the water quality of your lake!

LakeSmart is an ongoing program that engages your community in the value and urgency of adopting sustainable conservation practices. New LakeSmart programs take time to grow, typically going through a 2-3 year building phase as volunteers become familiar with evaluations and homeowners hear about the program. Once established, many LakeSmart teams will mentor and train new evaluators and see the results of their work with of a growing number of lake-friendly properties on their lake. As the years go by, this LakeSmart “look” may become the “norm” on your lake

Maine Lakes offers the following guidelines for lake groups starting a LakeSmart program. Feel free to email or call Andrea at Maine Lakes if you have questions: astevens@lakes.me or (207) 951-7413.



1. Build your LakeSmart team!

Your LakeSmart team is made up of at least two or three volunteer Evaluators and a Lake Coordinator. **LakeSmart Evaluators** identify water quality issues and share guidance about best management practices (BMPs) for lake protection with participating lakefront homeowners. Through training and experience, Evaluators become proficient at making reliable on-site judgments about sources of nonpoint source pollution and how to manage them.

The **Lake Coordinator** oversees outreach to the public to encourage interest in LakeSmart visits. The Coordinator assigns Evaluators to homeowners interested in LakeSmart evaluations and ensures that visits, reports, data entry, and evaluation reviews proceed in a timely manner. The Lake Coordinator also manages post-visit follow-up conversations with homeowners, including continuing guidance about best management practices.



LakeSmart Evaluator Trainees at a practice evaluation on Togus Pond (Photo by Susan Gallo)

2. LakeSmart Training

The training for new LakeSmart Evaluators and Coordinators is provided by Maine Lakes staff and experienced Evaluators and begins with a two-part series of online presentations scheduled in May or June. The first presentation covers the history of the LakeSmart program, how it came to live at Maine Lakes, and how it uses the power of Community-based Social Marketing to successfully change behavior and protect lakes. It also introduces the logistics of the program, including an overview of who does what, who reviews LakeSmart evaluations, and how to recruit homeowners to sign up for LakeSmart evaluations.

The second online presentation covers the ins and outs of setting up the Survey123 app on your tablet, phone, or computer and walks through the process of entering LakeSmart data into the Survey123 database. Maine Lakes offers many ways to support the use of Survey123 but joining this online presentation is a great way to start.



LakeSmart Evaluators on Androscoggin Island (Photo by Whitney Baker)

The two online presentations are followed by an on-lake “practice” evaluation session scheduled with Maine Lakes staff and/or an experienced evaluator.

3. Collaborate with regional LakeSmart evaluators

Regional ties with nearby LakeSmart programs can help build mentoring relationships between new and experienced teams. Since all lakefront properties are different, this on-the-ground experience offers important opportunities to become familiar with identifying erosion problems and understanding the range of best management practices to recommend to homeowners.

The more evaluations new volunteers can participate in, the more confident they will become about transitioning to a lead Evaluator role. Some lake associations schedule several Evaluators for each evaluation visit, encouraging learning through collaborative and lively discussions!

4. Spread the word about your new LakeSmart program

Publicizing LakeSmart takes some effort and creativity. Here are a few strategies to get you started:

- Write articles for community newsletters and social media.
- Send a press release to your local newspaper.
- Set up a display table at local community group meetings or a Farmer’s Market where homeowners can sign up for LakeSmart visits.
- Add a LakeSmart page to your organization’s website.
- Assemble LakeSmart information packets and visit homeowners door-to-door to talk about the program.

5. Start your LakeSmart journey!

Schedule LakeSmart visits, stay in touch with your LakeSmart team, and reach out to Maine Lakes for materials and support.

LakeSmart Materials and Resources

Maine Lakes provides training, outreach materials, LakeSmart Award signs, and continuing support at no cost to lake groups hosting LakeSmart programs. Links for LakeSmart resources, including an online version of the newly released 4th edition of the **Lake Book** (www.lakes.me/library).

Sign up for the **LakeSmart e-newsletter** at www.lakes.me/newsletter. Training schedules, announcements and other updates about the program are announced in this newsletter.



Since 1970, Maine Lakes has worked across the state to protect and preserve the values and benefits of Maine’s lakes, ponds and watersheds for future generations. With more than 100 partner lake associations and our flagship LakeSmart program, we form a nucleus of lake conservation activity that strengthens the capacity of lake ecosystems to resist destabilizing threats and helps build the effectiveness of local lake organizations and allies. FMI and to join us today, please visit www.lakes.me.