



# Maine Lakes

Caring for Our Lakes Today so We Can Enjoy Them Tomorrow

Maine Lakes' mission is to protect and preserve the value of Maine's lakes to benefit all who use them, both today and long into the future. Our programs and activities promote and protect healthy lakes, and support the next generation of lake stewards. We actively engage in lake protection and management activities with our members, and support our invaluable network of lake associations as they work to keep our lakes clean, vibrant and healthy.

Clean and healthy lakes are essential to Maine's communities; economy; and outdoor, recreation, and tourism industries. Unfortunately, pollution, development pressure and a changing climate are pushing many of our lakes to a tipping point, where damage to lake health might soon be irreversible. Learn more about the critical work Maine Lakes is doing to safeguard the health of our lakes—and how you can help.

## Maine's Lakes Are Critical...

Our lakes are a vital public resource for the people of Maine. Our lakes are:

- ◆ **Water supplies**, providing safe drinking water to half of the state's population.
- ◆ **Job creators**, supporting more than 50,000 jobs.
- ◆ **Revenue producers**, with boating and angling alone generating more than \$284 million in annual economic output.
- ◆ **Recreation and relaxation venues**, offering treasured destinations for anglers, boaters, paddlers and wildlife watchers from across the state and around the world.
- ◆ **Wildlife havens**, providing places both in the water and along the shore for more than 70 percent of Maine's wildlife to live, feed and raise their young.
- ◆ **Priceless**, offering an immeasurable source of beauty and tranquility.

## Maine's Lakes Are in Jeopardy...

In a natural, undeveloped landscape, lakes are in balance. Many layers of vegetation along the shore intercept rainwater, and the ground absorbs the rest so that very little excess rain, and few nutrients, reach the lake.

However, when the area around a lake is developed with impermeable surfaces, such as houses and roads, the ground can no longer absorb and filter rainwater. More water flows over the ground, carrying excess soil nutrients and pollutants directly into lakes, tipping them out of balance. When this

happens, water quality declines, wildlife and fish habitat degrade, and algal "blooms" turn water green and smelly. This damage can be irreparable.

This harm to our lakes is exacerbated by a changing climate. Warmer temperatures, less time under ice, more severe rain events, and the spread of invasive species compound the threats facing Maine's lakes, bringing them more quickly to that dangerous tipping point.

## ... And It's About More Than Lakes

When lake health declines, the ripple effects can be far reaching and permanent:

- ◆ Local property values and tax revenues drop.
- ◆ Local economies suffer.
- ◆ Recreational and aesthetic values diminish.
- ◆ Future generations lose their natural heritage.
- ◆ Community members' health might be adversely affected.
- ◆ Wildlife habitat declines or disappears.
- ◆ Fishing opportunities are lost.

## How Maine Lakes Helps

For more than 50 years, Maine Lakes has been dedicated to conserving our lakes. Through our work, we preserve the ecological, economic, aesthetic and recreational value of lakes—for all who use them. We engage with all who appreciate, value and benefit from Maine lakes; including property owners, boaters, swimmers, anglers, paddlers, real estate professionals, businesses, students, policy makers, agencies and regulators.



## Our Programs

### LakeSmart

Our flagship program, LakeSmart, helps lake associations and their landowners build resilient shorelines that protect lake water quality and wildlife habitat for future generations. We train LakeSmart teams and provide the resources they need to help people take action.



Maine Lakes and colleagues celebrate signing of the septic inspection bill (April 2019)

### Advocacy

Maine Lakes is the go-to organization for statewide, grassroots lake advocacy and action. Working with many partners, we advance policy approaches that safeguard property values, recreation opportunities, water quality and wildlife habitat. We are a credible source of science-based information for policy-makers.

### Lake Association Support

Our more than 100 lake association members are vital to community-based action and lake protection efforts. We promote association programming and membership; send out monthly email newsletters; and provide networking and educational opportunities throughout the year.

### Education, Outreach and Publications

Maine Lakes supports a range of resources:

- 💧 **Maine Lakes Conference.** Our annual Maine Lakes Conference provides opportunities for lake association members and others to network, hear expert speakers and learn more about what's new on Maine's lakes.
- 💧 **Publications.** We provide an online library to help lake users learn more about their lakes and what they can do to protect them. The latest edition of our flagship publication "The Lake Book" (available online) is a must read for any lake visitor or resident.
- 💧 **Newsletters.** We distribute monthly email newsletters and a semi-annual print newsletter, *For the Sake of Maine's Lakes*, to share timely lake news about advocacy, action, history, volunteer work and lake association news.



## How You Can Support Our Work

We invite you to join us. We rely on the support of donors, members, volunteers and partners to continue our vital work. Here are some ways you can get involved:

- 💧 **Become a member.** Members are central to our work. Join today and you'll receive our bi-annual print newsletter and a discount on registration for our annual Lakes Conference. We welcome memberships from individuals, families, and lake associations.
- 💧 **Become a Business Sponsor.** Businesses share their commitment to clean and healthy lakes by sponsoring events and outreach pieces, including webinars, conferences and publications. Businesses gain recognition in our newsletters and social media.
- 💧 **Make Maine Lakes part of your legacy.** As a 501(c)(3) organization, Maine Lakes is a smart choice for deferring retirement savings income or estate planning. Your gift will help build sustainable, long-term endowed funds that work to protect Maine's lakes long into the future.

Click the "Donate" button at [www.lakes.me](http://www.lakes.me) for easy online giving options, or reach out to Susan Gallo, Executive Director, for more information at (207)956-1965.

Many people working together is the key to long-term lake health.

Maine Lakes can connect you with your lake community and help you become part of the solution.

Join us today! Visit [lakes.me/donate](http://lakes.me/donate).

## More Ways to Get Involved

- 💧 **Become a member!** Visit [lakes.me/donate](http://lakes.me/donate) for online giving.
- 💧 **Join or create a lake association.** Visit [lakes.me/map](http://lakes.me/map) FMI.
- 💧 **Become LakeSmart.** Email [lakesmart@lakes.me](mailto:lakesmart@lakes.me) FMI or visit [lakesmart.org](http://lakesmart.org).
- 💧 **Advocate for lake-friendly policies.** For action alerts, email [info@lakes.me](mailto:info@lakes.me).
- 💧 **Learn more at the lake library.** Visit [lakes.me/library](http://lakes.me/library) FMI.

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