



THE LAKESIDER

Newsletter of the Greater Pushaw Lake Association, serving Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond

GPLA 2020 ANNUAL MEETING CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19

by Rich Dressler, GPLA President

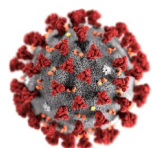
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Welcome Back to the Lake!

It seems as if it has been a decade since last year! Hopefully, you and your families have been able to survive the pandemic, albeit the worse for wear with lost income and businesses, job interruptions, missed weddings and, yes, missed funerals, missed school and graduations, etc. **Thanks to all of you who are doctors, nurses, medical support staff, and emergency responders – you have earned a debt of gratitude which may never be fully repaid, but we will never forget your sacrifice!**

2020 ANNUAL MEETING CANCELED



Based on projected restrictions and uncertainty about the status of COVID-19, we have decided for the first time in our history to CANCEL the GPLA Annual Meeting in July. However, we are planning to hold a special online Zoom meeting of the GPLA Board on **Wednesday, July 22**, open to all GPLA members and lake residents who wish to become members.

We will be highlighting GPLA's activities over the past year, and holding Board elections. **IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS MEETING, PLEASE EMAIL RICH DRESSLER at greaterpushawlakeassociation@gmail.com.** Instructions for logging into the meeting will be circulated a few days before the meeting, along with an agenda. You must be a current dues-paying member of GPLA to vote in the Board elections; a membership form and mailing envelope are included in this newsletter. Please visit our website, www.greaterpushaw.org/ for more information about GPLA.



We are hoping, with appropriate physical distancing and good health, to continue our lake monitoring efforts this year! Water testing will continue thanks to our volunteers – Dorli & Lou Cloutier on Pushaw Lake, and Laura & Quinton Hurst on Little Pushaw Pond. We are also planning to complete the annual loon count on July 18, with the help of volunteers.



The entire GPLA Board of Directors joins me in wishing you the best for this year. We are hoping for a COVID-19 vaccine sooner than later, so that we can all continue our lives somewhat as before!! We hope you will be able to get back to the lake this summer, self-quarantine for 14 days if that order is still in effect, and experience some semblance of normalcy before summer's end.

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DID YOU KNOW?

- Wondering why the chipmunks have taken over your yard this year? Last fall produced a lot of mast (acorns, tree nuts and fruits that fall to the ground), so lots of chubby chippies with well-stocked pantries survived this past winter. And adults produce litters of 2-8 pups, twice a year!
- Congratulations to both Pushaw Lake ice-out winners on our Facebook page this spring! Heather Alexander Rancourt correctly guessed April 3 for the southern end, and Jacob Fletcher correctly guessed April 6 for the northern end.

STAYING LAKESMART IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

by Brooke Hafford MacDonald, LakeSmart Program Manager for the Maine Lakes Society

I have always admired thoughtfully arranged, well-maintained landscaping, but you would never know that from looking at my property. I mow my lawn infrequently, and when I do I leave the dandelions and clover because the bees like them. I ignore fallen, dead trees and scrubby underbrush in my wooded areas because it encourages more songbird activity. I allow leaf litter to build up in the fall because it benefits the soil microbes and invertebrates. Nature likes for things to be messy, and I guess I like it too.

“I’m not lazy, I’m a good ecologist!” is how I justify this to others, but admittedly there is some truth to the laziness part. After reading his column in the Bangor Daily News, I realize I have that in common with your fellow GPLA member and LakeSmart Award winner, Bob Duchesne! I think this philosophy has helped me connect to LakeSmart so deeply.



I began working as your LakeSmart Program Manager full-time back in January. I knew my first year would present many exciting opportunities and new challenges, but nothing could have prepared me for what we are currently facing. Now, you all don’t know me well yet, but I have always been a “silver linings” type of person – within every challenge is an opportunity for growth. I firmly believe that with a little creativity and flexibility we can still make a lot of progress with LakeSmart this year, but by “progress” I don’t necessarily mean lots of property visits and Award presentations. Here are just a few things we are working on:

LakeSmart 2.0

LakeSmart standards were implemented in 2003 by the Department of Environmental Protection, 10 years before the program was transferred to the Maine Lakes Society and Maggie Shannon. LakeSmart has since been a great success, but increased pressure on lakes from intensifying storms, increased summer temperatures, and changes in winter ice cover has prompted us to reevaluate our program standards. How can we adjust LakeSmart standards to be more protective of water quality, yet still be realistic for motivated property owners? Can we update award standards without creating barriers that are simply too difficult for homeowners to overcome? Maine Lakes is currently reviewing its property evaluation standards, with plans to implement a few new changes in 2021.

LakeSmart: Where are they now?

Whatever happened to folks who received Commendations (given to those who fall short of enough points to earn the award, along with specific advice on how and what to improve) in years past? This is a great time for our LakeSmart teams to follow up with previous participants, and check in on the status of their properties.

LakeSmart Social Media

We are currently developing a series of LakeSmart webinars and social media posts to help spread our message: best-management-practice (BMP) demonstrations, LakeSmart tips, native plants information, LoonSmart, and much more!

LakeSmart Start

As of this writing, Governor Mills has extended the Stay Safer at Home order until at least May 31, so we are unable to complete any on-site evaluations until that has been lifted. LakeSmart Start is a way for us to provide virtual support to homeowners so they can prepare their home for a formal, on-site property evaluation in future – thus, giving them a head start!

There is no doubt that 2020 will be a strange year. I find comfort in the little things that seem to stay the same. Spring is here again, as always. The bees are buzzing around my too-tall lawn and the songbirds are thrashing around in my scrubby forest.

I am excited to work with you all, and for the opportunity to learn and grow as we navigate our socially changed world. Thank you for welcoming me! I’m very happy to be here.



35TH ANNUAL MAINE AUDUBON LOON COUNT ON PUSHAW LAKE and LITTLE PUSHAW POND Saturday, July 18, 2020, 7:00-7:30 am

MAINE



Loon Project

The 2020 loon count will take place on Saturday, July 18, from 7:00 to 7:30 a.m. following existing Covid-19 guidelines. Typically we have an individual or family units involved within defined areas of Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond. If possible, the count needs to be completed within one-half hour to avoid double-counting of loons moving between adjacent observation areas. In some larger observation areas we do extend the count to achieve complete coverage. We will be contacting all volunteers who participated in the count in 2019 to determine availability to help count loons from boats, kayaks, and shoreline this year. If you have helped in years before 2019, or have never helped but would like to get involved, please contact Rich Dressler at 827-5407.

In 2018 a loon chick was tragically and needlessly killed by a careless jet skier. While the act did not appear to be intentional, it highlights the need for all users of motorized watercraft to drive soberly and responsibly, operate at safe, legal and controlled speeds, and slow down or take a very wide berth around loons, especially adults swimming with fledging chicks.

You can help protect the loons—as well as yourself and your fellow lake users— by reporting any reckless, endangering, or illegal boating behavior you observe to a game warden. To report a potential violation 24 hours a day, please contact the dispatch operator at the Regional Communication Center (Bangor) at 800-432-7381. The Bangor regional game warden headquarters can be reached directly during weekday working hours at 207-941-4440.

GPLA is always interested in hearing from our members. We encourage you to participate in our annual survey to help us best serve our community! Find out more at <http://tinyurl.com/GPLASurvey>.



How Are Your Lakeside Roads? by Rich Dressler

GPLA's Outreach Plan calls for increasing the use of "best management practices" (BMPs) to maintain and improve local roads. So how are your roads, especially camp roads, unpaved private and public roads, and long gravel driveways close to the lake? Eroding roads are a major source of phosphorus pollution to lakes, and the use of BMPs can minimize soil export into the lake. **Soil erosion is the primary threat to the water quality in Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond. And we can help reduce it through proper road maintenance.**

Many gravel roads in our area are maintained by the municipalities. We hope that all public road crews are aware of erosion and sediment control BMPs for road maintenance, including road drainage. Maine's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) provides a wealth of information and guidance on camp road maintenance on its website: <https://www.maine.gov/dep/land/watershed/camp/road/>. Proper road maintenance protects local water quality, while reducing the need to fill in potholes, ruts, and other problems that make a road dangerous and difficult to travel. The road also needs to be designed and maintained to shed water from its surface into nearby wooded areas, following the application of BMPs.

There are also many private road associations around Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond. DEP points out that a road association allows you and other road users to formally manage the road, in an organized and cost-effective manner. An effective camp road maintenance program is a major step towards helping protect our lakes. To learn more about road associations if you do not have one, visit this website: <https://www.maine.gov/dep/land/watershed/roadassociation.html>. In addition, there are a number of state laws that focus on camp roads and preventing soil erosion into lakes. There's not enough space to list them all here, but you can review them yourself on the DEP website.

All of us need to be aware of potential erosion from exposed soil entering into our lakes, and make sure we are taking steps to minimize erosion from unpaved roads and driveways. As the saying goes, **"if you see something, say something"** to your road association or to your municipal officials. We ALL can take responsibility for the public roads, private roads, and driveways leading to our properties! Thanks for your efforts to protect our lakes.

Greater Pushaw Lake Association

Greater Pushaw Lake Association
PO Box 302
Stillwater, ME 04489

Phone: 207-217-4065
Website: www.greaterpushaw.org



*“Never doubt that a small
committed group of
citizens can change the
world. Indeed it is the
only thing that ever has.”*

Margaret Mead



GPLA MEMBERSHIP DUES AND DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE!

Name(s): _____

Address: (please provide both summer and winter addresses, if applicable):

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

If you are interested in learning more about [LakeSmart](#), check here:

Please mail along with \$15 annual dues (more if you wish, & if you can) in the enclosed envelope, or mail to:
GPLA, PO Box 302, Stillwater, ME 04489. If you prefer, you can now **donate securely online** at
www.greaterpushaw.org/membership.html. **Thanks!**