



THE LAKESIDER

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

THANKS TO THE TOWNS! by Rich Dressler, GPLA President

Over the past several years, the City of Old Town and the Towns of Glenburn, Orono and Hudson have been supporting the efforts of GPLA to conduct water testing and mail out biannual informational newsletters to all property owners on Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond. These activities are focused on the mission of **preserving and improving the quality** of both bodies of water.

Pushaw Lake is a valuable resource for all four municipalities that surround it, providing recreation and natural resources that benefit both residents and visitors. All residents either directly or indirectly benefit from a healthy ecosystem on Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond. Full-time and part-time lakeside residents enjoy many recreational opportunities on the lake, like boating, fishing, water sports, and wildlife-watching. In addition, **each municipality relies heavily on the tax base** provided by its shoreline properties, which are generally assessed at a higher value.



At present, GPLA is the only entity with the mission of monitoring water quality on Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond. We provide the data to the State for comprehensive monitoring. GPLA volunteers also provide free, practical information to lakeside landowners regarding erosion prevention and other measures to protect the lake. We conduct education and outreach activities that increase public awareness about the need to preserve and improve lake water quality.

If GPLA didn't perform these services, municipal governments would have to do it. But our services are not redundant with training, equipment and services that each local government already has. Our services are unique, and unless municipal officials want to ignore lake water quality altogether (and the value it adds to their communities), someone has to do the work. GPLA volunteers are trained, experienced, equipped, and passionate about keeping our lakes clean and beautiful. **The towns have come through with the help needed to continue this mutually beneficial effort. We greatly appreciate their support and view them as Municipal Members of the GPLA!**

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DID YOU KNOW?

- Fertilizer use is banned in Maine within 25 feet of the shoreline. Many Mainers can avoid using fertilizer in their lakeside yards entirely, by planting native ground covers, shrubs, and trees—and by leaving grass clippings on the lawn. Grass clippings act as both a mulch and a no-cost fertilizer for your lawn, while also preventing phosphorus-laden runoff from reaching the lake. Phosphorus from runoff is the leading cause of algae blooms in lakes—and severe algae blooms can cause lakeside property values to plummet, due to their disgusting look, feel, and smell during the warmest days of summer.
- You're not imagining it—we really are getting much more rain than we used to! Rainstorms throughout New England have increased by 71% over the past 30 years, and scientists predict they will continue to increase in both length and intensity over the next 40 years. To protect both your property and the lake from damage due to erosion and runoff during heavy rainstorms, it's more important than ever to stabilize gravel camp roads, driveways, and parking areas.

Old Town Seventh-Graders Want to Help Keep Phosphorus Out of Pushaw Lake!

Dear Residents of Pushaw Lake,

The 7th Grade at Leonard Middle School is looking for properties in need of erosion control projects, and residents who are interested in becoming LakeSmart certified. As our students learn about soil erosion and deposition, the value of natural resources, and their civic duties, we are hoping to involve them with a community project that will protect and improve the health of Pushaw Lake. We are seeking landowners with a passion for the environment, plus a willingness to host a large group of middle school students on their lakeside property. Students will assess erosion issues, and implement a solution during the spring semester of 2019. If your property suffers from stormwater runoff, poor drainage, or eroding banks due to inadequate ground cover and a lack of shoreline buffer plantings, please contact me through email or phone:

drew.mclaren@rsu34.org/ 207-602-8116. We are excited to get our students involved in their community, and we would greatly appreciate your help in this effort—especially if your home or seasonal camp is located in Old Town, although we are happy to work with residents of the other towns around Pushaw Lake as well. Thank you!

-Drew McLaren, Educational Technician (in collaboration with 7th Grade Science Teachers Melissa Zabierek and Hannah Dickinson), Leonard Middle School, Old Town



GET LAKESMART...FOR THE SAKE OF OUR LAKES!

This summer and fall, more Pushaw Lake residents requested LakeSmart evaluations from GPLA's cadre of trained volunteer evaluators. Congratulations to Rich and Marian Dressler of Glenburn, Penni and Nick Hill of Hudson, and Linda Kling of Old Town, all of whom earned the coveted LakeSmart award with its cool signage! In addition, the following households have received GPLA commendations: Paul and Susan Russell of Old Town, Bruce and Pam Burnham of Old Town, Carolyn and George Eaton of Orono, Mary Toscano of Hudson, and Art Hildebrandt of Hudson. Although their properties did not meet the criteria for LakeSmart certification during initial property assessments, all of these folks are well on their way toward achieving the award. Just by implementing a few easy, inexpensive improvements, these properties will also qualify as LakeSmart. GPLA is committed to helping them do so.



The LakeSmart program uses objective criteria in a number of different categories to evaluate how well a lakeside property blocks phosphorus-laden runoff from reaching the lake, since **direct soil runoff is the #1 cause of widespread algae blooms in our lakes**. The criteria are stringent enough that most people will NOT qualify for a LakeSmart award on their very first try, but they will learn what they need to do to qualify on the next visit! The point of the program is continuous improvement, with neighbors helping neighbors learn practical, low-cost methods and best practices to reduce and prevent soil erosion from their driveways, lawns, and shorelines. As more and more local residents become LakeSmart, we can expect to see significant improvements in lake water quality over time, which in turn will preserve and enhance our property values and quality of life. Those are goals that ALL Lakesiders can support!

We look forward to scheduling more LakeSmart visits, beginning next spring. If you would like to schedule a LakeSmart evaluation for your own property on Pushaw Lake or Little Pushaw Pond, or train to become a LakeSmart volunteer evaluator, please contact GPLA LakeSmart Program Coordinator Carolyn Eaton at pushawlakesmart@gmail.com.



Photos: Top right: Penni and Nick Hill at their LakeSmart home in Hudson.

Bottom right: Linda Kling at her LakeSmart home in Old Town.

Bottom left: Carolyn Eaton presents the LakeSmart award to Marian and Rich Dressler for their LakeSmart home in Glenburn. All photos by Carolyn Eaton.



33RD ANNUAL MAINE AUDUBON LOON COUNT RESULTS ON PUSHAW LAKE and LITTLE PUSHAW POND

By Rich Dressler

MAINE



Loon Project

Based on the loon count survey in July 2018, a total of 27 adults and one chick were counted on Pushaw Lake. Pam Griffith reported that on Little Pushaw, 10 adults and no chicks were observed during the survey. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the count this year. Over recent years the adult count on Pushaw Lake has been primarily in the upper 20s to low 30s, and chick numbers had been improving—but this year's chick count was down due to several failed nests and the loss of two chicks, apparently due to careless Jet Ski operation.

PLEASE OBEY THE 200 FOOT NO WAKE ZONE ALONG SHORELINES, AND GIVE LOONS AND THEIR CHICKS PLENTY OF SPACE ON THE LAKE!!

ALEWIFE UPDATE: Over 1.4 million alewives were officially recorded swimming upstream past the fishway counter at the Pushaw Stream dam during the spring and early summer of 2018. Observers had seen quite a few fish swimming directly over the main portion of the dam earlier in the year, before the water level dropped enough to direct all alewives through the fishway, so this is likely a very conservative estimate of the actual number of alewives that are now summering and breeding in our lakes. Considering that alewives have only been stocked in Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond since 2012, this is a truly remarkable recovery of a native Maine fish species that had been hindered by dam construction for over a century. Marine scientists believe that reestablishing the alewife fishery is a key building block in their goal to restore Maine's Atlantic salmon population to historically high levels. Alewives are also an increasingly popular choice for baiting lobster traps, due to declines in the herring fishery.

2018 WATER QUALITY RESULTS by Jeff Hayward



Water testing for the 2018 season on Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond has been completed.

Phosphorus levels on Pushaw Lake continued the trend in recent years of being quite high from the start of the testing season through mid-July. The average reading was 22 parts per billion (ppb), well above the level that could support a major algae bloom. The good news is that the numbers settled down to "normal" for the remainder of the year, averaging 16 ppb for the remainder of the testing season. While the phosphorus levels in Pushaw Lake continue to be a concern each year, the clarity and dissolved oxygen (DO) test results have remained healthy. In fact, a water clarity reading of 4.9 meters in August was the best result since 1997! This was followed by a 4.7 meter reading in September!

Over at Little Pushaw Pond, we found similar good results for clarity, with the our first-ever 4+ meter reading in mid-August! Phosphorus numbers are healthier on Little Pushaw than on Pushaw Lake, and while we would prefer to see phosphorus results in the single digits, numbers in the mid-teens as early as June were of much less concern than the readings over 20 ppb that we had on Pushaw.

Thanks to the Cloutiers (Lou and Dorli) and to the Hursts (Quint and Laura) for their many volunteer hours spent performing the water testing on Pushaw Lake and Little Pushaw Pond, respectively. **You can do your part** to help decrease phosphorus contributions to our lakes, so we can preserve these beautiful and valuable assets for the future. Plant buffers along your shoreline! Don't use fertilizers anywhere near the water—and please use a phosphorus-free product if you need to fertilize lawns or plants on your property. Protect your lake frontage from runoff and soil erosion. Get LakeSmart!

Your annual dues, local municipal funding, and private donations have helped to make this monitoring possible! As always, water testing and results reporting are conducted solely by GPLA volunteers. All results are reported to the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program and go into the Maine lakes database, where environmental scientists (the true experts in water quality) monitor the results and study the trends.

Greater Pushaw Lake Association

Send address changes to:

Greater Pushaw Lake Association
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Stillwater, ME 04489

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: _____

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 **donate online** at www.greaterpushaw.org/membership.html. **Thanks!**