



REFLECTIONS

The Newsletter for the Pleasant Lake Protective Association

Vol. 56, Issue 1, June 2025



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As I began collecting my thoughts to write this letter, I reflected on the state of our organization today compared to when I was previously president 20 some years ago. We have a much more complex organization than we did 25 years ago, as the challenges and responsibilities continue to mount. These were all positive thoughts however, as our lake still has some of the best water quality in the region, our beautiful surroundings have changed little, and our lake association still thrives with a dedicated and involved group of members, doing all that we do with volunteers.

This has been accomplished through good leadership from the PLPA Board of Directors and the continuation of our many initiatives; Comprehensive Water Testing, Weed Watching, Lake Host Boat Inspections, continued education on best practices for maintaining water quality, involvement with the Town of New London departments and boards, and of course continuing our traditions of the annual meeting, 4th of July celebrations, and our newest tradition, the annual PLPA Neighbor Social held in August.

Lake Sunapee Protective Association has begun holding quarterly meetings of local lake association leaders which we are participating in. These meetings have been an opportunity to meet other lake association leaders and build a network that has led to the sharing of ideas, problems, chal-

lenges, and solutions. I have attended three of these meetings to date with other members of our board, and our #1 take away from these meetings has been that "we are blessed". We have challenges before us, but comparatively speaking, we have a lake that has been free of many of the issues facing other lakes and ponds in our area. But it is our job to ensure that this continues.

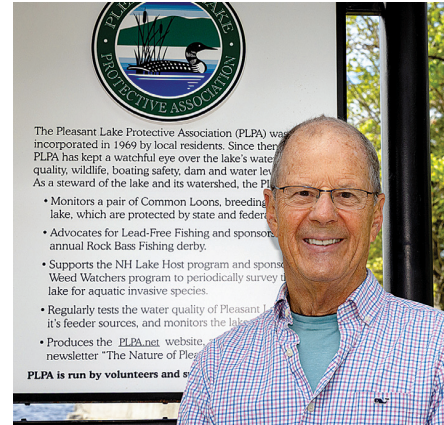
So, what lies ahead?

Our collaboration with the Colby-Sawyer College Environmental Science Department and their recent sampling of all tributaries feeding into Pleasant Lake, has provided us with extremely useful data that pinpoints a few 'hot spots' that require our attention.

We have an erosion situation at Elkins Beach where excessive runoff from Elkins Road and the Post Office parking lot, are combining to create a stream flowing directly into the lake, creating property damage as well as introducing pollutants into the lake.

Several properties around the shorelines of the lake continue to have green lawns that run down to the water's edge, without any type of vegetative buffer for nutrient uptake. We hope to work with these property owners with suggestions and education on how to create an attractive buffer while still maintaining their lake view.

While the Town of New London has adopted new septic pumping



Doug Baxter, President

regulations, we will conduct our own educational campaign, to include a survey of property owners creating a database of when septic systems were last pumped.

In closing I would like to thank the multitude of talented volunteers we have, too many to single out for fear of missing someone. I would like to thank all of you who have converted to LED electric flares. I would like to thank all our wake boaters for their cooperation and surfing in the middle of the lake. I would like to thank the Town of New London, NH Lakes Association and NH DES for their continued support. And most importantly, I want to thank our members for their neighborliness, and continued time and financial support. The PLPA is in its 56th year of existence and we should all be proud of what we have and what we have accomplished.

Doug Baxter
President

The Ring of Fire

Pleasant Lake's Tradition of Flares around the Lake
Saturday, June 28, 9-9:30 pm

The PLPA is once again planning the "Ring of Fire" which traditionally precedes the fireworks display. This year the PLPA is strongly encouraging the use of LED Flares. These are easy to find on the internet.

Town of New London Septic Regulations

In order to protect the water quality of our lakes and streams, the Town of New London officially adopted a town wide septic regulation that will go into effect on January 1, 2026. All individual septic systems will need to be pumped and given a general inspection at least every three years. A receipt from the pumping agency will need to be forwarded to the town to confirm this action.

Property owners may apply for waivers which could increase the required time for pumping from 3 years to a maximum of 6 years, depending on the usage of the system. These waivers could be granted if the owner can demonstrate that the actual usage of the system is 50% or less of the system's capacity. Examples could include seasonal use or few occupants in a house with a large system.

If you have had your tank pumped within 3 years of the effective date of 1/1/2026, keep your receipt to show that you are in compliance, otherwise, you will be expected to pump again.

Lawns Bordering Pleasant Lake

Phosphorus and other nutrients fuel algae, weed growth and more recently cyanobacteria outbreaks in Pleasant Lake. These nutrients primarily enter the lake through stormwater runoff. Many of the lawns bordering Pleasant Lake extend down to the shoreline offering very little resistance to this nutrient onslaught.

A 2020 Watershed Study of Lake Sunapee suggested planting a vegetated barrier between lawns and the water's edge. These barriers consist of native plants and bushes and can support a 45% reduction in overall phosphorous loading into a lake.

We are struggling more and more to reduce the deleterious effects of phosphorous in Pleasant Lake and this is one of the more simple and effective ways this can be done. The barrier plantings not only absorb phosphorous and other nutrients, but also aid in the reduction of erosion.

To maintain and improve the health of Pleasant Lake, the PLPA Shoreland Protection Committee is launching an all-out effort to encourage those of us with lawns extending to the shoreline to plant an appropriate vegetated barrier.

A directory of certified professional landscapers trained in ecological landscaping for water quality can be found on the UNH Extension website at <https://extension.unh.edu>. Many of these landscapers are local and have expertise in stormwater management and landscaping for water quality.

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www.plpa.net • email: plpa@plpa.net

Message and 'Like' us on our
Facebook page: Pleasant Lake
Protective Association

*The PLPA was incorporated in 1969,
by local residents. Since then the PLPA
has kept a watchful eye over the lake's
water quality, wildlife, boating safety,
dam and water level.*

Newsletter photos by
Jennifer Esten and Jonathan Waage

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STREAMING PLEASANT LAKE: WATER QUALITY DEPENDS ON HUMAN ACTIVITY

Last year, under the supervision of faculty members Nick Baer and David Lutz, Colby-Sawyer College students sampled dozens of tributary streams that enter Pleasant Lake. The purpose of this study was to determine how human activity in the watershed catchment influences water quality in the lake. The primary results of this study were summarized in an article in the 2024 PLPA Newsletter. Two key take-home messages from the full study are that: (1) there are several tributaries that are hotspots for phosphorus inputs to the lake. Phosphorus is a key nutrient that in excess poisons lake ecosystems by causing blooms of toxic cyanobacteria (cyanoHABs); and, (2) concentrations of chloride (from road salt) in the lake have been increasing steadily for many years, especially in areas influenced by the state application of large amounts of salt on Route 11. High concentrations of chloride can kill beneficial algae-eating zooplankton.

The tributary streams that flow into the lake act like the circulatory system of the human body. They collect the products of natural and human activity throughout the watershed and deposit them in the lake. Avoiding or minimizing the use of lawn

and garden fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, and routinely pumping and inspecting septic systems throughout the watershed (not just on the lake), are two important steps to maintaining high water quality in Pleasant Lake and avoiding the cyanobacteria harmful algal blooms that we have experienced the past three years. The town of New London has been very proactive on this front and has adopted regulations that will soon (as of January 2026) require septic systems to be pumped and inspected every three years.

Members of the PLPA, led by Board member Doug Bent, will extend the in-lake VLAP (Volunteer Lake Assessment Program) sampling to include the tributaries. Combined with the Colby-Sawyer study, this sampling will provide the basis for more effective water quality management by enabling the PLPA to identify and help residents learn how to reduce harmful inputs to our beautiful lake and keep the water clarity high.

Craig Williamson, PhD,
Resident Limnologist

PLEASANT LAKE ICE-OUT DATES

	2014 APRIL 22	
	2015 APRIL 21	
	2016 MARCH 1	
	2017 APRIL 16	
	2018 APRIL 27	
	2019 APRIL 20	
	2020 APRIL 2	
	2021 APRIL 5	
	2022 APRIL 6	
	2023 APRIL 12	
	2024 MARCH 21	
	2025 APRIL 13	



LOST AND FOUND

If you lost something from your beach or waterfront, or if something unexpected comes ashore, please email will@plpa.net or send a message to the PLPA Facebook page, and we will try to help!

CYANOBACTERIA HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS – WHY IN PLEASANT LAKE?

The water quality in Pleasant Lake is some of the cleanest of all New Hampshire lakes, and one of the last places in the state where one might expect harmful algal blooms of cyanobacteria (CyanoHABS). Yet in each of the past three years CyanoHABS have occurred in Pleasant Lake. In 2024, there were seven reports of algae blooms in Pleasant Lake, one of which can be seen in the photo below.

What are cyanobacteria, and what can we as a community do to help manage and minimize future CyanoHAB outbreaks in Pleasant Lake? The first thing is to recognize that we, the surrounding residents, are the most important factor influencing water quality in the lake. We control the size of the human footprint in the lake through our activities both in the lake, and in the surrounding landscape - the watershed through which the majority of water passes before it enters the lake.



2024 Cyanobacteria Bloom on Pleasant Lake

What are Cyanobacteria harmful algal blooms (CyanoHABS)?

Cyanobacteria are microscopic, algae-like bacteria that occur naturally in all freshwater ecosystems. When the conditions are right, such as high nutrient concentrations, and warm water temperatures, cyanobacteria can increase rapidly to form blooms that are toxic to people, their pets, and to wildlife.

There are many species of cyanobacteria that produce toxins (cyanotoxins) that irritate the skin and eyes. Longer term exposure to cyanotoxins can

damage the brain (neurotoxins) and liver (hepatotoxins), and has been related to cancer and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig's Disease). Pets that swim in water where CyanoHABS are present can die within hours; thus, it is important to evaluate the water quality before wading, swimming, or drinking the water. Keep an eye out and avoid water that is discolored or where you see any evidence of algae blooms that may be green, blue, yellow, orange, or even red. The NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) has several resources to inform you about active blooms across the state: <https://www.des.nh.gov/water/healthy-swimming/harmful-algal-blooms/faqs>.

What do I do if I see what I suspect is a CyanoHAB?

If you see what you suspect is a cyanobacteria bloom, avoid any contact with the water by people or pets – no wading, swimming, or drinking the water. Follow these steps to report the bloom:

1. Take both close-up and wide photographs of the bloom and share them and the specific location with the New London Health Officer, Nick Baer, at n.baer@newlondon.nh.gov.
2. Fill out the form and submit your photographs to the State of New Hampshire using the online NHDES Cyanobacteria Bloom Report Form.
3. Use a clean jar or bottle to take a water sample for analysis by the NH Department of Environmental Services in Concord. Avoid contact with the water, and see detailed instructions for sampling on the PLPA website in the article, "Be on the Lookout for Cyanobacteria Blooms!"

How can I help reduce the chances of future CyanoHABS?

1. Minimize or avoid any lawns near the lake and minimize or (better) avoid the use of lawn and garden fertilizers, especially anywhere within 100 feet of the lake, streams, and areas of runoff into the lake. This applies to people in the whole watershed of the lake, as it only takes minutes for stream-water to flow to the lake and pollute it.
2. Have your septic system thoroughly inspected and pumped every 3 years.

3. Minimize the wake of your motorboat: waves mix nutrients into surface waters from nearshore sediments as well as deeper layers of the lake that often have much higher concentrations of nutrients. Wave activity brings these nutrients to the surface where warmer water and high light conditions can together cause CyanoHABs.
4. Redirect storm and roof runoff away from the lake.
5. Do not dispose of leaves, grass, or other yard material in the lake.
6. Pick up your pet waste and dispose of it outside the Pleasant Lake watershed.

What is the PLPA doing to reduce the chances of future CyanoHAB blooms?

The PLPA provides educational material on its website, as well as volunteer and financial support for sampling the lake and its stream tributaries. Several PLPA members participate in New Hampshire’s Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP). PLPA support for a study by Colby-Sawyer College students provides the foundations for understanding the primary sources of nutrients entering Pleasant Lake, which can help guide us in identifying and reducing nutrient inputs.

THE PLEASANT LAKE BOAT PARADE 2024

2024 Theme: Olde London



Parade marshals
will be
Doug and Charlene Baxter

**1:30 pm Gathering of the
Boats off Slope 'n Shore**

2 pm Parade
The horn will sound
and we will follow
The Tortoise

**Direction of travel will be
counter clockwise**

SATURDAY JULY 5TH, 2025 AT 2 PM

2025 Theme:

LAKE MONSTERS

Mammals of

Turtle Cove, like most protected areas, has a huge assortment of creatures. In addition to birds, amphibians and insects, Turtle Cove is home to many mammals. Here are a few of them.



Beavers are a keystone species, creating vital habitat for many other creatures.

They have a second set of eyelids that allow them to see while underwater. They also have a second set of lips that enable them to swim with tree limbs in their mouths!

Sometimes misidentified as a beaver, muskrats are smaller, with a very different tail. They are related to rats, mice, gerbils, hamsters, and lemmings. In fact, they look a lot like their relatives as they are quite round, with short legs and almost invisible ears. They are very social and live in large, territorial families.



We are sometimes lucky to spot otters fishing in the cove. Otters are expert hunters that eat fish, crustaceans, and other critters. Webbed feet and powerful tails, which act like rudders, make otters strong swimmers.

This Fawn is venturing in for a dip. When born, a fawn weighs about 6 to 8 pounds. Fawns instinctively lie motionless when approached by a potential predator. This seemingly helpless state is a behavioral adaptation that has helped white-tailed deer survive for ages.



f Turtle Cove

Photos by Jen Esten and Jon Waage

sted shallow marshes, is home to a
Along with many species of birds,
e Cove is also home to a variety of
that have been seen in the Cove.

Red Squirrels sometimes leave big piles of
pinecone refuse on stumps. Interestingly, they
can be left- or right-handed. Left-handed
squirrels hold a pinecone with the top towards
the left and use the left hand to rotate it.
Right-handed squirrels do the opposite. Can
you tell if this red squirrel is a righty or lefty?



Chipmunks love the wild blueberries that grow
along the shoreline. They are ground-dwelling
members of the squirrel family that are known
for their burrowing habits. They weigh any-
where from 1 to 5 ounces. Chipmunks need
about 15 hours of sleep per day but are very
zippy when awake!

A Black Bear is seen wandering in the
area after a dip in the Cove. Black
bears are a medium-sized bear that can
climb trees as well as swim. They can
run 35 miles per hour and can live for
more than 25 years!



This photo captures a very rare encounter
with a mink. Minks are solitary and only
come together to breed. They are skilled
swimmers and use auditory signals to
communicate such as chuckling, growling,
hissing, screeching, squealing, and barking
when they feel threatened.



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SAFE BOATING AND FISHING RULES

We appreciate everyone's help in respecting our neighbors and our lake.

We hope you enjoy your day boating here on Pleasant Lake!

For your safety and enjoyment as well as that of others, please follow these important boating and fishing rules:

NO WAKE ZONES

When you are within **150 feet** of any **shore, other boats, skiers, swimmers, floats, or marked swimming areas**, State law mandates that you must slow down to **NO WAKE** speed. **NO WAKE** means **no faster than 6 mph. 150 feet = the length of two ski ropes.**

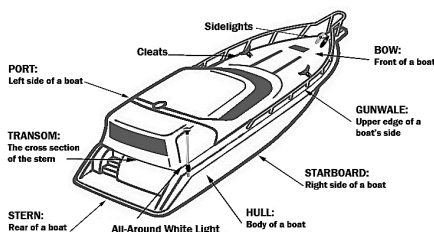
TOWING SKIERS

- All skiers **must** wear life jackets.
- A maximum of two people may be towed at any time.
- An observer, 13 years or older is required.
- No skiing is allowed before sunrise and after sunset.
- Keep your boat and skier 150 feet or more away from EVERYTHING; the shore, the island, other boats, skiers, swimmers, floats, and marked swimming areas.
- Do not drop a skier within 150 feet of the shore.

ON-BOARD SAFETY

- It is illegal and dangerous to sit on the edge of the cockpit, bow or transom.
- There must be at least one appropriately-sized life jacket for every person onboard. This includes paddle boarders and kayaks. **By law**, children 12 or under must wear a life jacket at all times. On a power boat, it is recommended that you always attach a lanyard to the ignition kill switch.

PARTS OF A BOAT



BOATING CERTIFICATION

New Hampshire law requires that all persons who operate a powerboat with a **motor greater than 25 horsepower must have a New Hampshire Safe Boater Education Certificate** and that **certificate must be carried on board**. Out-of-state boaters must have completed a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) approved course and carry that certificate on board. Call 1-888-254-2125 or go to www.boat-ed.com/nh/ for more information.

WILDLIFE, LOONS

Pleasant Lake is home to many water birds, including nesting loons. The loon is a protected species and harassment is a **punishable offense**. Loon chicks are very small and cannot dive or fly to escape an oncoming boat, kayak or canoe.

Please keep well away from all water birds, especially loons and their chicks.

FISHING

- Children under the age of 16 may fish without a license.
- The use of lead sinkers and jigs is strictly prohibited. Ingestion will kill a loon!
- Only smelt can be used as live bait in Pleasant Lake.
- Be sure to follow all the Fishing Rules published in the New Hampshire Freshwater Fishing Digest.

Copies of **A Boater's Guide to NH Boating Law** and **The New Hampshire Freshwater Fishing Digest** are available at Rocky's Ace Hardware in New London.

THE "150 FEET LAW" New Hampshire Law 270-D: 2 Section VI

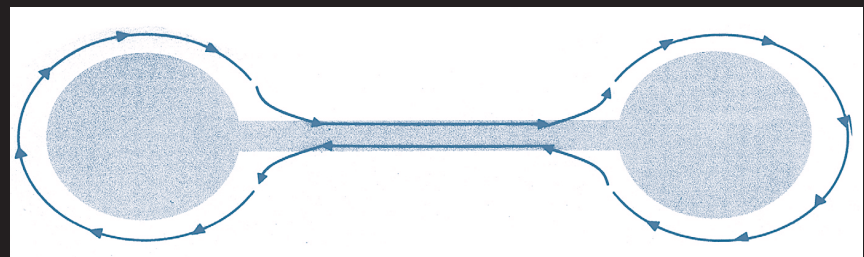
SPEED

All vessels shall maintain headway speed (only 6 mph and No Wake) when within 150 feet (the length of two ski ropes) from: the shore, the island, other boats, docks, rafts, swimmers, permitted swimming areas.

BEST PRACTICE

TOWING

Ski down the middle of the lake and Use "Best Practice" Towing: Long, straight runs, with barbell turns help keep the wake moving away from the skier.



IF YOU SEE A VIOLATION, PLEASE REPORT IT!

- Obtain the bow number of the boat.
- Call Marine Patrol at 293-2037. They appreciate our help!

Loon Preservation Committee

The Loon Preservation Committee has helped to grow New Hampshire's loon population since 1975. Their mission is "to restore and maintain a healthy population of loons throughout New Hampshire; to monitor the health and productivity of loon populations as sentinels of environmental quality; and to promote a greater understanding of loons and the larger natural world." You can learn all about loons and how this organization works to protect and preserve this species by visiting their website at www.loon.org.

Help Support Pleasant Lake's Loon Population

There are many threats to loons, but you can help these birds in a couple of ways. First, do not use lead fishing tackle. Lead poisoning, resulting from the ingestion of lead fishing tackle, is the leading cause of documented Common Loon mortality in New Hampshire. Second, reel in your fishing line when loons are around and avoid casting in the direction of loons. And if your line gets snagged on a tree, log, rock, or shoreline, please take the time to recover it to the best of your ability. Fishing line entanglement can result in loons having difficulty swimming, eating, and preening. Finally, when out boating, stay away from the loons. Close approach by humans can upset them, especially when with their young. If nesting, a threat can trigger them to leave their eggs unattended, making the eggs vulnerable to predation, overheating or chilling.



Lead Tackle Buyback

The Loon Preservation Committee has a lead buy-back program. Anglers can exchange one ounce or more of banned* lead fishing tackle for a \$10 merchandise voucher redeemable at participating tackle shops.

Rocky's Ace Hardware
257 Newport Rd
New London, NH 03257
603-202-3033

**Banned lead tackle means a lead fishing sinker or jig (weighted hook) that weighs one ounce or less, regardless of whether it is painted, coated, covered by some other substance or by attached skirts. The sale and freshwater use of the aforementioned tackle is banned by New Hampshire law. See NH RSA 339:77 and NH RSA 211:13-b.*

To learn more about the buyback program, go to: www.loonsafe.org/lead-tackle-buyback-terms/



If you see a Loon in distress or find an injured or orphaned bird or animal,

call Jen Esten 781-726-2697,
Jon Waage 508-463-5906 or
John Wilson 526-4069

Or message us on the Pleasant Lake Protective Association facebook page

PLEASE JOIN THE PLEASANT LAKE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town, State, Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone number: _____

I would like to learn more about becoming a volunteer

MAIL BY JULY 1, TO:
 PLEASANT LAKE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION
 P.O. BOX 1584, NEW LONDON, NH 03257

Note: Contributions to the PLPA are fully tax-deductible. PLPA is a 501(c)(3) Non-profit organization.

Next year's annual newsletter will feature a page to recognize our generous donors. If you wish your donation to remain anonymous, please check here

- _____ \$1,000+ Pleasant Lake Benefactor
- _____ \$500+ Pleasant Lake Patron
- _____ \$240+ Pleasant Lake Steward
- _____ \$120+ Pleasant Lake Protector
- _____ \$80+ Pleasant Lake Supporter
- _____ \$40+ PLPA Membership
- _____ Other

Many thanks!!



2025 Lake Hosts: (L-R) Molly Ellison, Jane Slayton, Lindsay Brook and Don Sheffield.

Thank You Wakeboarders

Our wakeboarding community worked hard last summer to minimize the damage to the lake that stems from their very large wakes. By staying to the middle of the lake, the severe shore erosion that can occur from the heavy wave action is lessened.

It is important that all speed boats be aware of other boats, kayakers, swimmers and paddleboarders. There should be room enough for all of us on the lake!

Keep in mind that local boating laws and navigation rules still apply. Follow them and everyone will enjoy their time on the water we share.



LIFE JACKETS REQUIRED FOR STAND UP PADDLE BOARDS (SUP)

Stand up paddle boards are considered boats by the United States Coast Guard and the State of New Hampshire. Accordingly, all persons using a stand up paddle board are required to carry a wearable life jacket onboard while paddling.

The Marine Patrol also reminds boaters/paddlers that anyone **12 years of age and under MUST be wearing their life jacket at all times** while aboard any type of boat, including stand up paddle boards.

PLEASANT LAKE
PROTECTIVE
ASSOCIATION, INC.
P.O. BOX 1584
NEW LONDON, NH 03257

PRESERVE AND PROTECT
PLEASANT LAKE

CELEBRATE PLEASANT LAKE THIS SUMMER!

Saturday, June 28 - Flares and Fireworks!

9 pm Light the Flares (no cannon this year)

9:30 pm Fireworks!!

Followed by the Illumination of the Colors and Taps

Saturday, July 5 - Annual Meeting and Boat Parade

8:30 am Coffee, Juice, Pastries

Slope 'n Shore annex

9 am PLPA Annual Meeting

Slope 'n Shore annex

2 pm Boat Parade

Theme: *Lake Monsters*

The Parade will go counter clockwise this year.

Sunday, August 24 - PLPA Summer Social

4 pm - 6 pm *The Ice House, Pleasant Street, New London*



Pleasant Lake is home to more than one merganser family each summer. Like loons, mergansers dive completely underwater and can stay submerged for a considerable amount of time to hunt for food.