



REFLECTIONS

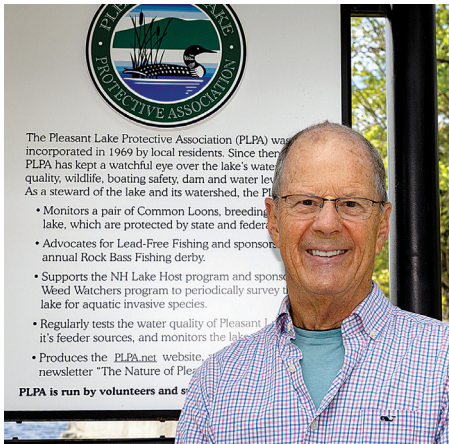
A Newsletter for the Pleasant Lake Protective Association

Vol. 57, Issue 1, June 2026



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The PLPA has matured into an extremely active and complex organization. We have ten committees covering these vital functions: Finance, Communications, Water Quality, Watershed Conservation, Invasive Species Protection, Wildlife Conservation, Membership, Activities, Safety, and Fish Conservation.



Doug Baxter, President

Our committees are comprised of forty-four individuals with a common goal of protecting our lake and the surrounding watershed. They are doing this through responsible stewardship and the education of all residents within the watershed—not just those on the lake shore.

Still, it takes more than the actions of forty-four individuals to make a difference and slow the gradual eutrophication of our lake. Little Lake Sunapee's recent newsletter, in the words of their president Deb Hoover stated, "While we often think of lakes as permanent fixtures of the

landscape, they are actually dynamic systems that slowly evolve, eventually transitioning from open water to boggy habitats such as Philbrick-Cricenti Bog. Human activity can unfortunately accelerate this natural process."

The actions of every individual living in this watershed are our primary focus as we try to educate area residents on what it means to be a good lake steward. We're introducing a new e-newsletter, RIPPLES, compiled and edited by Valerie Burns and Craig Williamson, to keep residents of the Pleasant Lake watershed apprised of the happenings in and around the lake. We have joined with LLSPA and Messer Pond Protective Association on a joint campaign "Love Our Lakes With All It Takes," to reinforce resident actions toward becoming good lake stewards.

We are moving forward with a formal Watershed Management Plan (WMP) by applying for a \$100,000 loan from the Clean Waters State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), a loan that will be forgiven upon completion of the WMP. More on this later in this newsletter.

PLPA is deeply indebted to the Town of New London Department of Public Works for all the work they are doing at the Elkins Beach area to address the serious runoff and erosion problems that have occurred there. More erosion control work will be done, and you will see extensive plantings of blueberry bushes

and other hearty ground cover in June.



John Wilson

In closing, I would like to recognize John Wilson, a true guardian of Pleasant Lake. As the president of this organization, I have witnessed first-hand what this founding father of the PLPA does. Many don't see John working tirelessly behind the scenes, including networking with critical partners and decision makers, all in an effort to keep our waters pristine and to protect our wildlife. John doesn't do this for the credit or the spotlight; he does it out of a deep, genuine love for this lake and its surroundings. From the quiet tasks no one sees to the constant protection he provides, Pleasant Lake is a better place because John is on the watch. Thank you, John, for being our unsung hero and for everything you do to preserve the heart of our lake community!

Doug Baxter
President

Loons 2025

2025 was our mother loon's 19th year on Pleasant Lake. Her chick, Piper, hatched on June 12th, and became a very healthy and independent youngster. Sometimes she warmed herself on a beach while her parents were off defending their territory from other loons on the lake. Piper is our female's 23rd chick to survive and leave for the ocean. We expect Piper will grow up to be a beautiful Loon.



Town of New London New 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 went into effect on January 1, 2026. All individual septic systems will need to be pumped and given a general inspection at least once 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.

Please help us maintain the water quality of Pleasant Lake by pumping out your septic system every three years. This will help to keep extra phosphorus from entering the lake.

Subscribe to our new Enewsletter,
Ripples, at plpa.net/community/newsletters
A newsletter for the Pleasant Lake community,
inspiring good lake stewardship through education.
It covers important news about the lake and its watershed
(including cyanobacteria alerts),
notifying readers of events and activities

2025 - 2026 PLPA OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

OFFICERS

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603-738-4737

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Craig Williamson 610-442-9322

John Wilson 603-526-4069

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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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and distribution by
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NEW LONDON VOTES FOR PLEASANT LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

By a landslide (258-2), voters at the March 18th New London Town Meeting Approved Warrant Article 3. This authorizes the town to apply for funds with PLPA to create a Watershed Management Plan (WMP) for Pleasant Lake. The watershed management plan will be designed to reduce cyanobacteria (harmful algal blooms) in our lake. Alarming cyanobacteria blooms in Pleasant Lake were seen in both June and September last year.

Cyanobacteria (sometimes called blue-green algae) are tiny organisms that naturally live in lakes, but when conditions are right — think warm temperatures and excess nutrients like phosphorus washing in from the surrounding land — they can multiply into large, sometimes toxic blooms. These blooms can make the water unsafe for swimming, harm pets and wildlife, and generally turn a beautiful lake into something you'd rather admire from a distance.

So where does all that extra phosphorus come from? A little bit of everything in the watershed: stormwater runoff from roads and driveways, aging septic systems, lawn fertilizers, and erosion from shorelines and stream banks. Each source on its own might seem small, but together they add up, and the lake is the final destination for all of it.

That's where a Watershed Management Plan comes in. Think of it as a practical playbook for the whole community. It identifies exactly where the biggest nutrient sources are, then lays out specific steps, like upgrading stormwater infrastructure, improving septic maintenance, restoring natural buffers along the shore, and reducing erosion, to cut down the amount of phosphorus reaching the lake. Instead of guessing, the community gets a science-backed strategy, with a list of projects to address, and clear priorities.

Keeping the phosphorus out of the water ensures that Pleasant Lake stays safe for swimming, supports a healthy fish population, and maintains the property values that keep New London thriving. After all, nobody wants to rename it "Somewhat Unpleasant Lake."

A Long Road Ahead and Steps to Take Now.

New London will submit the funding proposal to the NH CWSRF program by June 1, 2026. Final funding decisions are made in the fall with funds available the next spring. If our request is approved, by late spring of 2027 New London

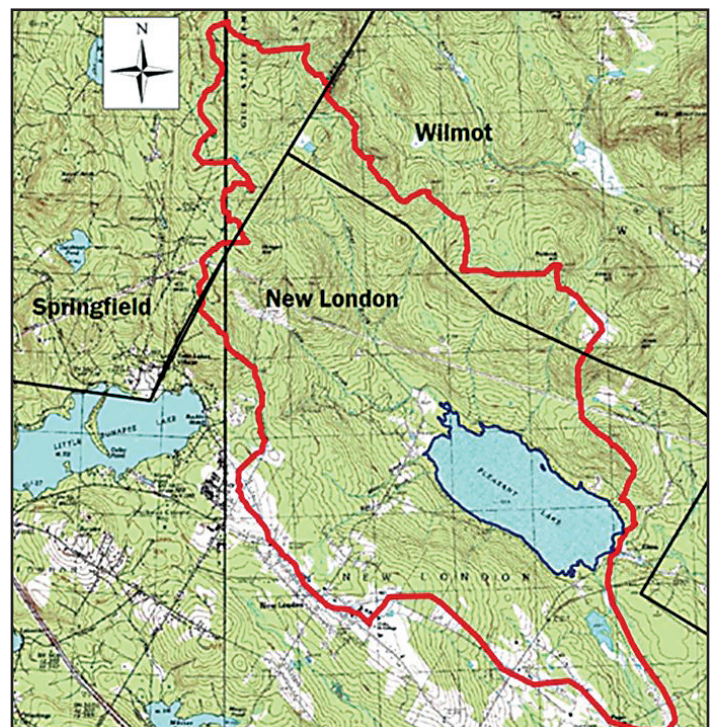
would solicit bids from firms qualified to produce EPA-compliant plans. Work on the plan would start during the summer of 2027 and take about 18 months to complete. Even if every step goes smoothly we shouldn't expect a finished plan much before 2029.

The good news is that we don't have to wait until then to act. Steps to reduce phosphorus entering a lake are well known and easy to take. The sooner we begin limiting phosphorus inputs to Pleasant Lake, the sooner we reduce the risk of further cyanobacteria outbreaks.

Here's what individuals can do right now:

- Start by making sure your septic system has been pumped recently. Aging or under-maintained systems are one of the largest controllable sources of phosphorus to the lake.
- Plant trees and shrubs along the water's edge if you own shorefront property
- Pick-up and dispose of pet waste. Poop has lots of phosphorus.
- Eliminate the use of fertilizers on your lawn and garden or use phosphorus-free products (the middle number on a fertilizer bag should be 0)
- Let the PLPA know if you have erosion or runoff problems on your property — we can help you find solutions.

Pleasant Lake's watershed outlined in red.



Birds of Ple



Bald Eagles are often seen over Pleasant Lake, perched way up in the white pines. Eagles are a threat to our loon chicks. The adult loons scream out alarms any time they spot one. So, if you hear a loon making a distress call, be on the lookout for an Eagle!

Osprey breed in the area and migrate south for the winter. They eat exclusively fish and are harassed by bald eagles that frequently steal their catch! Listen for the Osprey's whistling or chirping calls.



The Spotted Sandpiper likes hunting for insects on the beaver dam. It bobs its tail constantly and loses its spots in the fall. There are one or two pairs breeding on Pleasant Lake every year. You can see them flying inches over the water very fast.



Belted Kingfishers are seen diving for fish every day. They let out a call like a loud rattle at the slightest disturbance or as they fly from one shore to the other. Unlike most birds, the female is more colorful than the male, sporting both a chestnut and a blue band across her chest. Males only have one blue band.



Pleasant Lake

Photos by Jen Esten and Jon Waage

Great Blue Heron like to fish along the edge of the grasses in Turtle Cove. They are big birds with a 6-foot wingspan! They will eat almost anything but prefer fish. Scan the shoreline of Pleasant Lake for this tall, slow-moving bird.



The Eastern Kingbird is a large flycatcher. They breed in our watershed every year. Their Latin name is *Tyrannus tyrannus* because they can be little tyrants, aggressively defending their nesting territory! You will see them catching insects and spiders over the water.



Common Mergansers and their cousins, the Hooded Merganser, use the nest boxes intended for Wood Ducks that are maintained by Elkins Fish and Game in the cove. This is a mother Common Merganser and one of her juvenile chicks.



Song Sparrows can be heard singing in the cove and all around the lake shore. They have a beautiful song. They have a dark brown splotch in the center of their chest, distinguishing them from many other local sparrows.



Boating on Pleasant Lake

Boating on Pleasant Lake provides us with many hours of enjoyment and relaxation.



For your safety and others, please follow boating regulations and rules:

- Lifejackets are **IMPORTANT!** It is the law that children 12 or under wear a life jacket. All water skiers must wear life jackets. And there must be an appropriately sized life jacket on board all boats for every person onboard, including paddle boards.
- Motorboats must give way to non-motorized boats and swimmers. Captains, keep an eye out for canoes, rowboats, sculls, kayaks, paddle boards and sailboats!
- Don't forget that within 150 feet of any shore, other boats, floats, skiers, swimmers, or marked swimming areas, state law mandates you operate at **NO WAKE** speed. **NO WAKE** speed means no faster than 6 mph.



Wake boating is one recreational activity on Pleasant Lake. Wake boats are powerboats specially designed to increase wave height for watersports. Most wake boats have built-in ballast tanks that can be filled with lake water to increase the weight in the stern of the boat and create larger waves. While wakeboarding, a rider is towed with a rope, usually at a speed of 20–23 mph. They use the wake of the boat to perform jumps and tricks. Wake-surfing involves a person trailing behind a boat on a short surfboard and surfing on the boat's wake

without being attached to the boat by a rope. Wake-surfing generally occurs at speeds of 9–11 mph.

PLPA is concerned about the increase in use of wake boats on Pleasant Lake. Why? Pleasant Lake isn't very wide; the large waves that are created cause a lot of damage to this lake's ecosystem. When they crash on shore, they cause erosion and damage to the shoreline and docks. Small craft such as kayaks can be swamped by large waves. In addition, if a wake boat is not in deep water (over 30 feet) when moving quickly, its powerful motor can stir up sediment, impacting the water quality. The propellers can uproot or damage plants which provide natural habitat for fish and fauna. Finally, if a wake boat is being put in and out of different lakes, the ballast tank can be a vehicle for invasive species such as the spiny water flea.

PLPA along with other protective associations advocate for responsible wake boating:

- Move slowly in in water less than 20 feet deep to minimize damage.
- Stay in the middle of the lake, at least 500 ft from shore, when wakeboarding or wake-surfing.
- Keep your boat on a home lake rather than move it around during the season. If you do move it, completely drain the ballast tank before transporting it.

We appreciate everyone's help in respecting the rules of the lake and knowing boating safety. Now, get out there and boat!



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

JOIN AT PLPA.NET OR MAIL TO:

PLEASANT LAKE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 1584, NEW LONDON, NH 03257

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!!

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

PLEASANT LAKE ICE-OUT DATES

- 2020 APRIL 2
- 2021 APRIL 5
- 2022 APRIL 6
- 2023 APRIL 12
- 2024 MARCH 21
- 2025 APRIL 13
- 2026 APRIL 12

For more information about ice-out and ice-in trends check out our website: plpa.net. Go to Recreation & Safety/ maps & charts/ Ice Cover & Ice-out

Plant "Natives," Not Lawns

Are you thinking of doing some planting near Pleasant Lake? Consider planting native plants instead of lawns. A native plant is a species that has occurred naturally in a specific region, ecosystem, or habitat for hundreds of years. NH has many native plants (1500) because of the different climates, geology, and soils in our state.

There are many benefits to using native plants in landscaping. First, they are perfectly adapted to the local soil, moisture, and climate, requiring minimal maintenance, pesticides, or fertilizers. Second, they have developed cooperatively with local pollinators, birds, and mammals, often providing essential food and habitat that non-native plants cannot. The PLPA recommends planting native plants as a vegetated barrier between lawns and the water's edge. The barrier plants will not only absorb phosphorous and other nutrients, but they will also aid in the reduction of erosion. Here are a two native plants to consider.



Redosier Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) is a multi-stemmed shrub with vibrant red twigs in the winter. It prefers full sun and thrives in wet areas along shorelines or in rain gardens. Its aggressive, fibrous root system stabilizes shifting soil on streambanks and steep slopes.



Chokeberry (*Aronia polifolia*) is a deciduous shrub that looks good all four seasons! It has small white flowers in the spring, shiny foliage in summer, and dark berries and purple/red foliage in the fall. The berries persist, providing food for the birds and other wildlife in the winter. It is very tolerant of a wide range of growing conditions.

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

PRESERVE AND PROTECT
PLEASANT LAKE

CELEBRATE PLEASANT LAKE THIS SUMMER!

Wednesday, July 1 - Flares and Fireworks!

9 pm Traditional Ring of Fire! (no cannon this year)
Turn on your LED Flares.

9:30 pm Fireworks!!

Followed by the Illumination of the Colors and Taps

Saturday, July 4 - 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: 1776
The Parade will go clockwise this year.

Sunday, August 23 - PLPA Summer Social

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



2025 BOAT PARADE ~ "LAKE MONSTERS"

2026 Boat Parade Marshalls
Sally and Peter Winship