

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."

New London will submit the funding proposal to the NH CWSRF program by June 1st with funds to be awarded in the fall.