



Protecting New Hampshire's Lakes:

Lake-friendly living and shoreland protection.

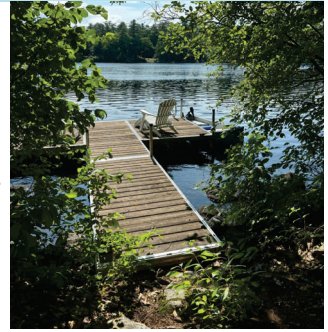
November 1, 2025

Brea Arvidson, Director of Programs, NH LAKES



This Morning's Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Lakes and their economic value
3. Threats to our lakes
4. Lake-friendly tools and techniques for Conservation Commissions
5. Questions/Discussion



NH LAKES is a nonprofit organization that is the voice for all of New Hampshire's 1000 lakes.



Our mission is to restore and preserve the lakes we all love!



Our vision is a New Hampshire where all our lakes are clean and healthy, and caring for them is a way of living, doing business, and governing.



Lakes and ponds are an integral part of New Hampshire's quality of life, economy, and natural heritage.

How are your lakes important to you and your town?

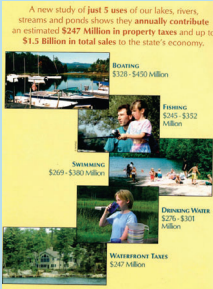


Lakes are economic powerhouses of the state.

Lakes generate:

- Jobs - tourism, hospitality, real estate, recreation
- Tax revenue
- Small business growth and year-round commerce





"Estimates of Select Economic Values of New Hampshire Lakes, Rivers, Streams & Ponds" (Phase II Report, June 2003)

What are our lakes actual economic worth?

Nearly 20 years ago, our lakes, rivers, streams, and ponds economic values were just reaching 1 billion.

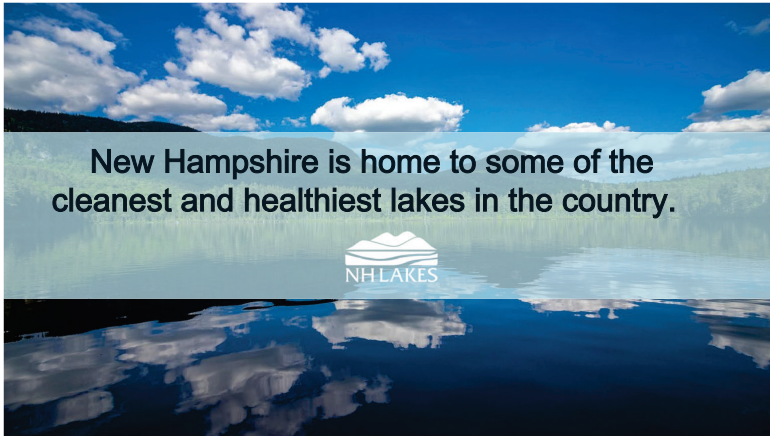


2021 study conducted by the Nelson A. Rockefeller Center for Public Policy and the Social Sciences at Dartmouth College

Lake Winnepesaukee net economic value:

Property values	\$16,457,417,397
Property town tax value	\$216,502,454
Tourism revenues	\$294,131,000
Boating & fishing revenues	\$109,266,944
Summer camp revenues	\$42,704,856
Water supply revenues	\$1,532,410
+ Lakeport dam	\$42,209,472

\$17 Billion Total



Today, the health and our enjoyment of our lakes is increasingly threatened by:



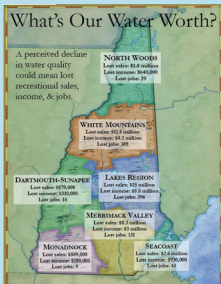
Invasive Species



Polluted Runoff Water



Changing Weather Patterns



"The Economic Impact of Potential Decline in NH Water Quality: The Link Between Visitor Perceptions, Usage and Spending" (Phase IV Report, May 2007)

50-60% of visitors would decrease visits to our lakes.

If they perceived:

- Increased crowding
- Decline in natural beauty and scenery
- Decline in water clarity/purity
- Decline in water levels/flows



Lake clarity impacts property values.

A one-meter decrease in lake clarity can lead to a 0.8-6% decline in property values. (UNH Study)



Polluted Runoff Water:



Nearly 90% of the water quality problems in our lakes are due to polluted runoff water.

Cyanobacteria blooms can produce toxins that make people, pets, and wildlife sick.



Cyanobacteria blooms impact property values.

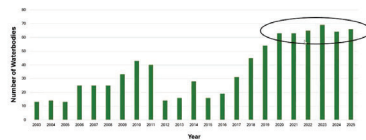
Property values can decline by 5-25% near affected waterbodies, depending on the frequency and severity of the cyanobacteria blooms.



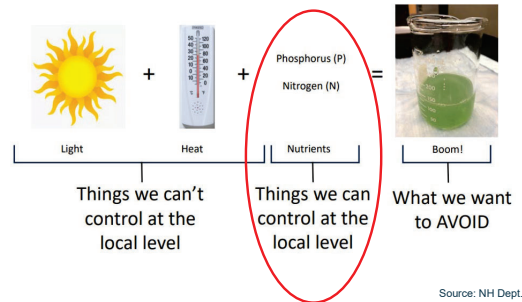
Cyanobacteria blooms are increasing in New Hampshire.

Increased frequency and duration of blooms, especially in recent years.

Waterbodies with Reported Blooms



A simplified equation for cyanobacteria blooms



Source: NH Dept. of Environmental Services



The most irrational thing we can do is pretend they will take care of themselves.



Where does polluted runoff water come from?



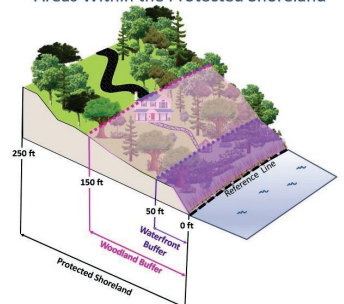
The land around our lakes can impact their health.



The Protected Shoreland Area is 250 feet within public waters.

- Lakes and ponds >10 acres
- Fourth order or larger streams
- Designated rivers
- Coastal waters

Areas Within the Protected Shoreland





Conservation Commissions facilitate shoreland protection.

“Our ConComs are responsible for protecting and sustainable use of our natural resources through tools and techniques”.



Lake-friendly tools and techniques for ConComs to use and provide:

1. Events and conversations - some examples
2. Local ordinances
3. Resources, informational and educational



Event: Community meeting or presentation



- Host a lake-friendly presentation(s) about your town's water resources
- Annual “Listening Session” to convene with lake groups and shoreland owners in the town.



Event: Hands-on Community Activities



- Plan a ‘Planting Day’ for your community
 - Purchase from local nurseries or the [State Forest Nursery](#)
- Watershed Warriors Toolkit for family events, “Old Home Day”
- “Lead by example” Town improvement projects



Event: Love Your Lake Day



- Demonstrations or exhibits from local groups or businesses
- Coordinate native plant sale or gifts, like native seed packets
- Boat parade, like Sunapee or Canobie)
- End with an Listening Session for shoreland property owners



Event: Promote or Attend NH LAKES Lakes Congress

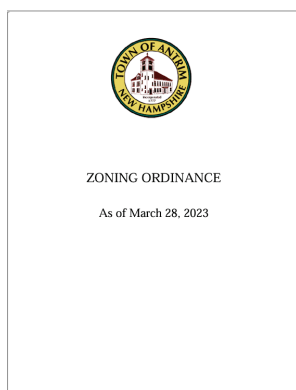


- One-day networking event for lake-minded people
- Meet other ConComs
- Hear other's successes and challenges
- Learn about new tools or rules

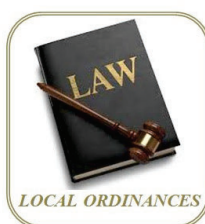


Establish regulations in your Town to enhance shoreland protection.

Don't recreate the wheel! Use language from other Town ordinances protecting our lakes, too.



How can municipal ordinances be protective of our lakes?



- NHDES Municipal Ordinances [Fact Sheet](#)
- Add protections to sensitive areas, such as shoreland or steep slopes.
- Reduce flow of pollution, such as phosphorus or sediment, into our lakes
- Reduce the likelihood of cyanobacteria blooms.



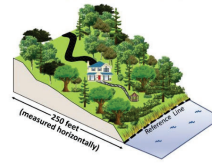
What is an Overlay District?

"A geographic zoning district layered over another existing zoning district or districts, or a defined area within a municipality or territory that lacks zoning, that implements new, additional, or revised regulations."



Examples of a Lake - Friendly Overlay District

The Protected Shoreland



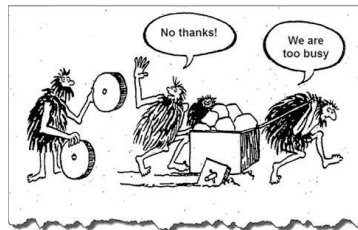
The protected shoreland is within 250 feet of the reference line of public waters.

- Standards for the use and development of shoreland within 250 feet of public waters.
- Creation of a Lakefront Residential District, protecting the water quality and residential privacy around lakes.
- Creation of Steep Slopes District, reducing damage to streams and lakes from erosion.



Educational resources are key.

Don't recreate the wheel! Use designs or materials from other organizations or Towns doing the same thing.



Examples of Lake -friendly Shoreland Resources



- DES [video](#) and [FAQ](#): What is Protected Shoreland in New Hampshire
- NH LAKES [Resource Library](#)
- NH LAKES [LakeSmart Book](#)
- NHDES Soak up the rain [DIY Fact Sheets](#)
- [Homeowner's Guide to Stormwater Management](#)
- Vegetation Management for Water Quality [fact sheet](#)
- Lake-friendly lawn care [fact sheet](#)
- [Landscaping at the Water's Edge](#) manual, UNH Extension



Partner with NH LAKES as a resource!

We work with communities and property owners to help them live in a lake-friendly way through our LakeSmart Program.



Educate and equip property owners with the knowledge to make informed, lake-friendly choices on their property.

What Does The LakeSmart Program Look At?

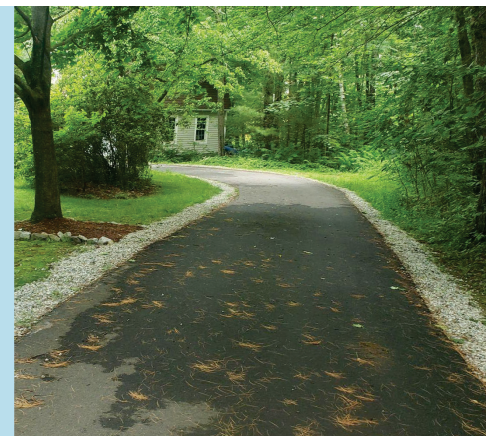


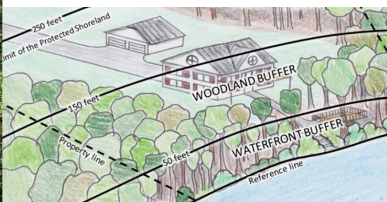
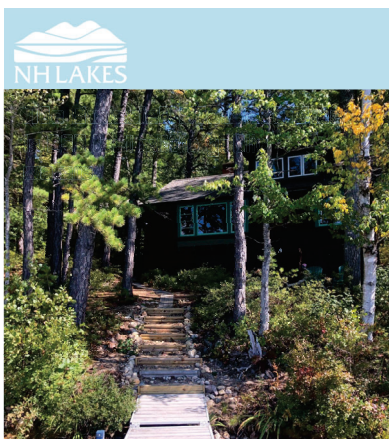
- Driveways, parking areas, and footpaths
- Wastewater treatment system
- Roof runoff and driplines
- Yard, gardens, and recreation areas
- Shoreline and water access
- Livestock and farming
- Lake-friendly habits



Our motto for runoff water:

Slow it down,
cool it off,
soak it up.





Driveways, Parking Areas, and Footpaths

- Infiltration trenches
- Woody vegetation
- Pervious pavers
- Water bars to divert runoff water into plants



Wastewater Treatment System

- Learn about onsite waste management
- Promote septic system maintenance
- Know what to flush



Roof runoff and Driplines

- Install gutters that lead to french drains or rain barrels.
- Place vegetation or stone around your house.



Yard, Gardens, and Recreation Areas



Lake-Friendly Lawn Care

- What areas need to be grassy for your aesthetic?
- Allow native grasses and plants to seed your lawn.
- Designate garden areas.



Shoreline and Water Access



Lake-Friendly Shoreland

- Protective yet provides enjoyment
- Maintain a "view-shed"
- Native, woody and dense-rooting plants (ex. high and low-bush blueberry)
- Sandy beaches are contained





Lake-friendly Habits

Lake-friendly living can be part of your everyday life, from picking up after your pet to keeping grass clippings out of the lake to recreating on the lake with care.



In 6 years, we've seen neighbors come together to build a culture around lake-friendly living.



Encourage groups in your municipality to become a LakeSmart Community.



What is a LakeSmart Community?

A group lead by a local volunteer, committed to working together to restore and preserve the health of their lake by living in a lake-friendly way.

Learn more and share the application →



Community -based action works.

- Cost-share projects or purchases with neighbors.
- Build relationships with local businesses, supporting your local economy.
- *Build a relationship with your municipality - they're community members too!



What about LakeSmart Municipalities?

A version of LakeSmart built specifically for municipalities, to help towns lead by example and integrate lake-friendly practices into town operations, ordinances, and community planning and outreach.

Join our community at nhlakes.org



Thank you!

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