

North Pond Association Annual Report 2023



The North Pond Association(NPA) is a volunteer organization of over 200 members and 25 businesses. The NPA is run by 12 board members who reside or summer on North Pond and/or Little Pond. We thank the Town of Smithfield for ongoing support and funding of the Courtesy Boat Inspector (CBI) program. Protecting the water quality in North and Little Ponds is key to our mission.

A 10-year **Watershed-Based Management Plan (WBMP)** was shared with the public at a meeting in July. This comprehensive plan managed by Ecological Instincts outlines the numerous steps and estimated costs necessary to improve the water quality in our lakes. The plan has been developed through partnerships with the Towns of Mercer, Rome, and Smithfield, Maine DEP, Colby College, 7 Lakes Alliance (7LA), the Kennebec County Soil & Water Conservation District (KCSWCD)and the NPA. Ecological Instincts has sent scientifically based recommendations for solutions to the ongoing algal blooms in North Pond to Maine DEP and US EPA for review.

Phosphorus run-off from lawns and roads contributes significantly to the algal blooms. A free **LakeSmart** evaluation is one way that property owners can minimize their impact on the lake water quality. In 2023 our three LakeSmart evaluators surveyed 24 properties with 6 qualifying for a LakeSmart Award. The key to the program is finding ways to buffer one's property to capture phosphorus before it enters the lake even though most of us have property limitations that won't qualify for the "Award". Each year an educational LakeSmart workshop is held at the Fairview Grange in Smithfield in early July. Please contact the North Pond LakeSmart coordinator Ed Glasheen at eglashe@yahoo.com to schedule your 2024 site visit.

319 grants provide funding for erosion control projects which help to keep runoff out of the lakes. The program is administered by Maine DEP as part of the US EPA Clean Water Act. In 2022-2023 there were 15 road and driveway projects completed! 7 Lakes

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Alliance was awarded \$112,410 in 319 grant funding for North Pond projects in 2024-2025. This money is available to homeowners, road associations, businesses and towns for erosion control projects that aim to improve water quality. A 50% match contribution is required by the landowner. Our thanks to Charlie Baeder at 7LA for all of his work and to Lynn Geiger, Erosion Control Policy Mgr at 7LA for coordinating the 319 grant program moving forward. Please contact NPA or 7LA this winter to discuss your project.

The **Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI)** program plays a vital role in keeping invasive plants out of North and Little Ponds. In 2023 a total of 854 boats were inspected over 954 hours of service at the public boat launch. Thankfully no invasives were found. This program is run by 7LA and paid for by NPA. Money from our bottle redemption at Tri Pond Variety as well as funding from the Towns of Smithfield, Rome and Mercer pays for the inspectors. The hourly wage for inspectors in 2023 was \$14/hr and is set to increase to \$15/hr in 2024. The financial support from the Town of Smithfield of \$3,500 is greatly appreciated.

North and Little Pond volunteers partnered with 7LA in several lake wide paddles to look for invasive plants. The Fairview Grange hosted regular workshops run by 7LA to educate the public on how to differentiate native plants from invasive species such as **Curly Leaf Pondweed (CPL)** and Variable Leaf Milfoil. 7LA divers working with the Maine DEP worked in 2023 to remove CLP plants and their turions (buds that can germinate) from the Serpentine in the early Spring and the Fall. No rooted CLP was found past Sunset Camps; however, a large floating fragment was found in July and upwards of 50 fragments were found in the Leech Brook Cove area at the northeastern corner of North Pond in September. The good news is that Maine DEP is still considering this infestation as a "rapid response plan" and will cover most of the cost of remediation for the CLP in 2024-2025. Please contact Sharon Mann, Invasive Aquatics Director, 7LA for questions.



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Restoring and preserving the water quality in our lakes is a prime focus of the North Pond Association. Using tools such as Lake Sediment Sampling, Water Quality Analysis, a Septic Database, Watershed NPS Assessment, Watershed AG & Forestry Survey Bathymetric Mapping, Municipal Ordinance Review, and Secchi Disc Measurements have provided the scientific basis to help achieve our goal of a healthy lake. All of us in the North and Little Pond watershed have a role to play. Together we will make North and Little Pond clear for all.

