

Sheepscot Lake Association End of Season Newsletter 2022

As the old adage states, "Time flies when you're having fun!" Well, a great deal of fun must've been had this summer as it has flown by! The Sheepscot Lake Association has been busy throughout the season working to help keep our beloved lake as healthy as it can be.

The Courtesy Boat Inspection Program had a busy and successful season inspecting boats at the impressive new boat launch at the Fish and Game Club. The three inspectors (two steady and one alternate) worked weekend shifts checking boats both entering and leaving the lake for invasive plants and other species. With 178 inspections conducted, no invasive plants/species were found. This is an important program, not only to keep unwanted non-native species from entering the lake, but also for the educational aspect. The inspectors not only check for plants, but inform boaters of the importance of doing so while demonstrating how it is done. This is imperative as the inspectors are not always at the launch and when they are not present we hope to encourage self-inspections. We all play a part in keeping Sheepscot the healthy lake that it is! Thank you to our 2022 inspectors, Wyatt McKenney, Alex Reitchel, and Brody Worth on an outstanding job!

Another program that helps to keep the lake healthy is our LakeSmart program. After being dormant for a number of years, our LakeSmart "team" is now up and running again and looking forward to conducting more evaluations in 2023! LakeSmart is run by the Maine Lakes Society in conjunction with Lake Associations throughout the state. Homeowners who are interested in helping stop erosion on their properties can sign up for an evaluation to determine the property's LakeSmart status. Our team will come to your property to conduct an evaluation determining the extent, if any, of erosion and the "best practices" suggested to combat it, including planting natural vegetation, constructing appropriate walking paths, and diverting rainwater runoff. An extensive checklist is adhered to, established by Maine Lakes, and then the evaluation is sent to them for official review. If your property is determined to be LakeSmart you will be awarded a plaque in recognition, but more importantly you will know you are doing all you can to help keep the lake healthy. That is the best reward we could all wish to receive! Please email us at sheepscotlakeassoc@gmail.com if you are interested in having your property evaluated for LakeSmart status in 2023.

The water quality team has been conducting water testing bi-weekly throughout the summer. Water is tested for its clarity, dissolved oxygen levels from the surface down to the deepest part of the lake, and phosphorus levels, and then sent off to Augusta DEP for evaluation/results. So far this summer we have been getting great results and the numbers indicate that Sheepscot is a healthy and vibrant lake. The latest testing was done the first week of September. Using the Secchi disk, testers were able to see more than 6 meters down from the surface! In comparison, another local waterbody with serious algae blooms has less than 2 meters of water clarity, so the 6+meter reading indicates a healthy lake.

SLA held two events this year. Our annual boat parade was held on July 4th, with over 32 boats participating, our best parade yet. The SLA annual general membership meeting occurred in

July with good attendance. If you were present, thank you for coming! If you were unable to attend, we hope that you can join us next year. It is a great way to hear about our programs, sign up to help with any that interest you, purchase some of our merchandise or a raffle ticket, vote for our new slate of board members, and renew your membership. If you were unable to attend and would like to renew your membership, or join the association, you can do so by going to our website at <https://sheepscotlakeassociation.com/>. This year our guest speaker was Matt Scott from the Lake Stewards of Maine who discussed our water quality, what constitutes a healthy lake, and the issue of PFAS.

PFAS are man-made chemicals known as per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances. They are a byproduct of plastics that resist degradation to the extreme that they are referred to as “forever chemicals.” They are linked to a number of health problems, and they are showing up in well water and in food supply around the world. PFAS have become an issue in several townships in Maine, including ours. We have been able to have the lake tested for PFAS and our lake water is considered clean with a PFOA (Perfluorooctanoic acid) reading of 1 ppt (parts per trillion), below which the EPA considers the minimum reporting level threshold of 4 for presence of PFAS. This is outstanding and further emphasizes the health of Sheepscot Lake! You can learn more about PFAS by reading the article written by Pamela McKenney in the Town Line <https://townline.org/pfas-the-forever-chemicals-making-more-headlines/>, as well as on the Town of Palermo website. For further information on the EPA’s guidelines, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/questions-and-answers-drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-pfos-genx-chemicals-and-pfbs#:~:text=EPA's%20lifetime%20health%20advisory%20levels,advisory%20for%20PFOA%20%3D%200.004%20ppt.>

This year we launched our SLA online store with two different shirt designs, both offered in many color options in men’s, women’s and children’s sizes as well as a tote bag. If you are interested in supporting our programs while sporting some cool tee shirts please visit the site here: <https://www.bonfire.com/store/sheepscot-lake-association/>. They make great holiday gifts for all of the lake-lovers in your household! If you are interested in purchasing a hat or visor, please come to our annual meeting next year!

Sheepscot is one of nearly 6,000 lakes and ponds in Maine, but it is certainly number one in our hearts. Keeping the lake healthy is our goal, and that cannot be done without the help and stewardship from the community - and that means you! Thank you to our members for your support!

Enjoy the fall and we look forward to another wonderful summer season on Sheepscot in 2023.

Maria O’Rourke
SLA President