

Lake Protection Coalition FAQs

Updated 7/16/2025

What is the Lake Protection Coalition?

The Lake Protection Coalition (LPC) is a collection of organizations, supported by individuals and businesses, who are uniting to advance innovative, effective, science-based policy change, including long-term funding for sustaining healthy lakes in

Maine. By bringing together those who care about and rely on our lakes, and coordinating and strengthening advocacy efforts, we can meet the many challenges of this moment and protect our lakes, ponds, and freshwaters for future generations.



Is the Lake Protection Coalition its own organization?

No. The Lake Protection Coalition is not its own 501(c)3 organization. There are six organizations that founded the coalition (see list below) and representatives from each organization act as the current Coalition steering committee.

How is the Lake Protection Coalition funded?

The Coalition is currently supported by a generous grant from the Onion Foundation and from several anonymous individuals. Maine Lakes is the current fiscal sponsor for grant awards to the coalition. We will be looking to secure funding from diverse sources to support future work.

What is the Lake Protection Coalition's vision?

Members of the Lake Protection Coalition envision a future where all of Maine's lakes are clean, healthy, and resilient. Lakes anchor our environment, economy, and way of life. They are protected by state and local stewards, sustained funding, and strong policies that safeguard their natural beauty and draw people to live, work, and play in Maine. From iconic summer camps to thriving tourism, from wildlife habitat and quality sport-fishing to clean drinking water, our lakes are valuable assets—and they need protection to last generations.

How will the Lake Protection Coalition be effective?

While lake groups in the state have worked together for many years to promote smart lake policies and effective actions, it has become increasingly clear that our lakes face growing risks and that we must do more. By bringing more lake advocates together, the Lake Protection Coalition will leverage existing networks, build connections to legislators and decision-makers, strategically plan for future lake policies and outreach needs, and ultimately bring a louder, and more proactive, lake protection voice to the table. Without an effective coalition working for our lakes' future, we risk losing the abundance of healthy lakes we enjoy and paying far more to fix lake health problems in the future.

What are the Lake Protection Coalition's purpose and goals?

The Coalition seeks to ensure adequate funding for comprehensive, sustainable, and long-term protection and restoration of lakes and their watersheds, including but not limited to water quality, wildlife habitat, and the monitoring and prevention of the spread of invasive aquatic species in Maine's freshwaters. The Coalition is committed to empowering local lake associations, regional watershed organizations, state-wide lake organizations, businesses, individuals, and communities to be engaged and play a critical role in lake protection.

Current Coalition Goals:

- Raise funds to create long-term capacity for Coalition work, including staff focused on Coalition priorities.
- Build Coalition membership by creating:
 - o An inclusive vision for lake funding priorities and action
 - o A vocal grassroots advocacy program to elevate lake protection voices
 - o Tools and support to successfully move lake protection policies forward
- Garner strong support from the Governor, legislators, the federal delegation, and state agency staff for lake protection and funding bills
- Support a Lakes Protection Caucus in the Maine Legislature of legislators who share a clean and healthy future for Maine's lakes.
- Elevate the critical need for lake protection through an organized communication campaign that engages large numbers of stakeholders and decision-makers.

Why should we be concerned about the future of Maine's lakes?

The future health of lakes across the state is at risk of decline from many different factors:

- **Invasive Species:** Invasive species are expanding into more Maine lakes every year. Colder water temperatures that may have kept some invasives at bay are now rising. More recreational boating in many parts of the state is increasing the risk of spread. Courtesy Boat Inspection programs and other outreach efforts like Invasive Plant Patrols help reduce this risk but need additional funding and support.
- **Erosion:** The stormwater from more intense rainstorms erodes more soil downhill and into water bodies. More soil means excess phosphorus reaches our waters, degrading water quality and feeding unwanted algal blooms. Expanding the scope and scale of stormwater management and erosion-control "best management practices", which are designed to slow and redirect stormwater runoff, is critical to future lake health but has been chronically underfunded.
- **Algal Blooms:** When algae grows out of control, or "blooms," lake water turns green, thick, and smelly, degrading fish and wildlife habitat and making our lakes unpleasant (and sometimes unsafe) for lake users. Warmer lake waters, a result of climate change, create better conditions for blooms to grow and spread. There is a growing need to manage the phosphorus that feeds algae growth, through erosion control efforts on land, including watershed-wide stormwater control, and through in-water treatments, across the state. These management tools require more expansive funding to be successful.
- **Development:** Development in surrounding uplands can directly impact lake health, even with strong Shoreland Zoning rules in place. Ensuring that towns have the tools

they need to enforce existing rules, increasing outreach to short-term rentals, and improving development standards in light of future lake protection are all critical for assuring long-term lake health.

- **Careless Use:** Lakes are a draw to many residents and visitors. Anglers, boaters, summer campers, swimmers, and others enjoy the countless benefits our lakes provide, and most do it in a way that is compatible with other users and with healthy lake protection. Lake users who are careless about rules designed to protect water quality and lake wildlife can degrade lakes for everyone. Increasing outreach to lake users, and enacting policies that protect lake health for the benefit of all lake recreationists, is critical to long-term lake health.
- **Economic Value:** Our lakes are a critical part of our state economy. Researchers at the University of Maine estimated economic value and annual spending in four lake-related sectors (lakefront summer camps, lakefront property, recreational lake use, and lake-based drinking water sources) in a recent study. The total value across the sectors is \$14.1 billion, with value defined as the benefit generated above and beyond what we spend to travel to and use lake-resources, while the annual spending (both direct and indirect) totals another \$3 billion.

How can I join the Lake Protection Coalition?

There are several ways that individuals and organizations can be involved with coalition activities. If you are interested in joining in any of the capacities below, please fill out this short contact form [HERE](#).

- **Organizational Members:** State-wide, watershed, regional, and local lake organizations, including lake associations, are invited to join the coalition as organizational members. Member organizations are expected to:
 - Share a commitment to the Coalition's vision
 - Send a delegate to occasional remote member meetings
 - Provide timely feedback to coalition requests
 - Join one or more Coalition working groups
 - Request engagement from their members for LPC calls to action
- **Allies:** National, statewide, regional or local organizations that share a commitment to the Coalition's vision but who cannot commit the time required of member organizations are invited to join the coalition as Allies. Delegates from Allied organizations may attend remote meetings. Allies agree to assist the Coalition in advocacy actions, lobbying efforts, and other policy initiatives as they are able.
- **Supporters:** Donors, foundations, businesses, or other nonprofit organizations that share a commitment to the Coalition's vision, and whose own purpose does not conflict with the Coalition's work, are invited to join the Coalition as Supporters.
- **Advocates:** Individuals who would like to be involved with Coalition calls to action and be kept directly apprised of Coalition activities are invited to join the Coalition as Advocates. Advocates will receive occasional updates about Coalition activity, requests for feedback on Coalition priorities, and calls for policy action.

Who started the Lake Protection Coalition?

Six founding organizations, along with a small group of advocates interested in building a sustainable future for Maine's lakes, began meeting in 2024 to create the concept of the Coalition. Founding members include:

30 Mile River Watershed Association info@30mileriver.org 30mileriver.org (207) 860-4043	30 Mile is a regional nonprofit in central Maine that works to keep over 20 lakes and ponds in our area clean and healthy. We partner with local lake associations and towns to deal with the threats of invasive species, development and climate change. Hands-on efforts include boat inspections, aquatic plant surveys, invasive species management, LakeSmart, and water quality monitoring. 30 Mile also helps fund and manage projects that reduce polluted runoff and protect water quality.
7 Lakes Alliance info@7lakesalliance.org www.7lakesalliance.org (207) 495-6039	7 Lakes Alliance, a regional non-profit, conserves lands and waters of the Belgrade Lakes region for all in support of vibrant communities and economies. With public and private partners, they monitor, research, and remediate water quality, prevent invasive species spread, and prevent and control erosion through the LakeSmart and the Youth Conservation Corps programs.
Cobbossee Watershed District cwd@fairpoint.net (207) 377-2234	The CWD, authorized by the Maine legislature in 1971 and governed by a board of trustees representing eight municipalities, protects and improves the 28 lakes and ponds of the Cobbossee Stream watershed. Activities include water level management, water quality monitoring, and restoration projects.
Lakes Environmental Association info@mainelakes.org www.mainelakes.org (207) 647-8580	A multi-lake association based in the upper Sebago Lake region, LEA works to protect water quality on 41 lakes and ponds in western Maine. LEA runs the statewide Courtesy Boat Inspection program, hosts the annual Milfoil Summit, and runs the Maine Lake Science Center. Their programs include: control and prevention of invasive species, water quality monitoring, restoration and mitigation, and landowner and municipal technical assistance.

Lake Stewards of Maine stewards@lakestewardsme.org www.lakestewardsofmaine.org (207) 783-7733	A statewide nonprofit protecting lakes and promoting stewardship through widespread citizen participation in the gathering and dissemination of credible scientific information about lake health. LSM trains, certifies and supports hundreds of volunteers who monitor a wide range of indicators of water quality, assess watershed health and function, and screen lakes for invasive aquatic plants and animals.
Maine Lakes info@lakes.me www.lakes.me (207) 495-2301	A statewide nonprofit that works to keep Maine's lakes healthy by managing the LakeSmart program, supporting local lake associations, promoting freshwater education initiatives, advocating for sound lake policies, and providing resources and a "lake library" for lake residents and visitors.

How can I support the work of the Lake Protection Coalition?

There are currently no dues or fees to be involved with the coalition, though the coalition has taken on an ambitious fundraising goal of \$150,000 over the next several years. Donations for coalition operations, including support of contract staff to increase capacity for Coalition work, can be made to Maine Lakes, as the fiscal sponsor of the Coalition. You can also contact any of the founding organizations listed above to support their staff involvement or the Coalition as a whole. Your time speaking up for lakes, talking to your legislators, and spreading the word about Coalition priorities is the most important type of support you can give!