



Protecting Maine's Most Valuable Resource: Clean and Healthy Lakes

Dear Friend of Maine Lakes,

Yes, it's true. A recent study by researchers at the University of Maine in Orono evaluated sectors of the economy related to lakes and estimated a value of Maine's lakes to be more than **\$14.4 billion**. In addition, lake-related direct sales and indirect spending in those sectors total more than **\$3 billion**. Lakes are our most valuable natural assets. They are central to our Maine "brand", and they are worth protecting.

We are asking today for a donation to support Maine Lakes' work to maintain and improve these incredibly valuable assets, especially in the face of unprecedented risks and pressures.

Risks to lakes are growing as the climate changes. More stormwater runoff brings more nutrient pollution into lakes. Warmer water fosters algae growth and invasive species spread. Large wakes close to shore, shoreland zoning violations, and development pressure put lake health, wildlife habitat, and human safety at risk.

To protect \$14.4 billion in lake value from these growing risks, help Maine Lakes increase the reach and impact of its outreach and programming.

Maine Lakes works with collaborators, partners, and volunteers (including many of you!) to engage people in action that protects lake health and habitat. We build networks of lake leaders, freshwater educators, and volunteers who help change behavior and grow lake-friendly actions in their communities. We strive for every student in Maine to have access to freshwater learning. We support lake associations in their critical work.

Your support is key to helping us grow our programs, expand our reach, and protect the immense value of healthy Maine lakes. But our capacity is limited. We must do more to be effective.

While we know the economic study data will support decision-makers in their efforts to adopt lake friendly policies, we also know the true value of Maine's lakes is, in Percival Baxter's words, inestimable. The sight and sound of water calms us all. Floating on a clean clear lake on a hot day. Launching a boat for an early morning fishing trip or a day of tubing. Setting up camp while a pair of loons call in the distance.

We often take these experience for granted. Yet these experiences require clean lakes. And clean lakes depend on organizations like Maine Lakes to support programming, outreach, advocacy, volunteer teams, and lake association members that keep lakes clean for you.

So consider \$14.4 billion a conservative estimate of lake value, and redouble your efforts to make sure our lakes stay healthy for generations to come. Supporting Maine Lakes is a great way to do that, as your donation funds outreach, programming, and action for clean and healthy Maine lakes, both today and long into the future.

Please see the reverse to read more about our current programming and ways we could put additional support to good use. And check out www.lakes.me/economics to learn more about the lake economic study.

More than ever before, we need you to grow our critical mission of engaging people in lake protection action.

Thank you for considering a donation for healthy lakes.

Susan Gallo
Executive Director
sgallo@lakes.me, (207)956-1965

LakeSmart

Our flagship program, **LakeSmart**, trains and supports volunteers who help shoreline homeowners act to slow stormwater runoff, reduce nutrient pollution, and improve lake health and habitat.

With Your Support, LakeSmart could:

- Offer LakeSmart teams more advanced training.
- Develop grant programs for erosion control projects.
- Increase shoreland buffers for wildlife, pollinators and lake health.
- Create tools to better connect people with lake protection resource.

Look Out For Loons

Look Out For Loons is a five-year effort to train and support volunteers who work to increase the public's awareness of nesting loons, decreasing disturbance and increasing the chances that loons will successfully raise their young.

With Your Support, Look Out For Loons could:

- Expand the geographic reach of training.
- Offer more support, tools and resources to volunteers
- Provide more and innovative outreach tools for volunteers and their audiences.

Lake Advocacy

Our **Legislative Advocacy Program** engages decision-makers, supports smart lake policy, and motivates grassroots activists to speak up for lakes.

With Your Support, our Advocacy Program could:

- Build staff capacity and presences at the state house.
- Engage with more partners and grow our networks of grassroots advocates.
- Craft proactive legislation to support invasives species risk reduction, water quality protection, and much more.
- Work with agencies and legislators to create a funding mechanism so that more can be done to protect our \$14.4 billion lake asset.

Freshwater Education

The **Freshwater Education Network** is bringing together educators and building resources and tools to support education programming.

With Your Support, the Freshwater Education Network could:

- Create more tools and website resources for educators.
- Expand freshwater education programming to reach underserved and remote areas.
- Provide resources for teachers so they can be involved in network building.
- Build tools for nontraditional educational settings like rec programs, camps, and community events.

Thank you for your continued support of Maine Lakes in 2024!

Please use this QR code to get to our secure donation page (www.lakes.me.donate) or send in a check with this form.

Mail in Donation Form

Please use the QR code or visit www.lakes.me/donate to donate securely online.

Or send in this form with the information below to:

Maine Lakes, PO Box 91, Yarmouth, ME 04096

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Lake of Interest: _____

QR code



Please use this donation of \$_____ for programs that keep Maine's lakes healthy.