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June 1, 2026

Dear Friend of Maine Lakes,

On behalf of the Maine Lakes board, I would like to share the news that Maine Lakes and Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM) are in the early stages of exploring a merger of our two organizations.

Both organizations have a statewide focus and offer important lake protection and outreach programs. In recent years, we have teamed up with LSM on the annual lake conference, the well-attended Winter Webinar Series and expanded grants for Watershed Surveys. In addition, both executive directors are part of the recently formed Lake Protection Coalition steering committee. These collaborations have demonstrated how working together can help both organizations meet our respective missions.

We spent time last year learning about each other's vision, values, and programming. Finding no major incompatibilities, both boards voted to look more deeply into the possibility of a merger.

An important step in this process is to open lines of communication with you - our members, supporters, and volunteers. We value your input as we begin a deeper dive into what a merger might look like.

Please use the QR code below to share your thoughts using a short feedback form.

We are intentionally taking our time during this process. Along with reaching out to you, both organizations are doing our 'due diligence' around finances, human resources, organizational culture, and much more. Ultimately it must clearly be a 'win-win' for all elements - most importantly mission delivery - for both boards to vote to continue the merger process.

The board and staff of Maine Lakes are eager to continue this merger exploration in the months ahead and we are energized by the possibilities we see in working together toward a shared vision of expanded lake protection.

Enjoy your time on Maine lakes this summer and thank you in advance for any feedback you can share.

Sincerely,

Toni Pied, President of the Board
Maine Lakes



Maine Lakes (www.lakes.me) trains and supports LakeSmart volunteers who help homeowners identify and remedy sources of erosion, protecting water quality and wildlife habitat. They also organize and lead advocacy efforts to move forward lake protection policy, and support education initiatives, including the Freshwater Education Network, that seeks to impart understanding of lake protection principles.

Lake Stewards of Maine (www.lakestewardsofmaine.org) trains, certifies and provides technical support to volunteer community scientists who monitor water quality and survey lakes for aquatic invasive species and conduct aquatic plant assessments. They also collect other lake data such as ice in/out dates, support watershed surveys and maintain the Lakes of Maine website.

In recent years, **Lake Stewards of Maine** and **Maine Lakes** have joined forces to:

- Combine their individual annual meetings into the **Maine Lake Conference**, nearly doubling the number of attendees (from approximately 90 each to more than 300). Both organizations have benefited from 1) efficiencies gained through shared planning responsibilities and costs, 2) increased fund-raising, sponsors, and donations, 3) increased awareness of

each organization's programs, and 4) broader engagement and a more diverse network of attendees.

- Establish the combined **Winter Webinar Series**, instead of each organization hosting their own, often covering similar topics with overlapping speakers. This teamwork has 1) improved coordination of educational programming, 2) reduced duplication of presentations, 3) expanded viewing to larger audience, and 4) resulted in shared planning responsibilities.
- Expand **Watershed Survey Grants**, previously only available through LSM but with additional funding through ML, a more sustainable offering to assist with watershed survey trainings. This successful collaboration has helped attract additional foundation support and grant funding!
- Coordinate participation in the **Lake Protection Coalition** steering committee. While this new entity involves other organizations, it has provided an avenue for ML and LSM to work together and find common ground around advocacy efforts.



Through these collaborations, both organizations have consistently found that working together expands impact, improves efficiency and coordination, and better serves Maine's lakes and communities!!!