Email: norwaylaon@gmail.com
Website: www.norwaylakes.org

**Annual Meeting May 30, 10am on Zoom**
**See page 6 for details**

# Lakes Association of Norway (LAON) – 2026 Newsletter

## President's Message

Greetings! I want to highlight that we're able to accomplish so much as an organization because of the hard work of our volunteers. Over the last year, several took on greater roles and a few new volunteers stepped forward. Thank you to everyone who contributed their time and energy to help make our programs successful.

To keep LAON performing at a high level, we need to recognize that our leadership has been in position for a long time and there is a need to transition to new leaders. *Please reach out if you're interested in learning how you can help prepare LAON for the future - send us an email to connect!*

Lakes can take a lot of stress, but when a tipping point is reached, recovery is not only difficult but expensive. Keeping our lakes away from their tipping points is a responsibility all property owners share. *The Lake Stewards of Maine Annual Newsletter* for 2025 had a timely and very relevant article by Tristan Taber about the balance that lakes maintain and what can happen if stressors from our activities become too great. We hope you find the condensed version below informative (see full article on p. 16 of LSM's website: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xZaq18Heu095J4NCuz8dpqx9n9r1bTkI/view ).

Although none of Norway's lakes are at that stage, we can't take lake health for granted. The cyanobacteria blooms we have seen on Hobb's Pond in the last four years present a concern and show how things can change quickly. We have increased our water quality monitoring and are working with state experts to better understand and address this recurring problem. The problem is complex and we all have a role to play in the solution.

### *Balancing Lakes: How Lakes Stay Healthy & What Happens When They Don't*

*Lakes are constantly adjusting to changes. Sunlight, temperature, plants, animals, and nutrients interact in ways that usually keep the lake stable. A healthy lake can handle small disturbances (like a heavy rainstorm washing in organic material) and then return to a balanced condition.*

*Seasonal patterns help maintain this balance. Spring and fall mixing due to changes in water temperature helps to redistribute oxygen and nutrients. Summer layering creates different "zones" in the lake, each with its own community of plants and animals. When these patterns hold, the lake stays clear, oxygenated, and full of life.*

#### *When the Balance Is Pushed Too Far*

*Trouble begins when stressors exceed a lake's ability to maintain the balance. One of the biggest stressors is pollution from across the watershed during rain or snowmelt.*

*This can come from:*

- *Runoff from gravel roads, driveways, and lawns carrying fertilizers, soil, pet waste*
- *Failing or poorly placed septic systems that leak nutrients*
- *Construction sites where loose soil washes into the water*

- *Eroding shorelines, often worsened by large boat wakes*
- *Insufficient shoreline vegetation to hold soil in place and absorb nutrients*

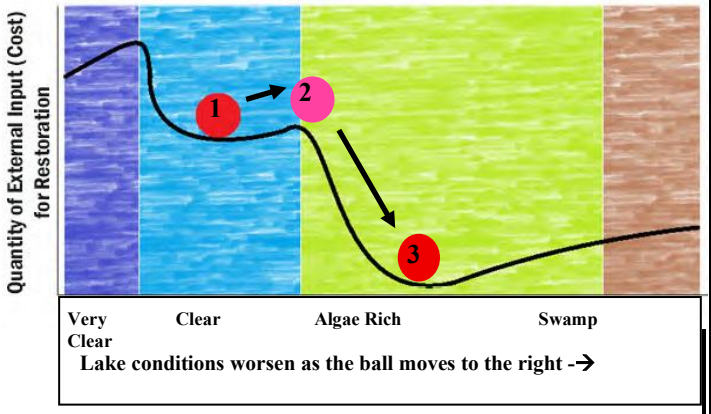
**As stressors continue over time, this pollution can push a lake past a tipping point.** *Water becomes murky. Oxygen levels drop in deeper water. Fish and other animals struggle to survive. Algae blooms become more common, often producing harmful toxins.*

*When deep water runs out of dissolved oxygen, bottom sediments release stored phosphorus which feeds algae. When the algae die and decompose, the decomposition uses even more oxygen—releasing more phosphorus, feeding more algae into a self-reinforcing cycle.*

*The lake can then become "stuck." Even with a reduction in pollution, the lake may continue fueling its own algae blooms. A changing fish population can also stir up sediment, releasing more nutrients, with aquatic plants that would typically help to stabilize sediments and absorb nutrients dying off. At this point, simply "stopping the pollution" is not enough to allow recovery. Restoring the former condition can take major community effort, time, and funding.*

*Note various lake conditions along the graph's horizontal axis. The cost of improving a lake is the vertical axis. The state of the lake is represented by the red ball.*

*In a healthy condition (**position 1**), if extra nutrients are introduced, the ball can roll slightly and will return to the "low point" on its own. If conditions worsen and extra nutrients drive the ball over the "tipping point," (**2**) it will establish a "new normal" (**3**) which could mean murky water, less oxygen, more algae, and internal loading. **At this point it's very costly to return to the previous condition.***




We all play a role in making sure our lakes do not reach the tipping point by maintaining woody shoreline buffers, addressing stormwater flow, limiting the use of chemicals near the water, inspecting septic systems regularly and maintaining gravel roads. **This is critical work and your efforts are instrumental as we work together!**

## The Norway Lakes


Planktothrix


Dolichospermum

2025 was an alarming year for Hobbs Pond, which is a major source of water for Lake Pennesseewassee. In the last four years a species of blue green algae (cyanobacteria) called "Planktothrix" appeared in a range from small green specs to larger green strands. While unwanted, these small blooms only affected their immediate area. Last year a second species, called "Dolichospermum," emerged which caused an unsightly uniform green color to develop throughout the lake along with a dramatic loss of water clarity - dropping from eight meters to as low as two meters at one point.

The problem is that Phosphorus and other nutrients rose to levels at which algae species can thrive. Until we can control the cyanobacteria by controlling the inflow of phosphorus, we can expect continued problems. The obvious remedy is to

reduce the nutrient flow into the pond from all watershed properties. Since every property and road has the potential to contribute harmful runoff, we all play a critical role in identifying and addressing erosion sites.

While we've increased monitoring on Hobb's Pond, we continue to test all our lakes. Two testing parameters, water clarity and phosphorous (P), directly indicate lake health. P concentrations at the water surface last year were about the same as historical averages for Sand Pond and Pennesseewassee, higher for Hobbs Pond and lower for North Pond. Water sampled near the lake bottom showed lower P concentrations from historical averages for North and Sand Ponds. Levels in Hobbs and Pennesseewassee were higher, likely indicating the potential for future problems if P levels continue to increase. Detailed results can be found in the **2025 Water Quality Report** on our website.

Keeping the "Balancing Lakes" article in mind, we must all be even more proactive in stopping phosphorus from entering the lakes. **Each of us might only have small potential impact, but with nearly 500 properties on our lakes, the accumulated impact can be great.** LAON can help, but our lakes might be at risk without you.

### Your role on your property (including roads and driveways)

Good intentions aren't enough. We must all make a concerted effort to assess our properties, both in good weather, and when raining. It's best to look in the spring - it's wetter and issues aren't hidden by plants. Look for these conditions:

- Any size gullies or depressions that indicate eroded soil or driveways.
- Bare dirt that runoff flows over on its way to your lake.
- Eroded footpaths to your lake/dock.
- Exposed tree roots (usually a result of the soil being eroded).
- Erosion along your roof drip line that can get to your lake.

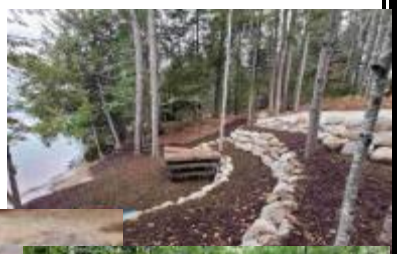
**Be proactive:**

- Create robust buffer plantings to protect your shoreline.
- Don't fertilize your lawn or, if you must, use non-phosphorous fertilizer. **"Lakes Like Less Lawns."** (Also, be sure not to use insecticides!)
- Pump your septic tank at least every third year. Be observant of any malfunctions.
- Contact LAON for recommendations and assistance and check our website.

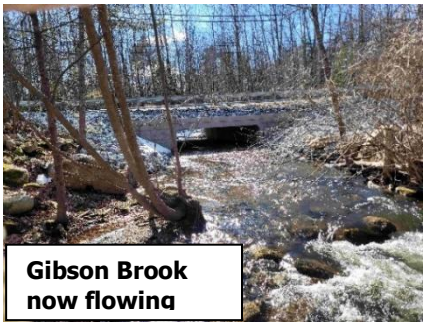
## Watershed Management

LAON manages two aligned efforts to support erosion mitigation work across our lakes. One involves the use of federal funding. The other is an internal program with LAON providing some matching funds to property owners outside of federal grant funding. After watershed surveys on North Pond, Lake Pennesseewassee and Hobb's Pond, LAON developed watershed management plans and received federal matching grant funds under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act to work on erosion remediation projects. Following 2017 remediation work, North Pond phosphorous levels and visible algae decreased. Of course, keeping these gains depends on property owners maintaining the improved conditions.

In 2025, LAON completed Phase 2 of the Lake Penn Watershed Management Plan. Over a two-year period, with the help of a $73,000 EPA grant, 18 erosion sites around the lake, including roads, driveways and residential properties, were remediated. The grant also helped to provide technical assistance to property owners and educational workshops on buffer planting and road maintenance. We estimate that a total of 344 tons of sediment and 293 pounds of phosphorus will be prevented from entering Lake Pennesseewassee annually as a result. Our next funding opportunity to continue this work will be in 2027.



After our 2024 survey of properties in the Hobb's Pond watershed, Section 319 funding for this lake was approved. We expect the funds to be released in October 2026 and are eager to begin remediation efforts.



**Gibson Brook now flowing**

LAON also worked with the Town of Norway on a separate grant to replace the culvert carrying Gibson Brook under Greenwood Road. Several washouts there had dumped tons of phosphorous-laden sediment into Lake Penn. The town replaced undersized culverts with a higher capacity concrete box culvert to handle flows that can occur during torrential rain.

**Box culvert before installation**

### LAON's Self-Funded Watershed Protection Program

Under the LAON Watershed Protection Program, property owners can request assistance to address erosion sites that directly impact their lake, if federal funding is not available. Technical assistance and matching funds can be made available based on recommendations by LAON trained volunteers. Although this program was rolled out two years ago, resource limitations impacted how broadly it could be implemented.

Jon Jacobson will manage the Water Protection program, contributing his engineering experience to help train volunteers to identify erosion sites and implement best practices. Reach out to Jon at jonjacobsen72@gmail.com if you want to join the team or need assistance with erosion.

## Preventing and Controlling Invasives

### Shoreline Invasives

This past summer, our shoreline crew continued to make positive gains on the mitigation of Yellow Iris, Purple Loosestrife, and Water Forget-Me Not on

Pennesseewassee. These colorful, highly invasive shoreline plants can spread into dense mats which crowd out native plants and impede water flow.

Learn more on our website under **Preventing Invasive Species.** We're looking for additional volunteers for a few hours/week in June-July to help prevent the spread of these invasives.

Chuck Frost, cbfrost@roadrunner.com, will manage the team this year. Reach out to get involved! Let us know where you see any of these plants; however, **DO NOT** attempt to remove them yourself before talking with Chuck as ***incorrect removal could cause further spreading.***

Yellow Iris

Purple Loosestrife

Water Forget-Me-Not

## Aquatic Invasives – Invasive Plant Patrol (IPP)

Dedicated volunteers on our Invasive Plant Patrols (IPP) look for invasive plants in our lakes twice during the summer. Volunteers receive easy and fun training on invasive plant identification. Please consider joining us since there are still a few areas on our lakes that are not yet patrolled. Heidi Wierman will assume responsibility for coordinating the team this year. Contact her at ippatlaon@gmail.com to join the team.

**In Memory**

We are saddened to report that Lynn Girifalco passed away in early April.

Lynn was instrumental in starting the Invasive Plant Patrol. For many years she trained and organized volunteers, provided assignments across all our lakes and was our resident expert on aquatic plant identification. She was always a willing LAON volunteer and Sal's cheerful backup. Lynn will be greatly missed.


## Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI)

In 2025 we inspected over 2000 watercraft entering and leaving Lake Pennesseewassee. Plants were found on seven boats entering the lake – fortunately none were invasive.

We had four part time boat inspectors in 2025, which enabled us to have broader coverage than in the past. We were lucky to have two enthusiastic student interns from Oxford Hills High School work with our Courtesy Boat Inspection Program as part of a joint High School/Town project. We are proud to help nurture the next generation of lake stewards.

While we believe that our lakes are free of invasives now, we must remain vigilant since additional Maine lakes become infected every year.

## YOU CAN HELP PRVENT INVASIVES


**Guidance from the Maine DEP**

**Before moving boats between waterbodies**:

- **CLEAN** off mud, plants, and animals from boat, trailer, motors and other equipment. Discard removed material in a trash receptacle or on high, dry ground.
- Don't forget to **check fishing gear** – a prime carrier!
- **DRAIN** all water from boat, engine, and other equipment away from the water.
- **DRY** anything that comes into contact with the water in the sun for at least five days. (Towel dry as a minimum precaution.)
- **Ask your guests** to do the same, whether they are using a boat, jet ski, kayak, canoe, or paddleboard.

**2023 Law**: Prior to entering a water body and when preparing to leave launch sites, boaters are required to remove or open any devices designed for routine removal/opening (for example, hull drain plugs, bailers, live wells, ballast tanks) to encourage draining of areas containing water (excluding live bait containers). This must be done in a way that does not allow drained water to enter any inland water.

See News and Reminders on next page.

## News and Reminders

The Water Quality Team welcomes Lisa Applegate and Leslie Taylor who received their Maine Department of Environmental Protection certification in 2025 to perform Secchi and dissolved oxygen readings.

**July 4th Lake Pennesseewassee Boat Parade**

This 10th annual parade is always a great time for those participating and watching.


**Length of Lake Swim Sun, August 16**

This 11th annual fundraiser and celebration of the health of our lakes welcomes individuals and 2-3 person teams. If you want to swim or help with a party boat, contact Susan Jacoby at skjacoby@comcast.net.

**Norway Art Festival Sat, September 12**

10am - 4pm. Stop by the LAON booth to say hello and check out our new merchandise.

### Join us for the LAON Annual Meeting (on Zoom)

**Saturday, May 30th at 10am**

**You must register for the meeting ahead of time to receive the Zoom link via email**

(Don't wait until the last minute to ensure you receive the meeting link)

**Use one of these ways to register (rather than type the long Zoom address)**

- Via Zoom – **click here**

  (https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/MxD_Bw0kRXWs-gevnRw9u6w#/registration)
- Via the LAON website **click here** (www.norwaylakes.org)

Email LAON if you need help registering!

*If you didn't also receive this newsletter via email, we don't have your email address. It would help us if we had it, and you could just click on the links in this newsletter*

*Please send us your email address* (norwaylaon@gmail.com)

LAON: Protecting Norway's Lakes Since 1971

Yes! I want to help protect Norway's lakes by joining LAON or by renewing my membership at the following level.

___ **Benefactor:** $1,000 or more*

___ **Steward:** $250 or more

___ **Family:** $50 or more

___ **Patron:** $500 or more

___ **Friends of the Lakes:** $150 or more

___ **Individual member:** $30 or more

*We hope you can support us at least at this level*

***LAON is a 501(c)(3) organization. ALL donations are fully tax deductible.***

## How to contribute:

**Online:** (https://norwaylakes.org/individual/) under "Membership and Support"

**Via check:** Make check payable to LAON, complete the below information and mail to:
Lakes Association of Norway, P.O. Box 505, Norway, ME 04268

## For paying by check:

*(Please print clearly)*

Name(s) _____

Lake Address _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____

*Thank You for Your Support*