

2024 Lakes Congress Session Descriptions – Thursday, June 6

9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Keynote Address

Navigating the Waters: Ensuring Resilient Futures for New Hampshire's Lakes

Presented by: Ted Diers, Assistant Director of the Water Division, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

Our lakes continue to face challenges like new invasive species, increasing cyanobacteria blooms, impactful erosion from more extreme weather events, and overuse from population growth. What's becoming clear is we need to plan on creating resilient lakes that can withstand these challenges. Ted Diers, the Assistant Director of the Water Division at the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, will discuss navigating the complex intersection of environmental science, policy, and community engagement and will delve into actionable strategies for building resilience for clean and healthy lakes.

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Session 1

A. Lakes Legislative Update

Presented by: Andrea LaMoreaux, President and Policy Advocate, NH LAKES

What happened in the 2024 legislative session that affected our lakes? Attend this session and find out. Andrea will provide an overview of the New Hampshire legislative process and summarize the lake priority bills NH LAKES weighed in on. Learn how your group can join the Lake Advocates Network, a statewide network of lake-minded people like you working with their community to initiate and support public policies and laws that restore and preserve the health of our lakes.

B. Defending our Lakes from Invasive Species

Presented by: Kat Kelleher, Conservation Program Coordinator, NH LAKES; Amy Smagula, Limnologist, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services; Paul Pellissier, Conservation Program Manager, Newfound Lake Region Association

Attend this session for an overview of the status of aquatic invasive species infestations in New Hampshire's waterbodies, including the newly discovered spiny water flea. You'll find what can be done to prevent and identify new infestations. And, you'll hear the story about how one local group defended their pristine lake last summer from becoming infested with an invasive plant thanks to the Lake Host and Weed Watcher programs and some quick local action.

C. LakeSmart Communities: How to Rally a Community Into Action

Presented by: Gloria Norcross, Conservation Program Coordinator, NH LAKES; Lynn Wittman, President, Kezar Lake Protective Association

The Kezar Lake Protective Association was the first group to receive the prestigious LakeSmart Community Award in New Hampshire. Over 50 percent of property owners around Kezar Lake have participated in the LakeSmart Program by taking the LakeSmart self-assessment survey and inviting the NH LAKES LakeSmart Team to conduct a property visit. Hear how this community came together to do all they can to protect their beloved lake and learn how you can rally your community into action.

D. “We’ve got high water—now what?”

Presented by Laurie Libby, President, and Pauline Tessier, Board Chair, Silver Lake Association of Belmont; Elizabeth Harper, Executive Director, Lake Sunapee Protective Association

During the summer of 2023, many of New Hampshire’s lakes experienced the highest water levels due to record-breaking rain events. This left many lake communities wondering how to protect their properties and the lake. You’ll hear from one lake community that advocated the state for an emergency no-wake order and encouraged community members to take a temporary no-wake pledge. You’ll also hear from the only lake community in New Hampshire with an emergency no-wake order established in law triggered when waters reach a certain level.

11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Session 2

A. New Hampshire’s Cyanobacteria Plan: A Statewide Strategy

Presented by: Dave Neils, Chief Aquatic Biologist, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

In November 2023, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services released a statewide strategy to prevent the increase of, and eventually control, cyanobacteria blooms in New Hampshire’s surface waters. The plan was required by the state legislature and included input from a 17-person cyanobacteria advisory committee. The plan establishes key strategies, goals, and actions to curb cyanobacteria bloom occurrences and risks.

B. Lake Level Management: A Balancing Act

Presented by: Corey Clark, Chief Engineer, Dam Bureau, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

Lake-level management can be complex. It requires monitoring water levels, regulating outflows, and implementing emergency response plans. Find out how and why lake levels are managed in New Hampshire. And hear about some challenges the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services faces when balancing various uses of our lakes, public safety, the changing seasons, and our changing climate.

C. Neighbors Helping Neighbors Reduce Polluted Runoff Water

Presented by: Kevin Kelly, Lake Kanasatka Watershed Association

Lake Kanasatka in Moultonborough, New Hampshire, has experienced severe and prolonged toxic cyanobacteria blooms over the past several summers. But the residents of this beloved lake community haven't given up. Instead, they've doubled down and are doing all they can to restore the health of the lake—including rolling up their sleeves and getting to work! Join this session to hear how this community has successfully engaged individuals with hands-on polluted runoff water reduction projects. You'll leave the session inspired and armed with practical tips to get your community involved in rolling up their sleeves, too!

D. Conserving Land Parcels—Big & Small—for Clean & Healthy Lakes

Presented by: Julie Brown, Executive Director, Wentworth Watershed Association; Rebecca Hanson, Executive Director, Newfound Lake Region Association

One way to help keep lakes clean and healthy is to conserve the natural lands surrounding our lakes. Land can be put into conservation while still allowing for specific uses. Attend this discussion and learn how two lake associations work in their community to conserve parcels of land—big and small—and our lakes.

11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch – Tent & Winnepesaukee Ballroom

Enjoy lunch provided by the Lakehouse Grille, a member of the Common Man family of restaurants. Visit our exhibitor tables and make connections with professionals who can help you accomplish the conservation goals you have in mind for your favorite lake. And, take advantage of the opportunity to sit and have lunch with other attendees interested in discussing certain lake conservation and management topics.

1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Session 3

A. Innovative Local Policy for Resilient Lakes

Presented by: Elizabeth Harper, Executive Director, Lake Sunapee Protective Association; Charlie Marsden, Director of Water Quality, Cobbett's Pond Improvement Association; facilitated by Andrea LaMoreaux, President and Policy Advocate, NH LAKES

Join this session to gain valuable insights into innovative approaches available to communities for reducing and managing polluted runoff water. Learn how local ordinances like septic system maintenance and fertilizer restrictions can be adopted to minimize runoff pollution to lakes. You will surely be inspired to work with your community on implementing these innovative approaches for clean, healthy, and resilient lakes.

B. Managing Recreation on Lakes Through the Petition and Public Process

Presented by: Christopher Casco, Administrator of Hearings, New Hampshire Department of Safety

This session will provide participants with an in-depth understanding of the public petition and hearing process for establishing recreational use restrictions on our lakes, such as no wake areas, no rafting areas, mooring requirements, and horsepower limits. You will learn about the legal and regulatory requirements for conducting public hearings. Bring your questions!

C. Ensuring Clean Waters: Empowering Lake Associations to Conduct Septic Surveys

Presented by: Evan Ma, Project Scientist, FB Environmental

Lake association leaders will learn to conduct septic surveys independently or work with professionals in this session. Hear about the basics of septic systems, including their operation, maintenance, and potential impacts on lake water quality. You'll learn how to identify areas where septic systems may be causing pollution and how to conduct a survey to determine their condition. You'll also learn how to communicate findings to homeowners and work with them to address identified issues.

D. Ready, Set, Network!

Didn't have enough time to finish conversations over lunch? Join us in the waterfront tent for a session just for networking! Mingle with others who want to connect or join a table discussion on one of the topics below.

Managing Proposed Land Development Projects on Your Lake—Is a development project being proposed in your community that could impact the health of a nearby lake? Join Bette Higley from the Meredith Neck and Islands Alliance (MerNIA), who has successfully worked with various stakeholders involved in the development process to address such a project. Have your own stories to share or need advice? Talk about strategies for effective engagement and collaboration among stakeholders and share your challenges.

Running a Lake Host Program—Join Kat Kelleher, NH LAKES Conservation Program Coordinator, and Lake Host Program leader, for a discussion about the Lake Host Program. Already involved in a program? Share your successes and challenges with other Lake Host Coordinators around the state. Interested in starting a program? Now's the time to ask your questions!

The LakeSmart Program—Curious about bringing this program to your community? Join Gloria Norcross, NH LAKES Conservation Program Coordinator, and LakeSmart Program leader, to learn how to schedule a lake day for your community where we can complete a group of site visits for those who have already taken the self-assessment.

Connecting with Others in Your Watershed—Do you wonder what others in your watershed are doing for lake health? Want to make connections to build a stronger community? Join a table for open discussion with others in your region.

2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Session 4

A. Run for Office: Help Shape Local and State Lake Policy!

Presented by: Representative Rosemarie Rung; Representative John MacDonald; Linda Murray, Town of Wolfeboro Selectboard; John Mullen, former State Representative and Town of Middleton Planning Board; facilitated by Andrea LaMoreaux, President and Policy Advocate, NH LAKES

Our lakes need a coalition of concerned and supportive leaders to initiate, support, and protect lake-friendly policies at the local and state levels. Being elected to office in your municipality can be a great way to help ensure your town governs in a lake-friendly way. And, by being elected to the state legislature, you can help ensure lake-friendly laws are passed that will positively impact restoring and preserving lake health statewide. Hear personal experiences from municipal representatives and New Hampshire legislators about running for office and opportunities they've had to stand up for clean and healthy lakes.

B. "We've got cyanobacteria—now what?"

Presented by: Nisa Marks, Watershed Coordinator, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

This past year was the fourth year in a row our lakes set a record for cyanobacteria blooms in our lakes. Climate change and polluted runoff water from rain events and flooding contribute to these blooms. Learn how to minimize bloom frequency, severity, and duration. Reducing polluted runoff water, combined with education and outreach efforts, are the best opportunities to reduce the risks and impacts of cyanobacteria blooms. Join this session to learn how to handle cyanobacteria and maintain your community's health.

C. Creating a Diverse, Inclusive, and Engaged Lake Association Membership

Presented by: Erin Graichen, Fund Development Manager, NH LAKES

This session will highlight practical skills and strategies your group can implement to create a more diverse, inclusive, and larger membership for your lake or watershed organization. Join us for an engaging and informative session to help you build a stronger and more vibrant community around your lake.

D. Community Solutions for Recreational Use Conflicts on Our Lakes

Presented by: Tim Dunleavy, Captain, New Hampshire Marine Patrol; Fred Pierce, President, Pleasant Lake Protective Association; Joe Hanzalik, Board Member, Spofford Lake Association

This session addresses a long-time and, in some areas, a growing community concern: recreational use conflicts on our lakes. Join us as we explore community-based solutions to these conflicts, including communication strategies and collaborative problem-solving.