

2026 Lakes Congress Session Descriptions – Friday, June 5

9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Welcoming Remarks

9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Keynote Address

Why Should Anyone Care About Your Lake? Using Engagement Mindsets to Turn Apathy into Action

Presented by Kivi Leroux Miller, Founder and CSO of the Nonprofit Marketing Guide

You know why your lake is so important. But getting other people to care and do something about it is a real challenge! In this keynote, Kivi Leroux Miller will introduce the Engagement Mindsets, a practical way to understand what motivates different people to pay attention, get involved, and stick with your cause. You'll learn how to recognize the different ways people engage, why some messages fall flat, and how to adjust your approach so more people see themselves in your work. Whether you're trying to recruit volunteers, influence behavior, or build long-term community support, this session will help you answer the most important question: Why should they care?

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Session 1

A. Lakes in the Legislature: 2026 Policy Update and How You Can Make a Difference

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

Join Andrea and learn what happened during the 2026 New Hampshire Legislative Session and how it will impact our lakes. She will kick things off with a brief overview of the state's legislative process, then dive into the key lake-related bills that NH LAKES tracked and influenced. You'll also discover how your group can get involved through the Lake Advocates Network, a statewide community of lake-minded individuals working with their community to advance policies and laws that restore and preserve the health of our lakes.

B. Cyanobacteria and Algal Identification Workshop: Seeing What's in the Water

Presented by: Dr. Ken Wagner, Owner, Water Resource Services, Inc.; Laura Diemer, Senior Project Manager/Lake Services Lead, FB Environmental; Dr. Amanda McQuaid, Associate Extension State Specialist and Professor of Water Quality and Ecotoxicology/Director of Lakes Lay Monitoring Program, University of New Hampshire

Cyanobacteria blooms are a growing concern in New Hampshire's lakes, impacting water quality, recreation, and public health. In this session, you will build practical skills for identifying common cyanobacteria and algal groups found in local lakes and ponds. Join Ken, Laura, and Amanda to learn how to spot visual clues, distinguish between cyanobacteria and algae, and interpret bloom characteristics, such as color, texture, and growth patterns. You'll also gain guidance on when and how to report suspected blooms, the limitations of visual identification, and learn why accurate identification is crucial for lake management and public communication.

C. Management of Aquatic Invasive Species in New Hampshire's Lakes

Presented by: Pauline Tessier, Silver Lake, Tilton; Jeff Evans, Lake Pemigewasset; Dave Gould, Lake Winnepesaukee; and Neil Santos, Pawtuckaway Lake. Moderated by Amy P. Smagula, Director, Jody Connor Limnology Center, Chief Aquatic Biologist, and Georgia Bunnell, Limnologist, Aquatic Invasive Species Program, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

In this session, you'll explore the challenges of long-term control of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and the creative partnerships that enable successful management. You'll hear how towns across New Hampshire are stepping up into leadership roles, working alongside lake residents and communities in this battle. Through real-world examples, you'll see different models of municipal engagement in action and learn how conservation commissions, town administrators, and local committees can collaborate to plan, fund, and implement AIS projects. You'll leave with practical ideas you can apply to your own lake, including strategies for building partnerships, securing funding, engaging your municipality, and adapting your approach over time.

D. Tell Better Stories: How to Write Three Types of Stories Your Community Will Respond To

Presented by: Kivi Leroux Miller, Founder and CEO of the Nonprofit Marketing Guide

Most lake associations know they should tell stories. But what kinds of stories actually work, and how do you write them? In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn how to create three specific types of stories you can use right away in your emails, social posts, and outreach. We'll break down why stories work so well, what makes each of the three formulas so effective, and how you can use them. You'll practice turning everyday moments from your lake into clear, engaging stories that help people understand what's at stake and what to do about it. By the end of the session, you'll walk away with story drafts you can use and a simple approach you can repeat again and again.

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Session 2

A. Lake-Friendly Land Use: Municipal Ordinances and Overlays That Protect Water Quality

Presented by: Norm Royce, NH LAKES Board Member and Northwood Conservation Commission; Carol Meise and Doug Southard, Town of Bradford

Protecting lakes starts at the local level, and in this session, you'll learn how your community can use smart land-use regulations to safeguard water. You'll explore real examples from New Hampshire communities, including how the Town of Northwood implemented a Septic System Health Ordinance and how the Town of Bradford adopted a Surface Water Overlay District. Through these case studies, you'll learn what works, what challenges to expect, and how to engage your community in the process. You'll leave with actionable ideas and strategies you can use to support or advance similar protections in your town. Presenters will share lessons learned, tips for public engagement, and strategies for effective ordinance adoption.

B. Aquatic Plant Identification Workshop: Natives vs. Invasives

Presented by: Brea Arvidson, Director of Programs, and Hannah Coppola, Conservation Program Coordinator, NH LAKES

Healthy lakes depend on balanced aquatic plant communities—but telling the difference between beneficial native plants and harmful invasive ones isn't always easy! In this interactive workshop, you'll practice identifying plants using real examples, handouts, and guided discussion. You'll learn to recognize key plant characteristics and how to distinguish common invasive species from similar native plants. With a focus on observation, questions, and conversation, you'll build confidence and leave with practical skills you can use right away.

C. From Shoreline to Solution: Interactive Lake-Friendly Fixes You Can Do Yourself

Presented by: Kat Kelleher, Conservation Program Coordinator, NH LAKES

Want to make your property more lake-friendly but not sure where to start? Or looking for ideas to share with your lake community? In this workshop, you'll explore real-world examples of shoreline and landscaping practices, and learn why they work. You'll see do-it-yourself approaches you can apply at home and get guidance on which practices are the right fit for your property. You'll leave with practical, achievable ideas to reduce runoff, create a more resilient shoreline, and create spaces that fit your lifestyle. Come ready to engage, learn, and walk away with actions you can take right away.

D. How Social Media Really Works Now and How to Avoid Wasting Your Time with It

Presented by: Kivi Leroux Miller, Founder and CSO of the Nonprofit Marketing Guide

Social media has changed. A lot. And most advice out there either feels outdated or impossible to keep up with. In this workshop, we'll cut through the noise and focus on how social media actually works today, and what that means for small, volunteer-driven lake associations. Instead of trying to do everything, you'll learn how to choose the type of content you want to be known for and use it consistently to build recognition and trust. We'll look at what gets attention now, how algorithms reward certain behaviors, and how to match your content to what your audience cares about. You'll leave with clearer direction for your social media plan and practical ideas you can implement right away without burning out your team.

12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch

Enjoy lunch and networking. Visit the wide variety of exhibitors in the pre-function area and the Granite Ballroom, as marked on the map.

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Session 3

A. Stronger Together: Collaborative Approaches to Successful Municipal Code Enforcement

Presented by: Dwight Trueblood, Chair, and Neil Slepian, Vice-Chair, Durham Coastal Conservation Commission; Cris Blackstone, Town of Newmarket; Facilitated by Barbara Richter, Executive Director, New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions

Effective municipal code enforcement isn't just about regulations—it's about teamwork, communication, and community engagement. In this session, you'll explore how towns can collaborate internally and with residents to strengthen ordinance enforcement, including those that safeguard our lakes and other natural resources.

You will hear from the Town of Durham about their updates to shoreland and wetland ordinances, including how they've engaged and educated the public to build support for larger buffer areas. You'll also learn from the Town of Newmarket about their collaboration between the conservation commission and the town planner. You'll leave with practical ideas you can use to improve communication, build partnerships, and support more effective enforcement in your own community.

B. Climate Change and Our Lakes: What It Means for New Hampshire

Presented by: Craig Williamson, Ph.D., retired Emeritus Professor of Biology

Climate change is reshaping lakes across New Hampshire and beyond. In this session, you'll learn what that means for the lakes you care about. You'll explore how changes in water temperature, ice cover, water quality, and aquatic ecosystems are unfolding and what trends scientists are seeing. Renowned limnologist Craig Williamson will break down the latest research and help you understand why lakes are especially sensitive indicators of environmental change. You'll leave with a clearer understanding of what's happening now, and what it could mean for the future of your lake.

C. LakeSmart in Action: New Online Tools and a Community-Based Approach

Presented by: Brea Arvidson, Director of Programs, and Kat Kelleher, Conservation Coordinator, NH LAKES

Even better than before! NH LAKES' LakeSmart Program, the go-to program for lake-friendly living throughout New Hampshire, now offers an updated online portal and an expanded community model. Learn how the online portal helps you track progress, access practical resources, and take meaningful steps toward earning the LakeSmart Award for Lake-Friendly Living. And, find out how the new model can and has brought neighbors together to make lake-friendly living the norm in their community. Whether you're already participating in LakeSmart or curious about getting your neighbors involved, this session is for you.

D. Becoming a 501(c)(3): A Practical Guide for Lake Associations

Presented by: MaryAnn Dempsey, Director, and Jared Davis, Assistant Director, Charitable Trusts, New Hampshire Department of Justice; Gil Watkins, Treasurer, Perkins Pond Protective Association; Thomas Farnen, CLEAR Trust

Forming a 501(c)(3) nonprofit can help your lake association unlock new funding opportunities, strengthen governance, and build credibility with partners and donors. In this session, you'll walk through the process in New Hampshire, using real-world examples and trusted state guidance.

You'll learn the essentials of nonprofit governance, board responsibilities, and compliance, along with common challenges lake associations face during transitions. Case studies will bring these concepts to life, including a successful 501(c)(3) conversion and innovative models like charitable trusts that support long-term lake stewardship. You'll leave with a clear sense of whether nonprofit status is the right fit for your organization, and the key steps to build a strong, sustainable foundation.

2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Session 4

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

Facilitated by Andrea LaMoreaux, President and Policy Advocate, NH LAKES, and a panel of New Hampshire Representatives and Senators, and municipal officials

Protecting our lakes takes leadership. In this session, you'll explore how you can play a role in shaping lake-friendly policies at both the local and state levels. You'll learn how serving in municipal office can help guide your community toward better lake stewardship, and how elected roles at the state level can influence laws that protect lakes across New Hampshire. You'll hear firsthand from municipal leaders and New Hampshire legislators about their experiences running for office, what to expect, and how they've been able to advocate for clean, healthy lakes. You'll leave with a clearer understanding of what it takes to get involved and how you can make an impact.

B. Managing Healthy Shoreland Vegetation: Forest Health, Regulations, and Best Practices

Presented by: Bill Davidson, Forest Specialist, New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands; Ryan Duquette, Shoreland Supervisor, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

Healthy shoreland vegetation is essential for protecting lake water quality, stabilizing soils, and supporting wildlife—but managing these areas can be complex. In this session, you'll explore how to care for shoreland vegetation while responding to emerging threats and meeting state requirements. You'll learn about the increasing impact of the hemlock woolly adelgid on New Hampshire's forests, including treatment options, considerations for pesticide use, and how to balance forest health with environmental protection. You'll also gain a clearer understanding of the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act, including what is allowed within protected shoreland, and how proper vegetation management supports both compliance and lake health.

C. Smart Salt Solutions: Municipal Salt Management Planning for Lake Protection

Presented by: Aubrey Voelker, Salt Reduction Program Coordinator, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services; Scott Kindmond, Technical Specialist, University of New Hampshire Technology Transfer Center; Stu Greer and Mike Thomas, Lake Sunapee Protective Association Watershed Committee

Road salt is a growing threat to New Hampshire's lakes, groundwater, and drinking water—but it doesn't have to be an inevitable one. In this session, you'll learn how municipalities are reducing their salt use while still maintaining winter road safety. Through practical case studies and program overviews, you'll hear about proven strategies, lessons learned, and tools for more efficient and environmentally responsible winter maintenance.

You'll also learn how the Green SnowPro Program, overseen by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, supports municipalities and contractors with training, certification, and resources to optimize salt application. And you'll hear how towns in the Lake Sunapee watershed are working to implement municipal salt management plans. You'll leave with actionable ideas and proven approaches you can apply in your own community to help protect water resources without compromising public safety.

D. Finding Funding: Grant and Loan Program Partnerships to Support Lake and Watershed Planning and Implementation Projects

Presented by: Steve Landry, Supervisor, Watershed Assistance Section, and Katie Zink, Watershed Grant Coordinator, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services; Kyle Pimental, Strafford Regional Planning Commission; Jack Eames, Partridge Lake Property Owners Association

Securing funding is one of the biggest challenges for lake associations working to protect and restore water quality. In this session, you'll learn about key grant and loan programs that support watershed planning, cyanobacteria mitigation, stormwater projects, and restoration efforts.

Experts from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services will walk you through funding opportunities and explain how partnerships with municipalities, regional planning commissions, and water systems can strengthen your application. You'll also hear firsthand from successful applicants who have secured funding through programs such as the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, and the Cyanobacteria Mitigation Loan and Grant Fund. Join this interactive discussion to learn practical strategies and make your next grant or loan application more competitive.