

Pleasant Pond / Cobbosseecontee Stream Lake Association



Summer 2025 Newsletter

Dear lake association members and friends,

Earlier this month we had a strong showing at our annual gathering hosted by Ed and Cheryl Avis on Upper Pleasant Pond. This newsletter is a recap of meeting highlights, plus reports on activities that have unfolded since then. We want to draw special attention to significant changes to our lake association going forward: we are transitioning away from an informal education/information group to an official 501(c)3 organization under new leadership. Read about when and why below.

Watershed Friends. Jennifer Peasnell, Director of Conservation at Watershed Friends (WF), brought us up-to-date on the status of aquatic invasive plant species on our pond and stream. Good news is that NO Eurasian milfoil has been identified in Cobbossee Stream this year, despite patches being spotted last year between the Cobbossee Outlet and the Collins Dam. However, three invasives are present in Pleasant Pond and Cobbossee Stream: European Frogbit, Swollen Bladderwort, and Variable-leaf Milfoil.

- Watershed Friends held a **"Frogbit Friday"** event on August 15 to get volunteers comfortable with what the plant looks like and what the removal process entails so that they can engage volunteers with our removal efforts in a greater capacity next season. Jen foresees volunteer efforts being a large part of our EFB management plan moving forward, so stay tuned if you want to be a more active volunteer.
- This month, WF crews conducted a rake toss sample survey to assess the **Swollen Bladderwort** infestation on Pleasant Pond. Very little was present in the main basin, but the species was found in several locations in Upper Pond, primarily near the boat launch and in the southern end. DNA analysis being done on the samples will give Friends more data and help them prepare a management plan.
- This season's **Variable-leaf Milfoil** mitigation program involves four weeks of removal by the dive team of New England Milfoil and their Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting services. The DASH boat spent two weeks in the stream and on Horseshoe Pond in July and August; the team will be on Pleasant the weeks of September 22 and 29. Thank you to all who contributed to our fundraising appeal in the spring to support milfoil detection and removal costs; donations totaled almost \$10,000, plus four weeks' waterfront housing for the divers.

Jen also reported that the Courtesy Boat Inspection program at the Throrofare Road boat ramps have had excellent coverage this summer—close to 90% on weekends and holidays this season—inspecting both motorized and non-motorized craft entering and leaving our waters.

Cobbossee Watershed District. Wendy Dennis, limnologist for the CWD, told us what we suspected: that Pleasant Pond water quality in 2024 was one of the poorest on record. It did not meet state water quality classification due to algal blooms, which persisted for 4 months in the main pond and 2 months in the upper pond. So far this year, both ponds are now experiencing a bloom that has not reached the severe level, both measuring 2.3 m of water clarity as of July 29.

The concentration of chlorophyll, which indicates algal abundance, and the concentration of phosphorus, which serves as food for algae, are two additional important water quality measurements. The average for each of those parameters in 2024 was substantially above goals for both the main and upper pond, and the highest in 25 years for the main pond. Clearly, there is a need to decrease phosphorus and the

corresponding high algal populations. CWD recommends starting with an assessment of agricultural practices in the watershed; erosion and runoff problems from roads in the watershed; shoreline erosion; and additional underwater monitoring.

CWD has been working to increase state support for lakes through more funding and better policies. They saw some small successes in the legislature this year but are looking to build stronger support. Lake associations may be asked to assist in some of these efforts in the future.

Wendy concluded: *Pleasant Pond, both the larger main basin and the smaller upper pond, is fishable, swimmable, boatable, good for wildlife, and overall, a valuable natural resource, even in a poor water quality condition, and it's worth trying to improve that condition.*

RE: Water Levels. The water level in Pleasant Pond was 3.5 inches below full pond on Aug. 1, and 5 inches below full pond on Aug. 11, which is quite good given the lack of rain in July and early August.

New Mills Dam. This past year, the town of West Gardiner voted to become a joint owner of the dam, along with Richmond, Litchfield, and Gardiner. The four towns underwrite the budget for keeping the dam in good working order. Jack Daniel chairs the dam committee, which consists of volunteers from each of the ownership municipalities. He reported that the dam was inspected by the state in July and found to be in sound condition. The repair project on the cribwork underpinning the dam has been postponed until next fall to allow time to complete the permitting process and fully fund the job.

Facebook Group. Our private FB group (Pleasant Pond/Cobbossee Stream Lake Association) now has 205 members, making it a very convenient platform for communication. Administrator Mark Fish has faithfully vetted would-be joiners to be sure they have a legitimate interest in the pond and stream. However, he does recommend that once our lake association becomes an official nonprofit organization, we also change our FB presence to a public group. Details to come!

The NEW Lake Association – PPCSLA to incorporate as a 501c(3) nonprofit.

Our lake association, and as have the others in our watershed, has benefitted from the Watershed Friends ongoing efforts to manage *aquatic invasive species* (AIS) populations in our lakes and streams for many years, largely without direct costs to us, thanks to very generous donors. This is a very expensive activity which includes courtesy boat inspections (CBI) at boat launches, surveying for the presence and locations of AIS, as well as coordinating the removal of populations when located. Due to the loss of major donors, and poor leadership, the Watershed Friends has reorganized its business plan and seated a new board of directors to oversee the organization. Under this new plan, the Friends sole focus is now on AIS management in the Cobbossee Watershed, and lake associations are billed directly for a portion of the AIS services they need to effectively manage AIS in their lakes and streams. Other important funding support comes from direct donations to the Friends, grants, the Maine DEP and the municipalities in the watershed.

What does this mean for the PPCSLA? Beginning in 2025, the Friends are billing us for the level of AIS services that we have negotiated with them. Pleasant Pond and Cobbosseecontee Stream have serious infestations of AIS as noted above. Typically, we have had Friends' dive teams hand pulling invasives, and 4 weeks of DASH boat services (d~~i~~ver a~~s~~sisted s~~u~~ction h~~a~~rvesting) from New England Milfoil, where populations are most dense. We always have CBI on the weekends and holidays from June through Labor Day weekend. This year, for PP/CS, the actual total cost of the AIS work was about \$60,000, of which the portion we, as a lake association, must raise is approximately \$18,000. So far, we have raised about \$10,500 as of 8-22-25. Thank you donors! Our bill was offset by \$3200 thanks to PPCSLA members very generously opening their homes to the DASH boat crews during the weeks they worked here, thereby saving us \$850/week in housing charges. Thank you! So, we have about \$5000 left to raise by the end of October to fully pay for our AIS services for 2025.

What is the PPCSLA doing about it? The PPCSLA is moving forward to incorporate as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit which gives us a much better basis for fundraising and building a community of supporters who care about our lake and stream and who want to assure that the waters are as clean as possible and free of invasives. We have formed a new Steering Committee dedicated to seeing the incorporation process through and fortifying the organization. Special thanks to all the new steering committee members who stepped up at the meeting to volunteer their time and talents on behalf of our PPCSLA community. The steering committee members will serve one year to get the PPCSLA established as a nonprofit and then there will be open elections at the next PPCSLA annual gathering to elect a Board of Directors for the corporation.

Steering Committee Members and Officers 2025/2026

Greg Anderson, President	Carolyn Bulliner, Vice President	Patsy Dickinson, Secretary
Melissa Monaghan, Treasurer	Beth Whalon, Membership Coord.	Pat Sirois
Tim Burr	Jane Campbell	Mark Blythe
Mary Parker	Martin Naas	

Other volunteers: Mark Fish has kindly volunteered to continue maintaining our Facebook page, and Frank Dumont, a retired web developer, has generously offered to help us develop a PPCSLA website. Carolyn Bulliner's daughter, an attorney, has most graciously offered her assistance as we navigate the paperwork involved in incorporating. A huge thank you to all of these folks for their generous offering of time and talent!

Nest steps: Over the next year you can expect to receive communications from the PPCSLA reporting on our progress and, of course, fundraising appeals for 2026. Membership in the PPCSLA will now come with an annual dues of \$25.00 that will pay for our administrative costs. We will notify the membership when we are able to accept dues payments and donations directly to PPCSLA sometime in 2026.

What can you do now to help? First, the best thing you can do as a member of PPCSLA is to donate generously to the Watershed Friends to help our association pay off our 2025 AIS services share. No amount is too small, but please give what you can. If you've already contributed and can afford a little more, that would be wonderful.

Second, talk to your lake and stream neighbors and (1) explain what's happening and the importance of supporting the Watershed Friends and the PPCSLA, and (2) encourage them to join the PPCSLA mailing list by sharing their email address with us. Email is by far the cheapest way for us to communicate with our members. Use the contact information below to send your email or your neighbor's to our list.

VERY IMPORTANT: When you make a donation to the Friends, please be sure to specify on your check or online that your donation is for PPCSLA. This will assure that your donation goes to pay down our bill and not into their general fund.

DONATE: <https://watershedfriends.com/get-involved/donate-to-the-friends/>

FOCW is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Federal ID 01-0545442

If you have questions, comments or concerns about how PPCSLA is changing, our relationship with the Watershed Friends, or you would like to get involved, please do not hesitate to contact Greg Anderson or any other committee member. Thanks everyone!

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