



WHY SHOULD YOU START A LAKE ASSOCIATION?

The simple answer is that lakes are fragile resources, and extremely sensitive to the effects of human activity in their watersheds.

Humans are drawn to water like steel to a magnet. All the water, exciting water sports, and the restorative beauty of lakes and ponds make waterfront property desirable and increasingly valuable. If today's lakefront property owners hope their children and grandchildren will enjoy the benefits available to themselves today, then caring for their chosen lake is a responsibility they really should consider.

A lake association is one of the most important tools available to lakefront property owners because people can accomplish far more as a group than they can as isolated individuals. Although lake associations are often formed to address a crisis such as invasive aquatic plants, or a drop in water clarity, more and more people today realize its much more efficient and far less expensive to prevent lake problems than it is to repair damage afterwards.

Lake Associations have many useful functions:

- They coalesce a group of lake users and property owners to maintain the lake
- They foster a sense of community (belonging) and group responsibility
- They monitor water quality, track trends, and work to maintain good quality
- They educate lake residents and the public
- They increase the pool of skills, experience and workers dedicated to stewardship of a fragile resource
- They can take advantage of partnership opportunities, e.g. with land trusts, communities, schools, conservation organizations,
- Build a database for effective outreach, action, and capacity building
- They influence and participate in local government decisions
- They Increase lakefront property owners' clout for policy and regulatory influence, proper enforcement, and the ability to attract funding
- They can involve the community of lake users, property owners, and lake- dependent businesses in lake management decisions.
- They voice the need to protect water

If you'd like help starting your own association, call the Maine Congress of Lake Associations at 877-254-2511 (toll-free), or write info@mainecola.org We would be pleased to help you set objectives, plan your first meeting, and give you help with Articles of Incorporation and By-laws. Check us out at: www.mainecola.org

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