

WHAT IS THE LAKE ATTITASH ASSOCIATION?

The Lake Attitash Association (LAA) was formed in 1993 to develop and encourage activities, improvements, and responsible behavior on Lake Attitash and in its watershed for the best interests of residents and visitors, and to preserve the aesthetic, environmental, and recreational values of the lake.

LAA is a non-profit organization managed by volunteers. Any person, family or business interested in supporting the goals of the association is welcome to join.

WHAT IS THE LAA DOING?

Our volunteers are:

- Pursuing major nutrient-loading sources
- Performing water quality tests
- Running weed-watchers events; identifying weeds and determining how to control growth
- Securing grants
- Educating residents and town officials about the situation on the lake
- Spearheading community activities like the Grand Illumination
- Trying to carry out many more tasks with too few volunteers

VOLUNTEER!

Volunteer to help on the Lake Attitash Association. You may be interested in the weed control committee, water quality committee, education committee, grant committee, social activity committee or other areas of interest. We need your help and enthusiasm. There are many more things that need to be done.

Please help us help our lake.

INSIDE: LEARN ABOUT ...

- Fertilizing
- Cleaning up after pets
- Growing shrubs
- Storm drains
- Washing cars and boats
- Pesticides
- Stopping "hitchhikers"
- Boating in shallow waters
- Dumping
- Digging with care
- Educating neighbors
- Cyanobacteria (also called blue/green algae)
- The Lake Attitash Association
- What is the LAA doing?
- Volunteer - we need you!

www.LakeAttitash.org



YOU can help improve Lake Attitash water quality!



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The lake is overloaded with nutrients. This is obvious from the extensive plant and weed growth, algae blooms, and the recent fish kill. Nobody likes the green scum that has appeared on the water.

As an Association, we are working with Amesbury, Merrimac, the State Department of Environmental Protection, the State Department of Agricultural Resources and the US EPA to identify and rectify major sources of nutrients.

We need your help! Nutrients are also being contributed by homes all around the lake, adding up to a high concentration in the water. What can you do as a homeowner? Become aware of what nutrients you may be contributing to the lake, and stop.

FERTILIZING:

Fertilizers feed algae and turn the lake green!

Don't fertilize, but if you feel you must, use **phosphate-free fertilizers**. Fertilizer bags show three numbers – nitrogen amount, phosphorus amount, and potassium amount. Make sure that the middle number is 0. It can be found at Eastern Lumber, Amesbury Industrial Supply and Lowes. This will reduce the phosphorus entering the lake. Phosphorus contributes to plant growth!

Fertilize when rain is not in the forecast.

If you use a professional lawn company, let them know that you do not want phosphate in your lawn treatments!

SCOOP THE POOP:

Dispose of pet waste so that it does not enter storm drains or get washed directly into the lake. Remember that the water carries nutrients from the storm drain to the lake.

VEGETATED BUFFER ZONE:

A vegetated buffer between your home and the lake can separate human/pet activity from the water. This should be natural vegetation that captures the runoff. Avoid having your lawn go directly to the water. Plant shrubs!

STORM DRAINS:

Be aware of the storm drain locations around your home. Remember: anything that enters the storm drains makes its way to the lake.

DIG WITH CARE:

When digging on your property, cover piles of dirt to reduce the runoff during and after a rainstorm.

PESTICIDES:

Limit the use of pesticides. Look for natural methods to deal with pests. Do not apply pesticides near the water or a storm drain or before a rainstorm. Consider a raised vegetable garden.

STOP THE HITCHHIKERS:

Remove plants and weeds from boats and trailers. There are invasive plants and weeds that can easily take over and harm the lake. Invasive water chestnuts have already infiltrated the Back River. Most invasive plants grow faster than native plants and will quickly choke waterways!

BOATING IN SHALLOW WATERS:

Lake Attitash is primarily a shallow water body, and higher-throttle boating in shallow water stirs up sediment and releases nutrients into the water!

AVOID DUMPING:

Avoid pouring anything directly into the lake. It is illegal to dump sand or any chemical into the lake, including weed-killing chemicals.

EDUCATE:

Inform neighbors of what they may be doing to contribute to the nutrient-load, and help them understand the ramifications of their actions.

WASHING CARS/BOATS:

Avoid washing your car or boat near the lake. Use a commercial car wash for both your car and boat. Always try to use phosphorus-free washing fluids.

WHAT IS CYANOBACTERIA AND WHY WAS THE LAKE UNDER A STATE WARNING FOR CONTACT?

Cyanobacteria is sometimes referred to as blue-green algae, and is an issue worldwide. It grows in shallow, warm, slow moving/still water that contains extensive nutrients. It multiplies quickly to form scum; a mass of algae is called a "bloom." The bacteria can create toxins which have adverse health effects.

Extensive rain early this summer unfortunately helped move nutrients into storm drains and Lake Attitash's tributaries. Later, high cyanobacteria counts were recorded in Lake Attitash by the Environmental Protection Agency during testing and research for a nationwide program. As a result, the warning was posted, and the State Department of Public Health began testing water quality on a weekly basis. The state can only lift the warning following two consecutive weeks of test results below advisable levels, and in the absence of visible scum.

WHY CAN'T YOU SWIM WHEN THE WARNING IS IN PLACE?

Negative effects from contact are dependent upon toxicity levels and amount of contact. When toxins are released they can cause nausea; eye, ear and skin irritation; paralysis and other negative side effects.

For more information on cyanobacteria, please visit Amesbury's Lakes and Waterways Commission website:

www.ci.amesbury.ma.us/lakesandwaterways.nfs