

## 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 the lake and in its watershed for the best interests of residents and visitors, and to preserve the aesthetic, environmental, and recreational values of the lake.

The 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:

- Reducing major nutrient 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
- Pursuing many more tasks with volunteers like you!

## 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. We need your help and enthusiasm. There are many more things that need to be done.

## PLEASE HELP US HELP OUR LAKE

For additional information, please refer to our website: [www.LakeAttitash.org](http://www.LakeAttitash.org).

## CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NATIVE PLANTS FOR YOUR BUFFER GARDEN

For a description of the following plants as well as information on creating a buffer garden, please visit [www.LakeAttitash.org](http://www.LakeAttitash.org) and click Water Quality.

### Perennials:

Blue-Eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium*)  
Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*)  
Wild Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*)  
Daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*)  
Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)  
Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*)  
Pennsylvania Sedge Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*)  
Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*)  
Twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*)  
Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*)

### Low growing shrubs:

Lowbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*)  
Maple Leaf Viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*)  
Steeplebush (*Spiraea tomentosa*)  
Sweetfern (*Comptonia peregrina*)  
Pasture Juniper (*Juniperus communis*)  
Rhodora Azalea (*Rhododendron canadense*)  
Sweet Gale (*Myrica gale*)

### Ground Covers:

Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)  
Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)  
Bunchberry/Creeping Dogwood (*Cornus canadensis*)  
Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*)  
Partridge Berry (*Mitchella repens*)  
Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)  
Cinnamon Fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*)  
Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*)



## Living Lake Smart

## Help improve Lake Attitash water quality

The lake is overloaded with nutrients. This is obvious from the extensive plant and weed growth, algae blooms, and the fish kill experienced last summer. Nobody likes the green scum that sometimes appears on our water and we're all unhappy when the lake is put under a state warning for contact.

## We need your help!

Nutrients are 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.



## **Invasive plants**

Two invasive plants have been found in Lake Attitash: Eurasian milfoil and water chestnut. Both grow and reproduce rapidly and can interfere with recreational use of the lake. The LAA started removing water chestnut last summer with a group of volunteers hand-pulling the plant. This process will be necessary for the next several years and will continue to require manpower. We're working with state and federal authorities to eradicate the Eurasian milfoil and will be working to secure financial assistance. Any ideas are welcome. Volunteers are needed to monitor plant growth in the lake.

## **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 in the summer of 2009 demonstrated how nutrients move 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](http://www.ci.amesbury.ma.us/lakesandwaterways.nfs)

## **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 zero. The goal is to maintain nutrients in the soil and keep them out of our lake and phosphorus is of the most concern.

Fertilize when rain is not in the forecast to prevent direct run-off into the lake. If you use a professional lawn company, let them know that you do not want phosphorus in your lawn treatments!

Phosphorus-free fertilizers containing slow-release nitrogen are available at the following locations:

*Amesbury Industrial Supply, 24 High St, Amesbury  
Eastern Lumber, 67 Haverhill Rd (Rt 110), Amesbury  
Harbor Garden Center, 53 Bridge St (Rt 1), Salisbury*

The BEST fertilizer? Leave grass clippings on the lawn; they are a free fertilizer!

## **Garden buffer zone**

A buffer garden is a planted area along the lake that functions to filter runoff, capture pollutants before they reach the lake, separate human and pet activity from the water, and provide a wildlife habitat. A buffer garden is a "living filter." Avoid having your lawn extend directly to the water.

Major pollutants from home gardens and lawns include fertilizers, pesticides and pet droppings.

Major pollutants from driveways and roads include sand, salt, oil and antifreeze.

## **Pesticides**

Limit the use of pesticides. Look for natural methods to control pests. Do not apply pesticides near the water or a storm drain or before a rainstorm.

## **Stop the hitchhikers**

Remove plants and weeds from boats and trailers; plants can easily take over and harm the lake. Invasive water chestnut and milfoil have already infiltrated the cove and 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.

## **Washing cars/boats**

Avoid washing your car or boat near the lake; use a commercial car wash instead. Always try to use phosphorus-free washing fluids.

## **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.

## **Scoop the poop**

Dispose of pet waste so that it does not enter storm drains or get washed directly into the lake.

## **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.

## **Educate**

Inform neighbors of what they may be doing to contribute to the nutrient load, and help them understand the ramifications of their actions. With the help and attention of all Lake Attitash residents as well as those in the watershed, we can hope to see water quality improve in the coming years.