

# Protecting Lakes with LakeSmart

LakeSmart protects lakes, lakefront property values and wildlife habitat. It's an incentivized education program that promotes lake-friendly property management by providing site-specific action plans and recognizing homeowners whose properties prevent pollution. LakeSmart benefits towns with lakes, the economies of entire lake regions and everyone who uses lakes. It's free, voluntary, and non-regulatory.



Lakes are extremely sensitive to human activity. Stormwater and snowmelt pick up and carry nutrient-laden soil and other pollutants from developed areas and deposit them in lakes. Over time these inputs cause harm ranging from cloudy water to fish kills and worse – overgrowth of algae and even health threats. According to Maine's Department of Environmental Protection, "Repeated nuisance algal blooms have been reported on more than 53 Maine lakes, and another 493 are considered to be at significant risk;" that's 22% of Maine's great ponds! These declines continue today despite known science, 45+ years of strong statutory protection and countless publications. We need a better approach to create real world action on the shorelands of Maine lakes.



The messenger makes a difference. Humans are more likely to follow advice from friends and neighbors than from strangers. Think about the last movie you saw, book you read, or restaurant you tried. Chances are a friend recommended it. Fancy brochures and expert advice aren't nearly as persuasive as a tip from a neighbor. This means that lake associations sit in just the right spot to influence homeowners to care for the lake as they care for their land. LakeSmart makes active stewardship the norm throughout the community because it's community-based.





**How LakeSmart works.** LakeSmart focuses on lake shorelands because this narrow strip of land is the last opportunity to capture and infiltrate damaging runoff before it harms the lake, and the shorelands are home base of lake associations. The Maine Lakes Society provides training, all program materials,



and technical assistance without cost to lake associations that host the program. Lake associations publicize LakeSmart, respond to homeowner inquiries, conduct site evaluations, provide individualized action plans for implementing good management, and recognize lake-friendly properties with LakeSmart's coveted Award signs. When posted at the lakeside and driveway entrance, these blue and white plaques point out good stewardship and encourage others to become LakeSmart.

**How to bring LakeSmart home to your lake.** The Maine Lakes Society offers one-day training workshops at locations across Maine each summer, and provides [training videos](#) on its website. Each host group must attend a workshop and practice evaluation skills in a Q/A session with an experienced LakeSmart Evaluator on its home lake before conducting LakeSmart visits on its own. Training, all materials, Q/A session, and ongoing support are provided free of charge to host groups, but new partners must first meet with the LakeSmart Coordinator and formally adopt the program before being accepted as LakeSmart hosts.

## Maine Lakes Society

*Advocacy, Education, and Action to Protect Maine Lakes*

For more information, please write to [lakesmart@mainelakessociety.org](mailto:lakesmart@mainelakessociety.org) or call (207) 495-2301. The current training schedule is posted [here](#).