



Summer Report

Campaign underway to protect Maine's lakes

Our lakes are natural treasures

From Moosehead and Great Pond to countless smaller lakes closer to home, Maine's 6,000 lakes are some of the most special places on earth.

They are beautiful and pristine; home to camps that have been passed down from generation to generation; where we get away to fish, swim, and boat; and where loons, trout, and moose abound. They provide clean drinking water to nearly two-thirds of our state. And they are the economic lifeblood of many communities, generating at least \$3.5 billion annually and sustaining 52,000 jobs.

Water quality is declining

New research from the University of Maine confirms what people are seeing first-hand: The water quality of our lakes is declining. We see it in algal blooms in Sabattus Pond and China Lake, milfoil in Great Pond and Sebago Lake, and dead trout suddenly washing up on the shore of Lake Auburn.

While Maine once ran a world-class lakes protection program, Gov. Paul LePage has run it into the ground—cutting funding, dramatically reducing staff, curtailing educational programs in our schools and technical assistance to lake communities, and even preventing staff scientists from sharing their research.

Once water quality deteriorates, it's very challenging and expensive to reverse. When it comes to water quality, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.



Jack Heddon/Flickr

▲ Canoeing on Churchill Lake

Public mobilized to protect lakes

That's why Environment Maine is working hard to convince our representatives in Augusta to restore and strengthen protections for our lakes—and better enforce the law.

We're taking this issue on the road this summer: Our citizen outreach team is knocking on more than 30,000 doors

between May and August, educating and engaging Mainers in all corners of the state about the risk to our lakes and the need to put important protections back in place.

It's going to take a groundswell of public support to make it happen, and we're confident that with your support, we can protect Maine's lakes for generations to come.



Staff

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◀ *Environment Maine staff meeting with Sen. Angus King.*

To learn more about our work to protect Maine's lakes and other campaigns, visit: www.EnvironmentMaine.org.



To our members

A colleague and friend recently told me a story about a fishing trip he took with friends in July 1980 to Sebago Lake. They had anchored in about 25 feet of water and were in the process of adding another brown trout to their catch, when the stringer suddenly broke loose from the boat and sank to the bottom. They were momentarily dismayed—but then realized they could actually see the fish, still hooked, on the bottom of the crystal clear lake! A member of the group dove right in and came up with the stringer in hand.

Fast-forward 30 years, and water visibility in Sebago Lake extends, at best, just seven or eight feet down. Clarity is one simple indicator of water quality. And the reality is that lake water quality is declining across the state. I hope you're enjoying Maine's lakes this summer. And I also hope you'll join with us to restore and strengthen protections for Maine's lakes, so that crystal clear lakes can be part of Maine's future for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Emily Figdor
Director

Recent action

Green Future Fund: A new way to honor supporters

Environment Maine's new Green Future Fund honors donors who ensure a greener future for Maine by remembering Environment Maine or our sister group, Environment Maine Research & Policy Center, in their estate plans.

Including Environment Maine in your planning costs nothing today, while protecting the places we love and the values we share for the future. With your permission, we'll recognize your gift in our publications, inspiring other members to make their own legacy gifts. Or you may choose to keep your gift private. Either way, any details you choose to provide about your gift will remain confidential. To enroll in the Green Future Fund, or to learn more, call 1-800-841-7299 ext. 312, or email PlannedGiving@EnvironmentMaine.org.

Food hubs bill passed Legislature, vetoed by LePage

"A New England Food Vision," a major new report released this spring, projects that in 50 years our region could grow at least half of its food—a major shift from today that would greatly benefit our environment, health, and economy. In the report, Maine is where the big change happens.

Along with state Sen. Chris Johnson of Lincoln, Environment Maine spearheaded the Maine Foods Bill (LD 1431) this year to start to bring the local foods movement to scale. The bill will jumpstart the development of food hubs across the state.

Food hubs enable small farmers to team up and pool their produce and other products so that together they have enough volume to sell to schools, grocery stores, and hospitals.

At the time of writing, we passed the bill unanimously in the Senate and by a large majority in the House, but Gov. Paul LePage vetoed the bill. We are working hard to overturn the veto.

Photo: Shutterstock.com

Toward a greener future

Environment Maine and Environment Maine Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentMaine.org.



Report: Clean energy is working to cut carbon pollution

This spring, we released a new report, “Moving America Forward,” showing that Maine’s major clean energy policies, such as our renewable energy standard, Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), and clean cars program, reduced carbon pollution by at least 600,000 metric tons in 2012, which is comparable to the annual emissions from 125,000 cars.

Rep. Michaud helped release report

We released the report at news conferences in Portland and Bangor with terrific speakers, including Rep. Mike Michaud and Southern Maine Community College President Ron Cantor. The report was featured on the front page of the Portland Press Herald and Kennebec Journal.

“So much of what makes our state home—lobstering and fishing, farming, maple syrup tapping, our rugged coast, mild summers, fall foliage, and great skiing—are at risk if we fail to take action on global climate change,” Rep. Michaud told the crowd gathered for the event at SMCC’s Sustainability and Energy Alternatives Center.

Policies make the difference

Environment Maine Director Emily Figdor explained that initiatives, programs, and policies ranging from SMCC’s SEA Center to statewide and federal clean energy policies are making real progress in reducing Maine’s carbon pollution.

“By using energy more efficiently and generating more power from clean, renewable sources, we are delivering a one-two punch in the fight against global warming. This report shows that we have the solutions to protect future generations from climate change. Now, we need to ramp up our use of these clean energy solutions, starting with new federal carbon standards for power plants,” said Figdor.

The next step

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s plan to move forward with carbon standards for power plants is the

next major step to fight global warming and shift to clean energy.

Power plants are America’s largest source of the carbon pollution fueling global warming, accounting for about 40 percent of total U.S. emissions. Maine already has such limits through the RGGI program, which should be a model for the upcoming federal standards.

Unfortunately, the American Petroleum Institute, National Mining Association, and many other powerful special interests have launched campaigns to block or undermine federal carbon standards for power plants.

Maine also needs to build on and accelerate the move to clean energy, but the state’s progress on clean energy has stalled under Gov. Paul LePage. There is much more we must do to continue transitioning to clean energy and reducing carbon pollution.

Environment Maine has been building support for strong action on climate change, starting with new EPA carbon pollution standards for power plants, as well as policies to promote solar and wind power in Maine.



Read the report “Moving America Forward” online:
www.EnvironmentMaine.org/reports.

Staff



DEP urged to require manufacturers to disclose toxic phthalates

This spring, along with our colleagues at the Alliance for a Clean & Healthy Maine, we released a study that found phthalates, a toxic chemical, in the bodies of all 25 Mainers who participated.

Phthalates are a hormone-disrupting chemical found in many everyday products like shower curtains, plastic wrap and cosmetics. Exposure to phthalates has been linked to serious health problems, including birth defects, early puberty, and cancer.

Currently, companies don’t have to disclose which products they put phthalates in, so it’s almost impossible to know.

In May, Environment Maine and the Alliance for a Clean & Healthy Maine petitioned the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to require major manufacturers to report their use of toxic phthalates.

This citizen-initiated rulemaking is the same tool we used last year to ban BPA in baby food.

Environment Maine worked with dozens of volunteers around the state to collect signatures submitted in support of the petition. The DEP has begun considering our rule, and we are preparing for a public hearing on it this summer.

News, research, ways to get involved:
www.EnvironmentMaine.org



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Environment Maine

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research, and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Maine. We focus exclusively on protecting Maine's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Ordinance to block tar sands advanced

Environment Maine's top priority for the last year and a half has been protecting Casco Bay and Sebago Lake from the threat of a tar sands oil spill. Since last fall, when the oil industry spent \$750,000 dollars to defeat our ballot initiative, we've made tremendous progress.

Yet the threat becomes more real every day. In March, the Canadian government approved letting tar sands flow to Montreal for the first time ever. Montreal is at the other end of our pipeline, so our work is truly the last defense to keep tar sands from flowing to Portland Harbor.

In South Portland, we continue to facilitate and organize with the citizens group Protect South Portland, and at the time this newsletter went to press, the City Council was preparing to consider an ordinance that will turn a temporary moratorium on shipping tar sands from Casco Bay into permanent protections. South Portland will be the first municipality to take such a step. We are so proud of this work, and we look forward to updating you soon!



littletonkat/flickr

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To learn more and take action to protect Sebago Lake and Casco Bay from tar sands, visit: www.EnvironmentMaine.org.

◀ [Bug Light on Casco Bay in South Portland](#)