

# LAKE LIFE

Winchendon Springs  
Lake Association  
Official Newsletter

SPRING 2026

Lake Monomonic

## President's Message

Work has continued to move forward toward the installation of the new sluice gate for the Main Dam.

The manufacturer, Whipps Inc., has created detailed drawings for the sluice gate. These drawings were based on the requirements of the existing Order of Conditions detailing management of the water level for the lake and as-built measurements of the culvert. A meeting with the DPW and manufacturer was held at the Main Dam to determine the exact placement of the gate within the culvert as well as the configuration of the gate controls in relation to the security fence. The sluice gate drawings were provided to the Winchendon Department of Public Works for review and comment. These drawings were approved and Whipps has now scheduled production of the gate.

The WSLA filed a Notice of Intent (NOI) with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The NOI described the work to be done in the Main Dam culvert as well as the requirement to lower Mirror Pond during the installation process. Mirror Pond must be lowered to dewater the Main Dam culvert. Mirror Pond will be returned to its normal level once the installation is complete. The DEP issued a file number for the project allowing it to proceed.

After the DEP project number was assigned, abutters to Mirror Pond were notified and a public hearing was scheduled and held before the Winchendon Conservation Commission regarding the project. The project was approved by the Conservation Commission.

As of this writing, the DPW still needs to obtain approval from the MA. Department of Conservation and Recreation Dam Safety Division. The WSLA will need to update their request-for quote with the installer as their quotes are only good for 30 days. Manufacturing lead-time is 22-weeks which brings installation into late summer or early fall.

Jon Lewandowski, WSLA President

## UPCOMING 2026 EVENTS

**WSLA Annual Meeting**  
June 20th, 2026

**Boat Concert:**  
**\*Whiskey Johnson**  
July 11th, 2025; 4-7pm

**Golf Tournament**  
Sept 12th, 2025  
Westminster Golf Club

## Membership Fees and Donations

We ask all lakefront owners to pay WSLA membership dues (\$50/year) and to consider an additional contribution. This is essential for continuing to maintain the quality of the lake in all its natural beauty.

**Dues** and additional **tax deductible donations** can be paid in **3 ways**:



**CHECKS:** made payable to **WSLA**, mail to:  
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# WSLA

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# Massachusetts Passes New Boating Law

Starting April 1st, 2026 Massachusetts new boating law went into effect. Anyone born after 1/1/89 must obtain a Boater Safety Certificate, and must have it onboard with them while operating any boat. On April 1, 2028 everyone in Massachusetts will be required to have a boating safety certificate. Please beware to boat on Lake Monomonac, the state of New Hampshire requires everyone to have a Boater Safety Certificate,

**MASSACHUSETTS BOATER SAFETY UPDATE**  
Hanson—Milone Boater Safety Act

Enjoy the water – but make safety your priority.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

- Boater Safety Certificate Required
- Applies to All Operators

**IMPORTANT DEADLINES**

- Born After Jan 1, 1989: By April 1, 2026
- Born Before Jan 1, 1989: By April 1, 2028
- Enforcement Begins September 2026

**WHY IT MATTERS**

- Improve Boater Safety
- Reduce Accidents & Injuries
- Ensure Safe Navigation

## Official Massachusetts Courses

MA Environmental Police offers  
Free in-person classes  
Approved online classes including some

The official state schedule is here:

[Massachusetts Boating Safety Course Schedule](#)

Online Courses (can do from home)

These are state-approved and accepted in Massachusetts:

[Boat-Ed Massachusetts Course](#)  
[iLearnToBoat Massachusetts Course](#)

[Boatwise](#) — often offers approved boating safety classes around NH and MA.

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Office Open: M-W-F, 8-Noon

# Cyanobacteria: Why You Should Care and When You Should Care

If you've read anything about cyanobacteria, you've probably seen that they are one of the oldest classes of bacteria on the planet and have been around for some 2–4 billion years. You may have also read that they are fairly ubiquitous and can be found all over the planet—in freshwater, saltwater, and soil.

So, why do we care when we find them in our lake? Well, it's not so much a matter of when we find them, because they're always there and they can always be detected. Rather, it's when we find them in large numbers and they become visible as a film or scum (also known as a bloom) on the water's surface. Individual cyanobacteria cells are not visible to the naked eye, and their presence in our lake water is normally not visible because the bacteria are there in small numbers. However, when the conditions are right and there's enough food for them (e.g., phosphorus), they multiply quickly and in great numbers, becoming visible as a bloom.



## The “So What?” Factor

OK, so there's a blue-green film on the lake surface; so what? Another well-documented fact about cyanobacteria is how many different species there are and that not all of them are dangerous. Of the approximately 2,700 species currently documented, the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Center for Freshwater Biology has identified what they call the “Dirty Dozen”—12 species of cyanobacteria that produce toxins known to be hazardous to humans and pets.

Like most toxins, it's the dose that makes the poison. For example, let's consider arsenic. Most people accept that arsenic is poisonous, and many will recall stories of arsenic poisoning, such as the old Cary Grant movie *Arsenic and Old Lace*. In ancient times, arsenic was known as the “poison of kings and the king of poisons.” In the not-so-ancient time of 1998, there was a mass poisoning in Japan from arsenic placed in food at a village fair.

Did you know, however, that arsenic is also quite ubiquitous and is found in freshwater, saltwater, and soil? It's also found in different forms and different concentrations, and not all forms are poisonous. Many naturally occurring forms of arsenic, such as those found in shellfish, are not harmful. Sounds a lot like cyanobacteria, doesn't it?

## The Danger of the Bloom

When any of the “Dirty Dozen” cyanobacteria grow rapidly and form a bloom, their naturally occurring toxins reach levels that become dangerous to humans and pets. These particular cyanobacteria produce cyanotoxins including:

- **Neurotoxins:** affecting the nervous system.
- **Hepatotoxins:** affecting the liver.
- **Cytotoxins:** affecting cells in the body.
- **Endotoxins:** resulting in fevers and organ damage.

Exposure to cyanobacteria blooms may cause various symptoms, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, mild fever, skin rashes, eye and nose irritations, numbness, and general malaise. Some studies suggest cyanobacteria may even be linked to serious illnesses such as ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease).


## Guidelines and Safety

The NH DES (New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services) will issue a cyanobacteria warning when the concentration of cyanobacteria cells exceeds 70,000 cells per milliliter of water and includes any of the known dangerous species. This concentration is the point at which toxins reach levels that are dangerous to public health.

NH DES advises people and pets to avoid contact with the water in the vicinity of the bloom. Both WSLA and MLPOA will repost the NH DES Cyanobacteria Warnings to inform lake residents.

**Remember: the dose makes the poison.**

## HOW'S THE WATER?





**Perform a visual assessment before jumping in.**

**Cyanobacteria can look like:**

- Clouds
- Streaks
- Mats
- Scum
- Specks
- Clumps

**Check the Healthy Swimming Mapper!**

**If you see discoloration or unusual growth, report it to NHDES.**



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# Watershed Management Plan (WMP) Spring Update

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TO COME-Stan Writing

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## MLPOA/WSLA Boards Meet to Work Together

The WSLA and MLPOA boards met to discuss general communication collaboration and the Watershed Management Plan (WMP).

The meeting covered updates on the WMP progress, and ongoing studies of shoreline, septic systems, and phosphorus levels. The boards discussed the LakeSmart program as a way to engage property owners in water quality improvements before the full WMP report is released in October. They also reviewed plans for invasive milfoil treatment, Lake Host program, and upcoming events including our Lake Education Day, and a fall WSLA golf tournament fundraiser.

The boards agreed to hold future joint meetings periodically, potentially twice a year in April and September. **Two organizations, one lake.**

**Save the Date!**

WINCHENDON SPRINGS LAKE ASSOCIATION

*8th Annual*

# GOLF

• TOURNAMENT •

SATURDAY  
SEPTEMBER  
12, 2026



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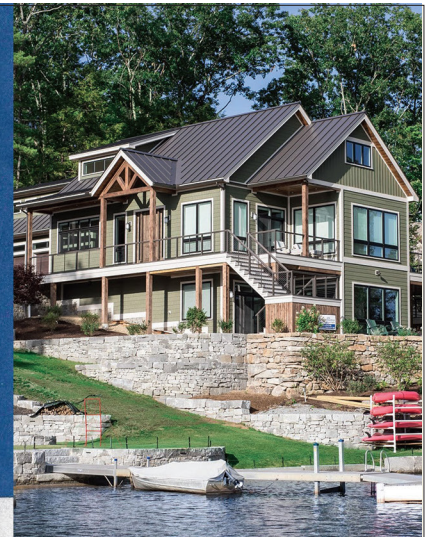
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# MLPOA

Monomac Lake Property  
Owners Association

Our mission is to preserve and protect the natural beauty, water quality, and recreational value of Lake Monomac and its surrounding watershed, promote responsible enjoyment of the lake, support public safety and law enforcement, educate the community about lake stewardship, and manage resources in service of these goals for the benefit of current and future generations.

[monomac.org](http://monomac.org)

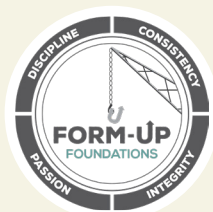
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### Lake Clean Up Days

Despite a low turn out, WSLA Board together with 4 volunteers joined the town of Winchendon's Earth Day Roadside Cleanup, spending the morning of May 2nd cleaning the roads surrounding the lake. As many as 15+ large trash bags of litter was collected along with a number of car tires and a rusted out snowmobile that was removed from the shoreline.

**Missed it? No problem.** Please make an effort to keep our roadways in your area clean.

### WSLA Annual Meeting Reminder

Saturday, June 20th at the Rindge Rec Center on Wellington Road. Coffee social at 8:30am. Meeting begins at 9am. We will be presenting a program about our Watershed Management Plan and what it means for you and our lake, as well as other topics. This is a great opportunity to meet us and get involved. More information, as well as the agenda, will be emailed closer to the meeting date. Mark your calendar now!