



The Amston Laker

President's Note – Eyes on the Lake

Hi neighbors,

Here we are at the beginning of another summer season and how lucky are we to be able to share this little piece of heaven called Amston Lake! First of all, I want to thank everyone who volunteered in one way or another throughout the year – your help is very much appreciated and it goes a long way in helping to build community and strengthen our bond as neighbors. You make a difference!

As you should be aware through our email blasts, in the last couple of years we have discovered an invasive non-native plant species in the lake. The good news is, we caught it early and our Lake Health Committee, along with our limnologist, addressed it. We continue to monitor the situation but have found smaller areas within the lake where it has spread. It is a top priority of the District Board of Directors but it seems that no lake is immune. The DEEP has also made it a priority, as left unchecked it can foul and choke many of the state's waterways.

This is where all of you can help. We are launching "Eyes on the Lake." What is most important is to catch issues with potential invasive species early – to that end the Lake Health Committee has created laminated cards with pictures of milfoil and hydrilla species. These cards will be handed out during our lake pass distribution days.

We are asking everyone who spends time on the water to familiarize yourself with the identification of these species and keep an eye open while you are on the water. If you think you have spotted a plant, remember the location, "drop a pin" on your phone, and contact any of the board members. Do not attempt to remove the plants as they can easily spread through fragmentation. The board will follow up with an investigation and appropriate measures.

The lake is what we all have in common. Whatever your favorite activity within the lake community is, the more we stay vigilant in its protection, the longer we can all enjoy what it has to offer.

Be safe and smart out there.

Frank Hoisl, President

Amston Lake District Board of Directors

If you haven't been receiving our periodic email blasts please go to our website www.amstonlake.org and sign up. Don't miss another informative update!

Have Renters or Guests?

If you plan to have renters or guests using your Amston Lake property this season, please ensure that they know the rules and can help protect the lake and watershed. Following are some tips to consider (and good reminders for all of us!):

- Explain that this is a private lake, and provide current lake passes to give your guests access to the beaches and ROWs. Inform them that cars without current tags in ALD parking areas may be towed.
- If you or your tenants or guests bring any boat from any other body of water, you must first either clean it thoroughly or dry out your boat, trailer, and fishing gear for a minimum of five days to prevent foreign species contamination by invasive weeds. This is known as the “Clean, Drain & Dry” protocol.
- Inform your guests that dogs are not allowed on the beaches and ROWs April 1 – September 30.
- When walking around the District, make sure your guests pick up after their pets. This is important to help keep bacteria out of the water, and a courtesy to fellow walkers and landowners.
- Be sure they adhere to our “carry out what you carry in” policy at the beaches and ROWs. We do not offer trash receptacles, and they must plan on taking home any trash to discard it themselves. No trash must be left in or around the porta-potties.
- Make sure renters/guests know their location (including whether they are on the Hebron or Lebanon side of the lake) for food or other deliveries, and especially in case of an emergency.

Spongy Moths, Emerald Ash and Chestnut Borers – Oh My!

If you’ve noticed more tree work being done around the lake in recent years, it’s with good reason.

Emerald ash borers were discovered in Connecticut in 2012 and, as their name implies, are particularly damaging to ash trees. There was a drought in 2015 and 2016, when the spongy moth began to spread. Then there were storms in 2018, which compounded the situation.

“Widespread oak mortality, particularly in eastern Connecticut, began in summer 2017 and continued through 2018,” the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection said on its website. “By summer 2018, the leaves on many oak trees began to turn brown. This was caused by another insect, the two-lined chestnut borer, which attacks and kills vulnerable oak trees stressed by previous defoliations.” Currently, beech trees throughout the state (we have many at Amston Lake) are being infected with beech leaf disease, which has a very high mortality rate.

Over the last three years, the ALD has worked with a local arborist to evaluate the condition of trees on District property and remove those that were a safety concern. We expect this will be an ongoing issue and ask that you watch out for hazardous limbs on trees around the lake or when visiting a beach or ROW.

The good news is, you’ve probably noticed an (over)abundance of maple seedlings in your lawn, your garden, and even your driveway this spring! Both red and sugar maples had abundant seed years last year, and hopefully these seedlings will take root and flourish, to somewhat make up for the tree deaths of recent years.



Spongy Moth



Emerald Ash



Chestnut Borers

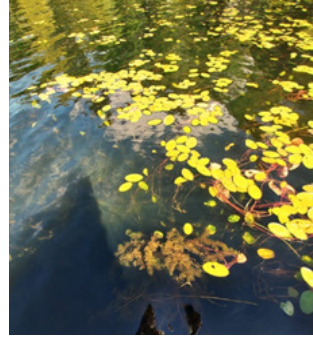
photo credits from CT.gov

HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD

Protect Our Lake From Invasive Aquatic Plants!

Eurasian Watermilfoil was discovered in Amston Lake in 2022 and 2023. This plant forms thick mats in shallow areas of a lake, quickly growing and spreading to block sunlight, killing off native aquatic plants, animals, fish, and other underwater species that rely on native plants for food and water.

If you think you see this plant, **DON'T TOUCH IT** since this can cause it to fragment and migrate to other areas of the lake.



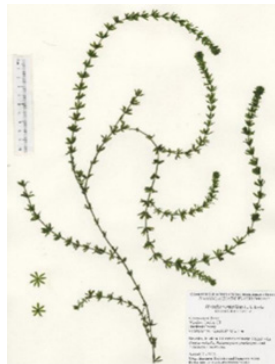
Do you think you've found EWM in the lake?

Take a clear photo, record the GPS coordinates, and send an email to:

- Al Fichtel fickerama@yahoo.com
- Jeff Arpin amstonbodjeffarpin@gmail.com
- Frank Hoisl hoislfr@gmail.com

INVASIVE SPECIES ADVISORY

Hydrilla - not discovered in Amston Lake so far but found in many areas of CT



This plant is considered one of the world's most invasive aquatic plants! It forms dense mats in both shallow and deep-water areas. It can alter water chemistry and dissolved oxygen levels impacting native plants, animals, and fish populations. It prevents swimming, boating, and fishing.

If you think you see this plant, **DON'T TOUCH IT** since this can cause it to fragment and migrate to other areas of the lake. Please make note of its location and notify the Amston Lake Board of Directors as soon as possible.

Prevention is the most important management option for invasives. Routine and thorough inspection and sanitation of recreational equipment will prevent spread. Any aquatic plant debris on boats, trailers, livewells, boat bilges, and fishing equipment should be disposed of away from lakes, ponds and rivers. Inspections must be thorough: a study by researchers in Denmark found fragments that were less than 1 inch long (2 cm) and with only two nodes are able to develop roots and colonize.

ALD Website Scavenger Hunt

Ever wonder how large Amston Lake is, the impact of invasive weeds, or where to read the Amston Lake District ordinances? You can find it all on the amstonlake.org website! Try your hand at this quiz/scavenger hunt. (See page 7 for hints on how to find answers on the amstonlake.org website.)

1. Amston Lake got its name in 1912. What was it called before then?
2. Where can I find out if there are outstanding Amston Lake District (ALD) taxes due on a property in the District?
3. How can I send an email to the Board of Directors to ask a question or get more information?
4. Why is fertilizer containing phosphorous bad for the lake?
5. I want to find out when the Beaches and ROWs spring and fall cleanup days are scheduled.
6. Amston Lake has two dams. What are their names?
7. Who do I contact to launch my boat from the Main Beach boat ramp?
8. What is the maximum distance from the shoreline a dock can extend? A raft?
9. How can I receive the latest news from the District?

Learn How You Can Help Our Amston Lake Turtles!

Something many of us take for granted in the warm seasons are the turtles that we see in our lake. Most of us know from experience that when you approach a turtle they quickly dive into the water, and it turns out to be for a good reason. According to the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), freshwater turtles are some of the most trafficked species in the country.

Surprisingly, despite the threats to turtles in Connecticut, the CT DEEP allows snapping turtles 13 inches or larger to be taken from July 15 through Sept. 30 with a permit. However, the Amston Lake District ordinance section 2008.5(d) states that, "...hunting and trapping are prohibited on any District Properties or District Waters." Removing turtles from Amston Lake is strictly prohibited. According to CT DEEP, to keep turtles alive and safe, you should:

- Leave turtles in the wild.
- Never release a captive turtle into the wild.
- Do not disturb nesting turtles.
- Watch out for turtles crossing the road, as you drive.
- Learn more about turtles and educate others.
- Report poaching:

Save these Numbers!

USFWS anonymous tip line: 1-844-FWS-TIPS (397-8477) or email FWS_TIPS@fws.gov

- CT DEEP Dispatch (EnCon Police) Emergency: 860-424-3333
- TIP – Turn in Poachers Hotline: 1-800-842-HELP (4357)



Amston Lake Access Passes

We're in the process of issuing this year's bright blue car hang tags, personal keychain tags, and boat stickers. This spring, we added the option of prefilled forms with last year's data (thanks to Donna Ciarfella and Liz Bowen!), so it's easier than ever! The new tags must be displayed no later than July 1, 2024, when the old ones expire. Your boats must display a valid tag when in the lake or stored on an ALD rack, your car must display a valid hang tag when parked on any ALD property, and you must present your keychain tag when using any of our beaches or ROWs – these policies are for all of us! Be sure to register online at amstonlake.org prior to picking up your passes during one of the remaining pass distribution dates at the clubhouse:

Saturday, May 25, 10 a.m. – noon

Saturday, June 15, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Sunday, June 30, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

For more information, click on Lake Activities, Pass Information on the website or contact board member Karen Patterson at pattersonk113@gmail.com.



Amston Lake Association (ALA)

“All Things Fun” at the Lake!

John Matra, President

The ALA has been an important part of the Amston Lake community since 1942, providing social and cultural opportunities throughout the year. The ALA is a vibrant all-volunteer organization. **We are a social club and are a separate organization from the Amston Lake District (ALD)**, the tax district.

Annual dues of \$30 per household allow us to maintain and improve the clubhouse (both inside and out) and subsidize many of our activities. Members also enjoy discounts on merchandise and clubhouse usage.

Activities from our 2023 Season included:

- Lake Day
- Food Trucks
- Sunday Yoga and Yoga Fest
- Speaker Series
- Oktoberfest Dinner & Beer Tasting
- Thanksgiving Potluck & Wine Tasting
- March Madness Watch Party
- Paella Dinner
- Tiki Night
- Game Nights
- Snowbird Dinner
- Book Club
- Santa Visit
- Holiday Party
- Movie Nights
- July 4th Parade & Ice Cream
- Hot Dog Social
- Chocolate Bingo
- Morning Coffees
- Fishing Derbies

2024 events and activities are posted on our website: www.amstonlakeassociation.com and Facebook group – “Amston Lake Assoc. – Social Events & Clubhouse.” Activities and events are added throughout the season, so be sure to visit often.

To promote community, to date the ALA has not differentiated between member households and non-member households. Over the past several years, our paid membership households have been declining, while the popularity and attendance at ALA events has increased dramatically.

Starting with the 2024/2025 season, the ALA will be implementing household member versus non-member pricing at some ALA events. Members will receive a membership card, two key tags, and a membership number. This number will provide member households with preferred event pricing and discounts. Events will still be open to all Amston Lake District residents, but non-member households may not be entitled to the same benefits as members.

You will see **significant** improvements at the clubhouse this spring! The exterior has been resided, the exit doors have been replaced, new bathroom windows and doors have been installed, and our landscape project is underway.

Our membership drive began on April 13 (first day of ALD lake pass distribution) at the clubhouse and will go through June.

If you’ve been an ALA member in the past – thank you! If you are not a member, please consider joining ALA – there is something for everyone.

John Matra
ALA President

Consider Joining Us on a Committee!

Our volunteers are the heart of our community! Without them, we could not do a fraction of the tasks and activities associated with running the District, especially when it comes to keeping our lake healthy and maintaining our beaches and ROWs. But we can always use more help! If you are interested in getting involved in any of the organizations or committees below or have questions, please reach out to any board member, to point you in the right direction.

- Amston Lake District (ALD) Board of Directors – our nine-member board has three openings each year, elected at the District annual meeting in May.
- Committees under the ALD Board of Directors include: Beaches and ROWs, Lake Health, Lebanon Roads, Long-Term Financial Planning, and Weeds. You do not need to be a board member to join a committee.

You might also consider volunteering for the Amston Lake Association (ALA), which is a separate organization from the ALD (think ALA = parks & rec, and ALD = government). The ALA organizes a huge variety of social events and maintains the ALA clubhouse.

Thanks to everyone who volunteers their time and support to make this community great!

**2024 Boat/trailer
Inspectors on call
7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.:**
(when available):

Carl Wool 860-334-9754

Al Fichtel 860-338-4300

Jim Delisle 860-707-6512

Dave Arnold 860-228-1944

Marge Arnold 860-228-1944

Protect Our Lake From Invasive Species

For the safety of our lake, the Amston Lake District requires that all boats/trailers must first be inspected.

- Boat launching off trailers is strictly **prohibited** from private property. Residents' boats launched from trailers must first be inspected at the Main Beach boat launch area to check for the presence of invasive weeds (see list of inspectors or visit www.amstonlake.org for more details).
- If you or your tenants or guests bring any boat from any other body of water, you must first either clean it thoroughly or dry out your boat, trailer, and fishing gear for a minimum of five days to prevent foreign species contamination by invasive weeds. This is known as the "Clean, Drain & Dry" protocol.

Tips on Porta-Potty Use

*There once was a beach-goer named Ron,
Who threw trash in the portable john.
It clogged the machine,
That keeps the john clean,
And in a jiffy the biffy was gone!*

We know it seems silly to have to provide reminders on porta-potty use, but every year, we have problems with unacceptable materials placed in the porta-potties. You might think it's okay to toss trash in the porta-potties, but...it's not. Those porta-potties have to be pumped, and trash can clog up the hoses. And if a piece of trash does make it through,

it becomes a problem at the other end when the truck is flushed. Bottom line (as it were): No trash in the potty, or the potties will go.

Continued issues may result in cancellation of our contract and our ability to provide this service to residents. Please do your part to not put these items in the porta-potties, to remind visitors and fellow residents to do the same, and follow the "carry in, carry out" motto!

- No garbage or litter
- No diapers
- No dog poo plastic bags

Limerick used with permission from Jack Savage, SPFNH

Share the Road

We hope that all members of our lake community – both drivers AND pedestrians – acknowledge each other and their mutual rights to use our roads, and work together to make our roads as safe as possible for everyone.

- Drivers, please drive carefully around the lake – remember, the speed limit is only 25 m.p.h. on the town roads, and an even lower 15 m.p.h. on the Lebanon private roads. Keep an eye out for pedestrians (especially children!), and bicyclists.
- Pedestrians, please walk single file at the side of the road, *facing* traffic.
- Residents, educate your children on appropriate behavior and rules of the road when riding bicycles; bicyclists should ride *with* traffic.
- Please have control of your pets at all times and walk them at the side of the road so the animal doesn't wander into or across the road in front of a vehicle.
- Remember to wear light-colored clothing and reflective gear, especially at night, dusk, or dawn – and/or carry a flashlight so you and your pets and children are visible. *Stay safe, everyone!*

Make Swimming Safety a Priority

In the United States, swimming is the fourth most popular recreational activity. It ranks first in popularity among children and teens ages 7 – 17. Unfortunately, water activities result in roughly 4,000 deaths per year. Tragedies can (and do) happen anywhere – including Amston Lake. Enjoy swimming in the lake by following a few safety tips.

Know the depth of the water

The hazard posed by deep water is closely tied to swimming ability, and the definition of “deep” depends on a person’s height. Non-swimmers of all ages entering water over their head will immediately begin the drowning process, will be unable to move even a few feet to safety, will not be able to call for help, and, if unaided, will likely submerge in 20 to 60 seconds. A sudden change in water depth that is only a mild surprise for good swimmers can be fatal for non-swimmers.

Wear proper personal flotation device

U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets add an extra layer of protection, particularly for weak or non-swimmers who might not be able to avoid deep water, such as swimming from boats, or small

children who are not tall enough to stand in the shallow water. To be effective, life jackets must be properly sized and correctly fastened. Do not rely on floats such as tubes, air mattresses, or “floaties” for protection. A non-swimmer knocked off a float will be unable to reach for it. You should never use floats where you can't swim or easily stand.

Designate a water watcher

Make sure a responsible person remains undistracted and constantly watches young children and adolescents swimming or playing in or around water, even if they know how to swim. Young children or inexperienced swimmers need to be within an arm's reach of an adult at all times.

Never swim alone

Even excellent swimmers should never swim alone – drowning can occur at any water depth due to unexpected medical complications. Swimmers at Amston Lake may overestimate their ability to handle adverse water conditions, such as cold or moving water, and their ability to swim long distances.

Adapted from “Swim Area Safety”, watersafetyusa.org.

Hints for ALD Website Scavenger Hunt

(from pg. 4):

1. Amston Lake History (p.2)
2. Tax Collector > Pay Online or Check Balance
3. Contact Us
4. Lake Health
5. Board of Directors/Meetings > Committee Meeting Minutes > Beaches & ROWs > Current and Past Minutes
6. Dams
7. Lake Activities > Boat Inspector Contacts
8. Ordinances, Info & Forms > ALD-Ordinances-rev-6-12-21 (p.4)
9. Send Me News From the ALD

Police & Security

We continue to work with the resident troopers in Hebron, Lebanon and Colchester to provide random patrols. Property owners are encouraged to report suspicious activity to the police immediately. **DO NOT CONFRONT ANYONE!** We also recommend that property owners lock their vehicle doors and keep valuables out of plain sight.

**Emergency calls:
911**

**Lebanon Resident Trooper:
860-642-7730**

**Hebron Resident Trooper:
860-228-3710**

**Troop K (Colchester):
860-465-5400**



Public Safety

For the safety and well-being of all in our community, we urge all property owners to clearly display their property address. Time is a critical factor for emergency services. Every minute lost to inadequately marked homes can make the difference between life and death, and damage or total destruction. It could save your life, or the life of someone you love! Property owners can purchase reflective address markers for \$15 from either the Hebron Fire Department or the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary. Each marker displays the property address on both sides with reflective lettering and is suitable for attachment to mailboxes, trees, and posts. Remember, *If They Can't Find You... They Can't Help You!*

Extras:

NOTICE: Fireworks are prohibited on all Amston Lake District property!

No lifeguards are on duty at any time – swimming and water activities are at your own risk!!

We are always looking for responsible boat inspectors to join the team. Contact inspector Dave Arnold for more information.

Thanks to our 2024 newsletter contributors:

Jeff Arpin

Liz Bowen

Donna Ciarfella

Laurel Hennebury

Frank Hoisl

John Matra

Karen Patterson

Jean Waleszczyk



Jeff Arpin Stormwater Testing



Deepwater Testing

A big thank you to all volunteers who keep things running around here! We can always use more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact an ALD Board member, using the “contact us” feature on the ALD website www.amstonlake.org. If you’re interested in volunteering for social events here at the lake, check out the ALA website, amstonlakeassociation.com.