



The Amston Laker

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As I reflect on my 11 years in this District and on the Amston Lake Board of Directors, as well as my first year as president of the board, I am filled with gratitude. It has been an honor to serve a community that cares so deeply about our lake, our shared spaces, and the spirit that makes this place feel like home.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to every volunteer, every committee member, and every resident who has stepped forward over the years. Your time, energy, and dedication are the backbone of everything we accomplish. Whether you've helped organize events, maintained our facilities, supported our committees, or simply shown up to lend a hand, you have made a meaningful difference.

I am proud of what we've achieved together, and I am equally excited for what lies ahead. I look forward to many more years of working alongside you to strengthen and enhance our lake community.

As we move forward, I encourage each of you to consider joining a committee or getting involved in a way that fits your interests. When more voices and hands come together, our community becomes stronger, more vibrant, and even better than before.

Thank you again for your trust, your partnership, and your commitment. I am grateful for the past 11 years and optimistic about all that we will continue to build together.

With appreciation,

Brandon Pelegano, President
Amston Lake District Board of Directors

Stay Engaged and Informed

If you haven't been receiving periodic email blasts from the board, you are missing out! You might assume that since the tax collector has your email address, or you submitted your email when you signed up for lake passes, that you're on "the list." But these are all separate databases – and the email blast list is an entirely separate list. The ALD email blasts are sent out a few times a month (less in the winter – the clerk needs a break!), and are filled with useful, timely information and reminders. It's the only method the board has to communicate quickly with a large number of people. To sign up, visit amstonlake.org and click the link in the upper right corner.

Important Dates:

- Annual Meeting: **Saturday, May 31**
- CAES presentation: **Saturday, June 6**
- Last day of fiscal year and last day for Green passes: **June 30**
- GZA presentation: **Saturday, June 20**
- Last day for boats at docks: **Thursday, October 15**
- Last day for boats on racks: **Sunday, October 31**

Watch the website and the email blasts for more information!

From the Amston Lake Clerk:

Our nine-member board of directors meets on the third Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. Meetings are hybrid, so you can join on Zoom, or attend in person at the ALA clubhouse. Zoom connection info, meeting dates, agendas, minutes, and recordings are all available on the ALD website. There is a time for resident comments, and afterwards the meeting is strictly limited to board discussion. The Amston Lake District holds our annual meeting each May, where eligible residents vote on the upcoming budget, and elect directors and officers. To be eligible to vote, you must be either a registered Connecticut voter with a home address in the Amston Lake District, OR be an ALD property owner.

The annual meeting is typically lightly attended, meaning that a small number of residents vote to decide how to spend your tax dollars. Please stay informed, by attending the monthly meetings in person or on Zoom, reading or listening to the meeting minutes on the website, and most importantly, attending the annual meeting. Besides, it's a good way to say hello to your neighbors after a long, cold winter!

2026 Lake Passes

2026 marks the second year of the striped boat stickers for all boats launched from a trailer. These stickers are the result of the July 2024 ordinance change which clarifies that residents/owners may only receive boat stickers for boats that they actually own. This is one part of our efforts to reduce the chance of introducing invasive plant species into the lake. To obtain the special striped boat sticker, part of the lake pass registration process requires applicants to show a title or current registration in their name for the boat being registered.

If you haven't yet registered for your lake passes, boat stickers, or auto hang tags, visit the amstonlake.org website, or use the unique link that was emailed to you, which will prefill last year's information. New purple tags must be displayed by July 1, 2026, when the old green ones expire. Contact Karen Patterson at amstonlakepasses@gmail.com with any questions.

Remaining lake pass distribution dates at the ALA clubhouse, 16 Wood Acres Rd, are listed below:

- **Sat, May 23**
10 a.m. – noon
- **Sat, June 13**
10 a.m. – noon
- **Sun, June 28**
10 a.m. – noon

Recognize that Beach Pass Checker?

Once again this year, from late spring until late summer, members of our community will be at Main and Lollipop Beaches helping to verify that all residents have valid beach pass tags. Our Beach Pass Checker team does a great job on behalf of the District! Five years ago, the District switched from hiring private security to using our friends and neighbors here at the lake for this essential work. The idea was that members of our community would be more committed to protecting the lake, and that the dollars spent by the Amston Lake District on beach pass checking would stay within our community.

The Beach Pass Checkers will be out on almost all days when we have "beach weather" – hopefully that will be many, many warm sunny days this summer! Please remember that all residents (and their guests or people renting their property) entering the beaches must have their beach tag with them every time they go to the beach (even if you've lived here for decades). It's easy – show your tag, the checker will record your information, and you'll continue on to enjoy our wonderful beaches and water!

Also, don't forget to hang your parking tag in your car if you drive to the beaches.

Keep in mind that the Beach Pass Checkers are our friends and neighbors here at Amston Lake, doing important work for our community. Please follow the rules, and be kind and courteous to them.



What is the Difference Between Algae & Cyanobacteria?

Algae are a diverse group of aquatic organisms that perform photosynthesis. Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, *are often responsible for harmful algal blooms* due to their ability to produce toxins.

We have seen both filamentous and cyanobacteria blooms at Amston Lake.

Filamentous algae are a type of green algae characterized by long, thread-like structures. These algae consist of cells that are connected longitudinally, forming filaments that can be seen with the naked eye. They typically grow in freshwater environments, such as ponds and lakes, often attaching to surfaces like rocks or other aquatic plants. When conditions are favorable, they can form large floating mats, commonly referred to as “pond scum.” These mats can trap gases and affect water quality.

Any overabundant plant growth is a symptom of excessive nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) in the lake.

Mechanical control of filamentous algae usually involves netting or raking the algae mats from the water surface. The Amston Lake Health Committee (ALHC) has worked with District residents to gather filamentous algae from kayaks with good results. If this method is used, it is important to dispose of the algae mats away from the water’s edge to prevent nutrients from reentering the water as the algae decays. While this method is labor-intensive and time-consuming, it can be very effective in small areas. It is also advantageous because it results in a removal of nutrients from the lake, which may help to prevent future algae growth.

Algal blooms can negatively affect fish populations by depleting oxygen levels and producing toxins. This can lead to fish kills and other disruptions to the aquatic ecosystem.

Non-toxic Algae Blooms:



Floating rafts



Bubbling scum

HAB Stands for Harmful Algal Bloom

These occur when cyanobacteria, often referred to as blue-green algae, grow excessively in freshwater bodies. This rapid growth can lead to visible patches on the water’s surface and may produce toxins harmful to humans and aquatic life. Common signs of HABs include discolored water, strong odors, and surface scums. Environmental conditions such as warm temperatures and nutrient pollution often contribute to the development of these blooms



HAB may look like parallel streaks, usually green on the surface



HAB may look like blue, green, or white spilled paint



HAB may make water look bright green or like pea soup

Because it is hard to tell an HAB from a non-harmful algal bloom, it is best to avoid swimming, boating, otherwise recreating in, or drinking water with a bloom.

People, pets, and livestock should **avoid contact with** any floating mats, scums, or discolored water. Colors can include shades of green, blue-green, yellow, brown or red.

If you see it, report it to the ALHC so a sample can be taken and signage installed as necessary.

Amston Lake Budget Process

Perhaps you are not familiar with how the ALD Board of Directors comes up with the budget for each fiscal year. I hope this article provides clarity to the District budgeting process.

Budgets are created for each fund in the District as determined is necessary for the coming fiscal year. The process begins in February and ends in April or May with a vote by the board to present the budget to the residents at the annual meeting

The General and Roads funds have a budget determined each year as they are fundamental to “operating” the lake and the private roads on the Lebanon side of the lake.

Other funds and their purposes are listed below and would only require a budget in the coming fiscal year if repairs or upgrades are anticipated/necessary.

- **Dam** – records expenses associated with inspections and repairs to the Main and Duck Pond dams.
- **Invasive Plant** – established in June, 2015 to record expenses for the removal of invasive plants from lake waters.
- **Docks** – created in 2024-5 fiscal year to record revenue and expenses associated with the District-managed docks.
- **Clubhouse** – created in 2024-5 fiscal year to record revenue and expenses associated with ALA clubhouse improvements.
- **Emergency (Rainy Day/Reserve)** – established in June, 2015 to set aside monies to minimize the need to borrow from third parties to pay for unplanned expenses that exceed the available balance in any other fund.

The General Fund budget is broken down into four sections: Administrative, Lake Health, Beaches and Rows, and Other Lake Expenses. Inputs for the coming fiscal year are gathered from the board members that monitor each section and combined into the total expenses for the fund. The treasurer and members of the board may make some adjustments up or down based on changing expense requirements. The Lebanon Roads budget is provided by the Roads Committee based on snow removal, sanding, and repairs anticipated for the coming year. Other funds’ budgets are based on anticipated repairs or upgrades to the particular item.

Once the overall budget is determined by board vote, then the tax revenue requirement is considered. All tax revenue except the Roads Fund is required to be split between the two towns equally. The Roads Fund tax revenue is collected from Lebanon residents only.

If any fund that has expenses planned and has a balance, the board can propose to use some of those funds to reduce the tax requirement.

After budget and tax requirement proposals are approved by the board, then the annual meeting presentation is prepared and presented for the District-wide vote. Each budget and associated tax revenue is voted on separately by the appropriate District voters. See you at the annual meeting!

Jim Caines, ALD Treasurer

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.



Amston Lake Association (ALA)

Bringing Our Community Together

John Matra, *President, Amston Lake Association*

Dear Amston Lake Neighbors,

As we move into another season at Amston Lake, I want to take time to highlight the role of the Amston Lake Association (ALA) and the benefits of being a member. Our organization is dedicated to fostering a vibrant social community and organizing events that bring neighbors together.

What We Do

The ALA plays a vital role in enhancing the social life of Amston Lake. Our efforts include:

- **Community Events:** We organize seasonal events, social gatherings, and volunteer opportunities to foster a strong sense of community.
- **Beach and Common Area Gatherings:** We coordinate fun and inclusive activities at our beaches and community clubhouse.
- **Social Programs and Clubs:** We facilitate various interest groups and recreational activities for all ages.
- **Communication and Connection:** We keep residents informed about social happenings through Facebook postings, the ALA website, and signboards.

Benefits of Membership

ALA membership is just \$30 annually *per household*—an incredible value for the many social events and community benefits it provides. Becoming a member of ALA not only helps support these initiatives but also provides direct benefits to you and your family, including:

- Access to exclusive Association-hosted social events
- Regular updates on community activities and opportunities to make new friends
- A shared commitment to building a warm and welcoming community
- Discounted participation fees at ALA-sponsored events

Get Involved!

You can become a member at one of the ALD boat pass distribution events or online at www.amstonlakeassociation.com. Your support and participation are essential to keeping Amston Lake a lively and connected community. Whether through volunteering, attending meetings, or simply joining in on events, every effort makes a difference.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible community. If you are not yet a member, I encourage you to join the Amston Lake Association today and help us continue our mission of bringing people together.

Fishing Licenses:

A fishing license is required in the state of CT for anyone age 16 or older. Fishing licenses are available online from the CT Dept of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and from many town clerk's offices.

2026 Boat/trailer Inspectors on call 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Al Fichtel 860-338-4300

Jim Delisle 860-707-6512

Lisa Salerno 860-377-9251

Jeff Arpin 860-207-5193

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. All 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 to the left or visit www.amstonlake.org for more details).
- If you 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.

Using a Professional Car Wash Protects the Lake

Washing your car in the driveway is one of the most environmentally unfriendly chores you can do at home. Soap and detergents used in home car washing pollutes our ground water and the lake.

Many types of corrosives and toxic substances get deposited on streets and highways and end up on your car. As a result, driveway car washing generates stormwater runoff containing lead, zinc, cadmium, phosphates, motor oil, asphalt, antifreeze, and other contaminants. Moreover, chemicals in soaps and detergents used in driveway car washing typically contain additional contaminants that are harmful to water quality.

Unlike household waste water that enters sewers or septic systems and undergoes treatment before it is discharged into the environment, what runs off from your car goes right into storm drains—and eventually the lake, where it poisons aquatic life and wreaks other ecosystem havoc. Please consider washing your car at one of the local professional car washes.

Responsible Fishing

Many of us enjoy fishing on Amston Lake and most residents practice catch-and-release, which enables us to enjoy fishing without depleting the supply of bass and other game fish in the lake. But there are some things we need to keep in mind when fishing. First, if you use your gear (poles, lures, wading gear, fishing basket...) in any other body of water please make sure it is clean and dry. Do not reuse live bait between water bodies. Second, please be courteous – take out what you took in, including that lure that got stuck in the branch. Anglers can further help by discarding line in recycling receptacles installed at a number of sites around the state. There's a recycling site right in Colchester! The disposed line is sent to a company that recycles it to make underwater habitat structures for fish.

Third, if you do plan to catch and release, consider using a smaller or barbless hook, so less damage is done to the fish. And lastly, the use of lead sinkers can be dangerous to fish as well as birds and other animals. Lead fragments are deadly when ingested by birds, and discarded sinkers slowly leach lead into the water, which is then swallowed by fish that are food to our beautiful eagles and ospreys. Sinkers made of alternate materials are readily available. Please do your part to make Amston Lake a safer place for our eagles, osprey, great blue herons, and turtles. Thanks for being responsible fisherfolk!

ALD Boat Racks

The Amston Lake District (ALD) provides boat racks for our residents at the seven rights-of-way (ROWs), as well as at Lollipop and Main Beach. Use of the boat racks is on a first-come, first-served basis and in accordance with the following policies:

- Boats displaying valid stickers may be placed on a rack after April 1 and must be removed no later than October 31
- Bottom rungs of racks should be reserved for heavier, larger boats
- Locks are encouraged to anchor boats to racks and discourage theft
- Boats without a space should not be attached to or near racks, preventing access to racks
- All boats should be placed/stored with hull up so as not to collect rainwater, which could breed mosquitoes
- District members should not move or dismantle the racks or move another resident's boat
- ALD has the right to remove any boat from the racks that does not have a current boat sticker
- Parking on a ROW is not allowed unless a sign specifically designates an area for parking

Boats of any kind – including electric vessels, sailboats, personal watercraft, and non-motorized craft such as kayaks, canoes, paddle boats, and paddleboards – may not operate within 12 feet of swimmers.

Our lake is a shared resource, and its quality depends on how we treat it and each other. Respect the rules, respect other residents, and respect the lake itself so everyone can continue to enjoy it.

Beaches and ROWs Committee

Question Your Lawn Care Company

It's that time of year when lawn and mosquito treatment companies send out their salesmen and post signs about treating our yards with products that will turn our properties into "paradise." Many of the products being sold are not as safe as you may think. It is important to consider the risks to our lake health environment. We cannot expect that what we *put* on our lawn will *stay* on our lawn. What runs off our land during a rainstorm will most likely end up in the lake – either directly, or indirectly through a storm drain.

This is why it is so important to review the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) of any product being put on your lawn. Ask for this information **before** you sign the contract and look for statements that warn against applications near large bodies of water, or its toxicity to fish and other organisms. All pesticides and herbicides harm the lake's health; even natural pesticides may be detrimental.



Good alternatives for fertilizer:

- Use lawn mowers that mulch grass and leave it on your lawn – it's free fertilizer! Lawn clippings can be left on the lawn but take more time to degrade into the soil. Never leave clumps of grass on the lawn.
- Clover uses nitrogen from the air and brings it into the soil for plant use.
- Use your own composted vegetation or purchase some at local garden stores. Spread it about 1/8 to 1/4 inch thick on the lawn in the spring.

Good alternative for mosquito fogging:

- Use mosquito dunks, readily available locally at Ace Hardware. By controlling mosquitoes at the source, it reduces populations without affecting the rest of the ecosystem. They're safe, cheap (!!), and better for biodiversity.

Protecting our lake is a responsibility that we all must share. Together let's ensure that this little piece of heaven remains pristine and healthy for many years to come.

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 \$20 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. Your address sign is how emergency responders find you when you call 9-1-1.

Remember, If They Can't Find You... They Can't Help You!



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



It's been five years since District residents voted to prohibit smoking year-round on all District properties! District properties include, but are not limited to, the beaches and ROWs, the parking areas, and the Berglund property (across from Main Beach). Please do not throw cigarette butts on the ground; put them into your garbage as you would any piece of litter – this will help reduce toxins getting into the lake, and it is very unsightly. Pets are prohibited on District properties April 1 – September 30.

WARNING!

Amston Lake District is a private, residents only community. All vehicles and watercraft must display CURRENT district parking passes and boating permits. A description of your vehicle/watercraft has been noted. Multiple offenses may result in fines and or vehicle towing/watercraft removal at the owner's expense.

For more information visit
www.amstonlake.org

The ALD reserves the right to remove watercraft that does not have a valid sticker. You are encouraged to note the make, model, and serial number of your watercraft, and keep the information in a safe place. Safeguarding this information is necessary to identify your watercraft if missing. It is recommended that property owners take steps to secure watercraft to racks. The ALD is not responsible for theft or damage to watercraft on District property.

Thanks to Our Contributors

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Liz Bowen
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Donna Ciarfella
John Matra
Ari Novis
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Brandon Pelegano
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