

The Amston Laker

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As the first year of my presidency comes to a close, I want to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow board members, as well as the countless residents who have volunteered within the District or joined our Finance, Beaches and ROWs, and Lake Health Committees. Yogi Berra might say...We have what we have because of you.

As residents of the Amston Lake District, I encourage everyone to get engaged in what our community has to offer. Don't think you need to be a lake scientist or chief financial officer to make a difference. All it takes is a willingness to help. Attend one of our monthly Board of Directors meetings (7:00 pm, 3rd Wednesday of each month at the clubhouse) – it's not as bad as it sounds. It's a great opportunity to meet the board and your fellow residents as well as get some exposure to the behind-the-scenes activities that are required to run the District.

I hope you all enjoy another great summer season at the lake and let's all do our best to contribute to what makes this District such a great place to live. You.

Be safe and smart.

Frank Hoisl, President
Amston Lake District Board of Directors



BE INFORMED

Have you checked out our website lately? Do you receive our email updates?

If you've said no to either of these make your way to amstonlake.org. You'll find all sorts of information, from monthly financials to lake health reports. While you're there, don't forget to subscribe to our email list to receive important updates about what's happening in our District.

[Subscribe to our mailing list](#)

We live in a Wa-ter-shed

Noun

1. An area or ridge of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers, basins, or seas

Watersheds are important because the surface water features and stormwater runoff within a watershed ultimately drain to the other bodies of water. In our case, into Amston Lake. It is essential to consider these downstream impacts when developing and implementing water quality protection and restoration actions. Everything upstream eventually ends up downstream.

2. An event or period marking a turning point in a course of action or state of affairs

Have a watershed moment and consider that everything you do has a consequence to your lake's health.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM GEESE?

A note from ALD Vice President, Brandon Pelegano

Why do geese rotate leadership?

The lead goose expends the most energy when at the head of the group because he or she is flying with the most wind resistance. When exhausted, that goose knows it is imperative to drop back and allow others to take the lead and continue in their path to cover more distance. Geese also rotate leadership so that each member of the team has the opportunity to lead and feel a strong partnership with the rest of the team.

Why do geese fly in a V formation?

When flying alone geese lose energy and have a need to rest more frequently. Flying in a V formation allows them to be more aerodynamic and cover 70% more distance, thereby reaching their goals together.

Why do geese honk at each other?

Geese often make loud noises as they fly together in a flock. Scientists have indicated that this behavior is actually their way of communicating encouragement to one another in order to cover greater distances as a team.

Why are we reading about geese?

This is not an article to discuss the issues geese cause on our beaches or in our yards, but rather a simple set of ideas that are important to our District and our goals.

I have been on the board for four years, have seen two presidents take the lead and have seen countless members come and go. There have been many reasons for members to step down or not seek re-election and I equate that to the story of the geese, simply giving others the chance to

lead. I have also seen groups and committees come together as a team, working in a V formation, accomplishing tasks that have been on the books for quite some time. By working as a team, they had more energy and accomplished their goals.



The last reason is related to the honking of the geese, or in this case remarks from residents about the performance of the board members. Rather than giving encouraging honking and thanking the members for working diligently on complicated and time-consuming tasks, I often hear negative remarks - complaints and accusations and feelings of mistrust. This sort of behavior is difficult to witness and certainly tough when you are the subject of the comments.

I'd like to make a simple request: that we all please learn from the geese. Be encouraging to one another, work with the board or on a committee as a team to accomplish tasks. If you are unhappy with our progress, think we are focusing our efforts on the wrong goal or need to head in a different direction, then please step up and take the lead. Join the board or a committee so that you too can energize the group and contribute to accomplishing our mission of being good stewards of Amston Lake.

If we act as a team like the geese, I guarantee we will accomplish more!



Remember, the speed limit on our roads in the Amston Lake District is 25 mph.

DRY HYDRANTS FOR FIRE PROTECTION

Last year a catastrophic fire occurred at a home on the Lebanon side of Amston Lake. As a result, the ALD Board of Directors is working with the Lebanon and Hebron Volunteer Fire Departments to explore the possibility of installing dry hydrants in the lake community. A dry hydrant is a simple water collection system installed in the lake that allows the local fire departments to draw water into their tanker trucks. Two representatives from the

Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department attended the March 2019 Lake Health Committee meeting to discuss their experience with installing dry hydrants in various locations in Lebanon. The next steps are to identify possible locations to install the hydrants on ALD property; determine what is required to repair or replace the existing dry hydrant at Lollipop Beach; and to consider the cost, benefits, and pitfalls of installation of new hydrants.

DON'T ALTER YOUR SHORELINE

Many new residents, as well as longtime homeowners, seem to be unaware that they are not allowed to add sand or fill to their waterfront without permission from the District and the town. The ALD ordinances specifically state that no one may "alter, excavate, or fill any shoreline, submerged grounds, or subsurface areas of District waters without the written approval of the board."

Dumping sand or fill along the shoreline can contribute to significant problems in the lake, especially when carried out repeatedly by a number of property owners. The effects of replenishing your waterfront with sand can contribute to the overall deterioration of the quality of the lake. Just like other types of soil, sand contains the nutrient phosphorus, which promotes the growth of algae and diminishes the clarity of the lake. One pound of phosphorous can produce 10,000 pounds of algae.

ALD residents need to be aware that altering your waterfront without permission is not allowed and can harm our much-loved lake.

Please take some time to familiarize yourself with our ordinances, or if you have any further questions, contact one of our board members.

Use the Port-a-Potties for...

It seems silly to even have to say this, but the Port-a-Potties are not for throwing away garbage, diapers, puppy poo bags, empty cans and plastic bottles, or anything else you may have with you. They are for official potty business only. The company will remove them if we do not use them properly.

Sport Your Lake Tags

Our lake is not available for public use. Placing your lake tags on your cars and vessels lets others know you're a resident or guest of a resident. Boat passes also help us notify you if your boat has gotten away from you. Keep your pin tag on your favorite hat or bag so you don't forget it when walking to a beach or right of way. Security will be checking for car and pin tags.

Campfire Control

When properly controlled, campfires can be a great way to wind your day down. Be sure to burn local wood that has not been treated with chemicals. Have a hose or water bucket nearby to put the fire out when you're done. If it's windy or very dry, plan your fire for another day.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP PROTECT AMSTON LAKE

1. Leave the natural vegetation.

If you have trees, bushes or groundcover between your home and the water, this area is commonly known as a buffer zone. This area acts to buffer the lake from excess stormwater runoff, nutrients and sediment.

2. Plant a rain garden.

A rain garden is one of native shrubs, perennials, and flowers planted in a small depression, usually on a natural slope. It is designed to temporarily hold and soak in rain water runoff that flows from roofs, driveways, patios or lawns.

3. Stop over-fertilizing your yard.

Topical fertilizers easily wash into the lake over time, more so if we have a significant rain event. The excess nutrients can raise phosphorus levels and create harmful algae blooms. Many fertilizers also contain pesticides, which we don't want washing into the lake.

4. Fix paths and driveways.

They can channel stormwater directly into the lake. Review your driveway and paths and consider

directing the drainage off to the sides into adjacent areas with vegetation, which can act to slow and absorb the runoff.

5. Take care of roof runoff.

Most water coming off roofs is relatively clean, but if it travels through gutter systems it can pick up speed and erode the ground near your house. Consider installing a rain barrel to collect the free water and use it to water plants around your home.

6. Mulch bare areas.

Stormwater tends to build up on bare areas around our yards. Mulching these spaces will improve water absorption and slow down the flow of moving water. Mulch will also protect any bare tree or shrub roots from the elements.

7. Do a rainy day survey.

During the next heavy rain, grab your umbrella and walk your property to identify any problem areas. Identify the areas on your property where you have erosion and significant runoff and consider one of the options listed above.

FOLLOW THAT BASS!

If you catch a bass with a numbered yellow tag, please DO NOT REMOVE IT!

If you can, photograph and note the tag number, measure the fish, and weigh the fish. Inspect the fish and in your opinion, make note of general distinguishing marks and overall health, such as injuries, is it skinny or full bellied, is it missing a fin, or anything else that may stand out.

PLEASE RELEASE THE FISH UNHARMED so that we can continue to monitor its life following future catch and releases! Send photos and notes to the ALD with the subject "Bass tagging".

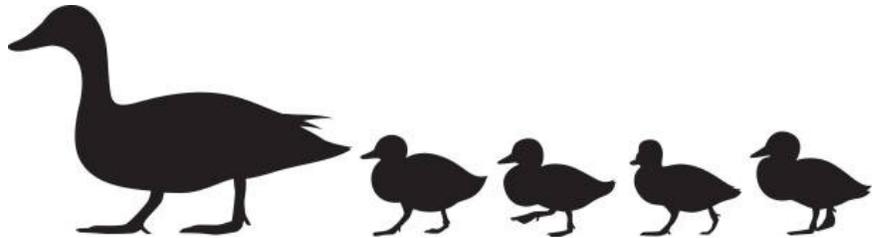


GETTING OUR DUCKS IN A ROW

This past year ALD Treasurer Anita Connor took on the herculean task of cleaning out the District's offsite storage unit. Since the treasurer function involves creating and handling many of the documents we've stored over the years, she was especially curious to see what we had and what we actually needed to keep. Board members Barbara Lederer, Brandon Pelegano, and Liz Bowen, as well as volunteers Laurel Hennebury, Jeff Arpin, and Donna Payne pitched in to help.

Anita researched the records retention requirements according to the State of Connecticut regulations and then the group went to work. Throughout the fall and winter, they sorted through some 25 boxes of records and maps. Duplicate and unnecessary records with no ongoing value were discarded and/or shredded. Resident Jeff Arpin indexed all of the records related to lake health and created a searchable database. He did the same for all of our main dam and duck pond records. Once sorting was done, all of the boxed records were neatly labeled and returned to storage. We are now in the process of requesting permission from the State Administrator of Public Records to eliminate many other records.

This process has been very valuable. We now know what we have and what we need to keep.



If we need to access prior year records, retrieving them will be much easier. And there is an added bonus – we found a document that was especially interesting. Sherry Martin, former clerk of the ALD, had discovered an article in "Outing" magazine from 1918 and luckily it was saved for us to find. You can view the article on the internet at <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hnfgv5?urlappend=%3Bseq=250>

The article was written by Herbert K. Job, a noted author and ornithologist. He describes a joint project of the National Association of Audubon Societies and Charles Ams, former owner of Amston Lake, to establish a wild bird and duck sanctuary at the lake. The article is illustrated with pictures of the duck house, the pond, and of course the wild ducks. How exciting to know that Amston Lake was on the cutting edge of ornithology and protecting the environment before it was cool.

And now we have all of our paper ducks in a row, too!

Be Respectful

People love our lake for many different reasons. Some like to cruise around on kayaks. Others like to catch some rays on one of the beaches. Regardless of your favorite way to enjoy the lake, please be respectful of others. Keep your language family-friendly, and keep voices down after hours. When boating, be aware of swimmers and keep a safe distance from them. If you've brought something to a beach or right of way, take everything with you when you leave.

Fireworks Prohibited

Use of fireworks is illegal on any District property - beaches, ROWs, District-owned lots - per ALD ordinances. Violators will be subject to arrest and ALD Tax District fines.



BEACHES & RIGHT OF WAYS COMMITTEE

It takes a lot of willing volunteers and hired contractors to keep our beautiful Amston Lake beaches and right of ways safe and maintained for the residents to enjoy – it’s a big job!

The committee has been meeting monthly since last fall and has accomplished a number of tasks and improvements, including tree removals, the removal of the prickly Barberry bushes at Main Beach, arranging the regular raking of the beaches to remove burrs and debris from the sand, raking leaves from the water’s edge of the beaches and ROWs, picking up litter and goose droppings, and the repair of erosion at Elsmere ROW.

This year the committee established volunteer stewards for each recreational area, who report to the committee any issue that needs attention. These areas are for all residents to enjoy recreating and relaxing at the lake. In addition, the committee oversees numerous other activities that local contractors

do each year, such as grass cutting, brush trimming, and maintaining the plunge pools to clear the water before it enters the lake.

Over the past year, committee members have also met with contractors, engineers and surveyors in an effort to repair the erosion damage at Ryan Terrace and Oakland ROWs caused by last September’s excessive rain. The repairs at Oakland have been completed. The repairs at Ryan Terrace will be held off so as not to impact seasonal use.

Our thanks to the dedicated group of 14 residents who have served the community this past year as members of the Beaches and ROWs Committee: Chairperson Maureen Dagon, Nancy Nurge, Barbara Lederer, Marge Nichols, Carl Wool, Jim Delisle, Mary and Jeff Withey, Kathie Garvie, Kathleen Feldman, Susan Wilson, Jan Garret, Lisa Salerno, and John Slauenwhite.



**Lake
Clean-up
Crew
2019**



AMSTON LAKE HEALTH COMMITTEE

On top of the regular lake health maintenance activities, the 10 members of the Lake Health Committee have been very busy this past year. A new lake management company, Aquatic Ecosystem Research (AER), has been hired and will help evaluate the water samples that our volunteers collect during seasonal rainstorms at various points around the lake. To address concerns of a possible declining fish population, members worked with the DEEP in performing a lake fish survey. AER also performed a Bathymetric survey, as an update to one performed in 1996. This survey mapped the water depths for the entire lake and will be helpful in determining impacts to the lake by what may wash in from our watershed. It can be found on our website.

To address concerns of a possible declining fish population, members engaged the DEEP to have them perform a lake fish survey. Additionally, resident Al Fichtel implemented a bass tagging program with the goal of understanding the overall health of the bass, their growth rate, and how certain actions may be affecting their survival rate.

Future activities being discussed include identifying areas for rain gardens or plunge pools to help filter rain water runoff before it enters the lake, monitoring of invasive plant species in the District, and working with the towns of Lebanon and Hebron to manage stormwater drains that feed into the lake.

All residents can assist in keeping our waters clean by eliminating the use of fertilizers on their lawns. Even phosphate-free fertilizers add damaging nutrients to the lake as they are washed through the storm drains.

Many thanks to chairman Frank Hoisl, and members Joyce Clark, Jeff Arpin, Dave Bareiss, Maureen Dagon, Kathleen Feldman, Al Fichtel, Kathleen Garvie, Les Parlin, and Steven Reagan.



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 on the following page 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 by invasive weeds.

If you have guests or tenants who bring their boats from other bodies of water, please make sure that they follow the "Clean, Drain & Dry" protocol.



AMSTON LAKE PASSES

A valid pass or sticker is required to use any beach or ROW at Amston Lake; or to store or use any boat in District waters; or park any vehicle on District properties. Property owners are responsible for providing passes to their renters. Passes are not otherwise transferable or salable.

If you are not able to attend any of pass distribution dates and would like your passes mailed to you, please fill out the registration form on our website, and mail along with a \$5 check payable to Amston Lake District, PO Box 95, Amston, CT, 06231. Mail-in forms will not be processed until after June 30th.



Lake use passes may be denied to residents who have unpaid boat removal fines from previous years.



BOAT & TRAILER INSPECTORS

Main Beach Boat Launch Hours: 7:00 am to 9:00 pm
On call (when available)

Al Fichtel 860-338-4300
Marge Arnold 860-228-1944
Jim Delisle 860-707-6512
Carl Wool 860-334-9754

Dave Arnold 860-228-1944
Craig Nowak 203-868-6728
Bill Anderson 203-218-6399