



In The Swim
with Gregg Lake

FAQ

Gregg Lake Watershed Management Plan

Why do we need a plan to protect Gregg Lake?

Gregg Lake has been Antrim's gem for generations of town residents and summer visitors alike, but now the health of our lake is declining. In 2004 the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) added Gregg Lake to its statewide list of impaired waters. As a lake's water quality declines, quality of life in and around the lake declines, too. The good news is that we should be able to stop and even partially reverse the failing health of Gregg Lake—if we take action now to change how we use the lake and its watershed.

How and why is Gregg Lake changing?

Water quality data collected annually by Gregg Lake community volunteers show chlorophyll above desirable levels and oxygen levels below those supporting aquatic life in recent years. Elevated levels of chlorophyll suggest that phosphorus washing into the lake from the surrounding land is causing too much algae to grow, which in turn results in depleted oxygen. Cloudy masses of green algae now regularly form in the shallows during the hottest periods of the summer. When sediment and plant nutrients like phosphorus wash into the lake from septic systems, yards, beaches, driveways and roads, it is called non-point source (NPS) pollution. In addition, lake turbidity is increasing and clarity is decreasing. These factors may be the result of increased sediment washing into the lake, increased algal growth or motorboat traffic churning up sediments or plants in shallow waters.

What will happen if we do nothing?

Lakes with too much phosphorus and too little oxygen lose diversity of fish. The water may develop a fishy "pond smell" on warm, still days. Aquatic plants begin to fill in along the shoreline, thriving on the phosphorus enrichment. Increased phosphorus also provides favorable conditions for invasive aquatic plants and cyanobacteria. Cyanobacteria blooms can cause toxic water conditions and force beach closures. Water turbidity can clog fish gills and block sunlight from aquatic plants, decreasing their ability to photosynthesize and produce oxygen for the fish to breathe.

Who will develop the watershed management plan?

In 2016 a group of concerned town and watershed citizens formed the Gregg Lake Watershed Management Plan Committee (GLWMPC) to address Gregg Lake's declining water quality. In 2017 the GLWMPC obtained grant funding to support development of a management plan and, in early 2018, in cooperation with the Town of Antrim, sought and contracted with a professional consulting firm for assistance in developing the plan. FB Environmental (FBE) has developed dozens of lake management plans, working with groups just like ours throughout New England. Successful development of the plan will depend on input and commitment from the entire Gregg Lake community.

How is the project funded?

GLWMPC applied for and received a competitive grant from the EPA, administered by NHDES, to the Town of Antrim to fund development of the plan. Watersheds with EPA-approved management plans are eligible for crucial state and federal monies for future management projects, such as building retention basins, improving road drainage, and replacing culverts.

What does the project entail?

The project team, in cooperation with the Town of Antrim, the Gregg Lake community, FBE and NHDES, will identify pollution causes and sources, estimate pollution reductions needed and outline actions needed to reduce pollution.

How long will the project take?

Approximately two years.

What will happen once a watershed management plan is developed?

Once we have determined the changes we need to make to restore water quality and have decided on a realistic schedule for meeting our water quality goals, we will initiate a system for monitoring our progress and will apply for additional funding to implement larger projects.

What will my role be in restoring Gregg Lake's water quality?

If you use Gregg Lake:

- Take some time to let us know what your concerns and priorities are.
- Become educated—visit our website (www.gregglake.org), attend workshops and gatherings hosted by GLWMPC.
- Spread the word to others about how our activities on and near the water affect the health of the lake.
- Consider volunteering to help with the project.

If you live on or near the lake or have a camp or cottage that you visit seasonally, you are in a unique position to help us to better understand how our uses of the lake and its watershed affect water quality. Join your fellow lakeshore and watershed residents in answering surveys about septic use and stormwater on your property. The more information we have, the better our plan will be.

Prepared by the Gregg Lake Watershed Management Plan Committee



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