



LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE
ASSOCIATION
Keep Winnie Blue

WOLFEBORO BAY WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

March 2021

Statement of Purpose

As a major economic asset to the Town of Wolfeboro, as well as the State of New Hampshire, Lake Winnepesaukee deserves protection of its irreplaceable water quality, the feature that most draws visitors to our community and enhances the quality of life for those who call this place home.

Currently, however, due to the occurrence of cyanobacteria, Winnepesaukee is found on the EPA's most recent list of threatened or impaired waters for primary contact recreation use.

Experience shows that the most effective approach for monitoring and protecting valuable water resources like Winnepesaukee is a comprehensive watershed-based management plan. In fact, such plans are a requirement for securing EPA funding for stormwater mitigation and protection projects under the Clean Water Act.

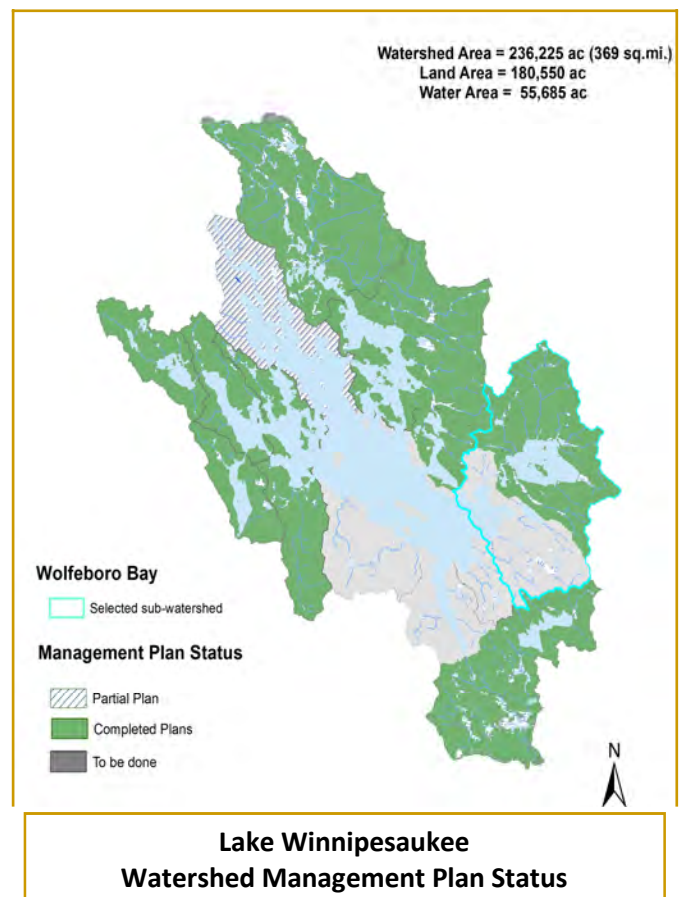
Because Winnepesaukee is a shared resource, it is imperative that communities around the lake share responsibility for identifying and mitigating pollution sources that are contributing to known impairments.

Taking the lead in this effort since 2010 has been the Lake Winnepesaukee Association (LWA).

Because of the size of the Winnepesaukee watershed, the LWA has been developing watershed management and restoration plans at the subwatershed level. The association has been the lead partner and project manager in the development of management plans for the Waukegan and Winona watersheds, for the Moultonborough Bay Inlet Restoration Plan, and, in 2020, for the Moultonborough Bay and Winter Harbor Watershed Management Plan.

Now a watershed plan that focuses on Wolfeboro Bay is the appropriate next step in this huge protection and preservation effort.

Development of a watershed management plan for Wolfeboro Bay will capture a snapshot of the health of waters in the Bay, identify any sources of pollution, and provide a roadmap for mitigation and protection efforts in the future.



Wolfeboro Bay Watershed at a Glance



Wolfeboro Bay Watershed Characteristics

- * Watershed Area: 36,965 acres
- * Waterbodies:
 - Lake Wentworth, Crescent Lake
 - Back Bay, Rust Pond, Wolfeboro Bay
 - Shaw's Pond, Knight's Pond

<u>Communities</u>	<u>Area (acres)</u>	<u>% of Watershed</u>
Wolfeboro	25,985	70.3
New Durham	5,333	14.4
Brookfield	2,818	7.6
Alton	2,761	7.5
Ossipee	68	0.2

Project Goals

The primary goal of the project is to develop a comprehensive management plan for the Wolfeboro Bay watershed, which lies primarily within Wolfeboro, with smaller portions in Brookfield, New Durham, Alton, and Ossipee.

Specifically, the proposed project will a) quantify the primary sources of phosphorus loading and other identified impairments; b) prioritize identified pollution sources for further action; c) undertake an educational effort to make property owners and users of our lakes aware of the sources and consequences of non-point source pollution; d) develop preliminary mitigation designs to address sources of impairment, and e) develop methods for tracking progress during implementation of the plan recommendations.

Rationale

Lake Winnepesaukee is currently listed on the draft 2020 305 (b)/303(d) list of threatened or impaired waters for marginal support of the aquatic life use. A sampling program for Wolfeboro Bay was initiated in 2019, but more data is needed to assess water quality.

Plan of Work

Employ a proven stakeholder-driven process to:

- * Identify and hire an experienced environmental consultant to conduct day-to-day activities of the planning process
- * Delineate and map subwatersheds such as Smith River, Rust Pond, and the immediate Winnepesaukee shoreline
- * Analyze existing water quality data
- * Determine a water quality goal for total phosphorus (TP)
- * Determine pollutant loads under existing and future use conditions
- * Conduct on-the-ground watershed and shoreline surveys
- * Publish the Watershed Management Plan to EPA standards in order to set up future Section 319-eligible implementation phases of the plan

Watershed Plan Funding

Historically, watershed management plans in New Hampshire have been funded under Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act, with funds overseen by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. Projects funded under this program are characterized as either planning or implementation in nature.

Under this regime, Section 319 monies have provided 60 percent of a plan's funding while local stakeholders provided 40 percent in the form of cash, administrative oversight, and/or in-kind contributions such as volunteer effort.

This is the model that has produced four phases of watershed management planning for the Lake Wentworth-Crescent Lake watershed since 2010. While EPA has provided \$338,000 in cash, the Town of Wolfeboro and the Wentworth Watershed Association (and its predecessor, the Lake Wentworth Foundation) have matched with \$375,776 in administrative oversight, cash, and in-kind contributions.

As of 2018, federal funding from the Section 319 Watershed Assistance Grant Program is no longer available for planning projects. Fortunately, Water Quality Planning grants are available to regional planning commissions for watershed planning under Section 604b of the Clean Water Act. The amount available is about \$64,000, with NHDES generally awarding 1-3 grants per year.

Consequently, the initial planning phase watershed management project for Wolfeboro Bay might require outreach to and cooperation with Lakes Region Planning Commission.

Another potential source of funding is the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). These funds are offered as loans, with up to \$75,000 eligible for forgiveness.

In addition to these sources, the expectation is that this project would look to draw some monies from the Town's watershed management reserve fund and from a dedicated Wolfeboro Bay fund established by the Lake Winnepesaukee Association. The LWA fund would depend on private donations solicited through a fundraising campaign coordinated by the project's steering committee.

The cost of the initial watershed planning project is estimated to be in the range of \$90,000 to \$110,000.

Subsequent implementation projects that build on an initial planning project remain eligible for Section 319 funding under long-standing protocols.



Stakeholder-Directed Planning

The activities that are at the core of a watershed management plan are directed by three distinct agents:

- An administrator who manages the project, and is responsible for fiscal oversight
- A steering committee, consisting of stakeholders from the community who help identify and prioritize action items for the project and who help develop a “roadmap” for future efforts in the watershed
- An environmental consultant, who carries out the scientific work of the project and identifies recommendations and implementation strategies to reduce nutrient loading in the watershed.

Coordinating Stakeholders and Partners

The Lake Winnepesaukee Association (LWA) is dedicated to protecting Winnepesaukee’s water quality and natural resources through monitoring, education, stewardship, and science-guided approaches for lake management. As the local lake association whose mission is to protect this valuable resource, LWA is strongly committed to development of a comprehensive management plan for the entire lake.

For the Wolfeboro Bay management plan, the executive director of the Lake Winnepesaukee Association will carry out administrative activities, consistent with other Winnepesaukee-centered management plans of recent years.

The steering committee could be expected to consist of 6 to 10 members of the Wolfeboro community representing Town government, business interests, and individuals with a commitment to protecting Wolfeboro Bay’s water quality.

Town officials might reasonably be represented, at a minimum, by the Town Planner and the Director of the Department of Public Works.

The Wolfeboro Waters Committee will solicit additional volunteers for the steering committee and ensure that its members are representative of the various interests in the community. This might include representatives with ties to real estate, the non-profit sector, downtown merchants, and those associated with recreation.

The plan administrator and the steering committee will be jointly responsible for selecting and working with a qualified environmental consultant. The consultant will perform collection and analysis of new and existing data, recommend remedial actions to deal with identified water quality threats, and produce the finished watershed plan document.



While not developed under the auspices of Section 319, the plan will adhere to all requirements of that provision in order to facilitate grant funding of future phases.