

Buoy Committee Annual Report

HSPA

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Hancock & Sand Ponds Association

Navigational Aids Program – Background








- 50 years! Established in 1968. HSPA joined in 1975. Richard Johnson initially led the effort and placed buoys in 1976 according to State survey.
 - Past leaders also include: Ed Cooper, Scott Mitchell, Andrew Clements, and Andrew McClean
 - Buoys must go in prior to Memorial Day, and be removed no earlier than Labor Day
 - Committee Chair reports placement and maintenance needs to State Navigational Aids Supervisor
- The State provides continuing free of charge buoys, chains, mooring blocks and shackles, as well as a GPS to place the buoys according to the state survey... as long as we timely renew, and abide by, the program.
 - Our current program is no longer offered by the state.
 - If we do not abide by, or let the agreement lapse...
 - Bureau of Parks and Lands would then come pick up all the material and we would become an unmarked lake.
 - Replacement of buoys would cost \$200-\$250 each. A number of buoys need to be replaced yearly.
 - We would be responsible for the cost of all maintenance hardware.
- State law basically eliminates any liability concern for Lake Associations for placing markers on hazards.
 - Expense of the "defendant" is covered if it is found they have done nothing malicious.
 - HSPA also has some insurance coverage provided and paid by the state each year.

Program Status

- Andrew McClean successfully placed and removed all 34 navigational buoys per program requirements in 2024
 - *Thank you for your five years of service Andrew!*
 - *Thank you to Larry & Ann Clark for allowing HSPA to store buoys on their property for the winter!*
- Andrew introduced Jeff and Steve Odden (new committee members) to placement and maintenance
 - Buoys maintained and placed on time on May 17th
 - Buoys will be removed, cleaned and maintained in September
- Program successfully renewed through 2029
- If you note any issues with buoys, please contact Jeff ASAP so we can address according to program requirements

Buoy Symbols

Some markers may not be used on this water body.

-  = Hazard Area, or Shallow Area, or Rock(s), or Dam - White buoy with an orange a diamond to mean danger. Buoy marks rocks, ledges, shoals, dams, or other submerged hazards.
-  = Red Channel Marker - Marks the right side of a channel when entering the channel from the main water body or proceeding up stream.
-  = Green Channel Marker - Marks the left side of a channel when entering the channel from the main water body or proceeding upstream.
-  = "Headway Speed Only" or Safety Zone "Slow" - White buoy with an orange circle to mean the area is subject to certain controls and/or restrictions. The type of control is printed on the buoy.
-  = Black & White Vertical Stripe - Boat should not pass between the buoy and the nearest shore.
-  = Red & White Vertical Stripe with a red sphere on top - Center channel marker, boat can pass close by either side.
-  = Swim Area - White buoy with an orange diamond, having a cross centered within the diamond to mean "No Motor Boats".

Reminder: Boating Practices

- It is unlawful to...
 - Operate a watercraft at greater than “headway speed” (the slowest speed at which it is still possible to maintain steering and control of the watercraft) while within **200 feet** of any shoreline, including islands; or...
 - Operate a motorboat engaged in a wakesurfing activity in less than **15 feet** of water (depth) or within **300 feet** of (any) shoreline

[Link to: Maine Boating Laws](#)

Backup

Navigational Aids Program Summary – Detail

- Established by the Bureau of Parks and Lands in 1968 to aid Lake Associations in placing buoys to mark lake hazards
- Under the program, the State surveys the lake and marks dangerous spots using GPS technology, and provides free of charge buoys, chains, mooring blocks and shackles, as well as a GPS to place the buoys according to the state survey.
- HSPA joined the program in 1975, under the leadership of Richard Johnson, and buoys were placed in 1976.
- A number of members took responsibility to place and remove the buoys over the years, including Ed Cooper, Dick Johnson, Scott Mitchell, Andrew Clements, and Andrew McClean
- At one time there were as many as maybe 15-20 lakes in the program. However, by 1995, there were only about 5-6 Lake Associations left. Now there are only two: Hancock Pond and Mousam Lake. Many dropped out because they could not find volunteers to do the work.
- The advantages of remaining in the program is that the Bureau of Parks and Lands pays for replacement of damaged buoys, at a cost of about \$200-\$250 for each buoy. We replaced three buoys this spring.
- Some associations had a concern regarding their liability in regard for placement of buoys. In order to clearly alleviate liability concern, the legislature passed a law that basically eliminates any liability concern for Lake Associations for placing markers on hazards. Part of that includes covering the expense of the "defendant" if it is found they have done nothing malicious.
- In addition to this coverage, the remaining 2 Lake Associations in the Maintenance Agreement Program have some insurance coverage provided and paid by the state each year.
- If we are unable to place the buoys, and decide to cancel the agreement, the Bureau of Parks and Lands would then come pick up all the material and we would become an unmarked lake. Maine has thousands of lakes and most do not have official buoys.
- If we choose to discontinue with the marking now, but change our mind at some point in the future and want to get back in, a decision will be made at that time in which program they will be offered to participate. The current program is no longer being offered.
- Under the new program, the state will only cover half of the cost of the markers and the association pays for the hardware and all other costs associated with placing markers. There are 30 lakes that are marking hazards under a permit where they have to pay for most of everything.