**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Contact:**

Peter Isles, Aquatic Biologist

Department of Environmental Conservation, Agency of Natural Resources

802-490-6130, Peter.Isles@vermont.gov

**Dive into Summer: Join the Vermont Lakes and Ponds Program as a Volunteer**

*Montpelier, Vt.* – This summer, the Vermont Lakes and Ponds Program is seeking volunteers to help monitor and collect information about lakes and ponds in the state. With over 800 lakes and ponds, volunteers are key to the success of the program’s lake monitoring efforts. Volunteers can be found statewide greeting lake visitors, inspecting boats, collecting water samples, tracking algal or cyanobacteria blooms, reporting aquatic invasive species, and more.

“State scientists use the information volunteers collect to understand the health of Vermont’s lakes and ponds,” said Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner John Beling. “Thanks to our dedicated and hardworking volunteers, we can better protect the many benefits of these special places.”

The Lakes and Pond Program hosts a few programs for volunteers to get involved with:

1. [Lay Monitoring Program](https://bit.ly/VT-Lay-Monitoring)
	* Volunteers are equipped and trained on their boats to sample lake water biweekly from June through August.
	* Information collected has helped state scientists track lake water quality conditions and trends during the summer recreation season since 1979.
	* Volunteers learn about lake ecology and stewardship while helping to inform lake protection and restoration.
	* To learn more or volunteer, contact Mark Mitchell at 802-490-6126 or Mark.Mitchell@partner.vermont.gov.
2. [Vermont Invasive Patrollers Program](https://bit.ly/VT-VIP-Program) and [Vermont Invasive Patrollers for Animals Program](https://bit.ly/VT-VIPA-Program)
	* Volunteers learn how to identify aquatic invasive species, such as zebra mussels and water chestnuts, and then choose a lake to monitor each year for aquatic invasive species.
	* Tracking aquatic invasive species is key because these organisms can harm the environment, economy, and even human health.
	* To learn more, volunteer, or host a workshop, contact Kimberly Jensen at 802-490-6120 or Kimberly.Jensen@vermont.gov.
3. [Public Access Greeter Program](https://bit.ly/VT-Public-Access-Greeter)
	* Volunteers help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species by offering to inspect boats and watercraft at no cost.
	* Volunteers have educated lake visitors about aquatic invasive species at public boat launches since 2002.
	* To start a greeter program, host a workshop, or learn more, contact Kim Jensen at Kimberly.Jensen@vermont.gov or 802-490-6120.
4. [Cyanobacteria Monitoring Program](https://bit.ly/VT-Cyanobacteria-Monitor)
	* Volunteers are trained to assess lake conditions and monitor for harmful algal or cyanobacteria blooms.
	* [Cyanobacteria](https://bit.ly/VT-Cyanobacteria), also known as blue-green algae, are naturally found in fresh water in the U.S. and throughout Vermont.
	* Under the right conditions, cyanobacteria can quickly multiply to create dense surface scums, mats, or layers known as blooms, especially in warm weather.
	* To learn more or volunteer, contact Peter Isles at Peter.Isles@vermont.gov or 802-490-6130.

For general information, interested parties are welcome to visit the [volunteer webpage](https://bit.ly/Lakes-Volunteers). If Peter Isles is not available, contact Oliver Pierson, Lakes and Ponds Program Manager, at 802-490-6198 or Oliver.Pierson@vermont.gov.

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Read the [press release online](https://dec.vermont.gov/news/dive-summer-join-vermont-lakes-and-ponds-program-volunteer).