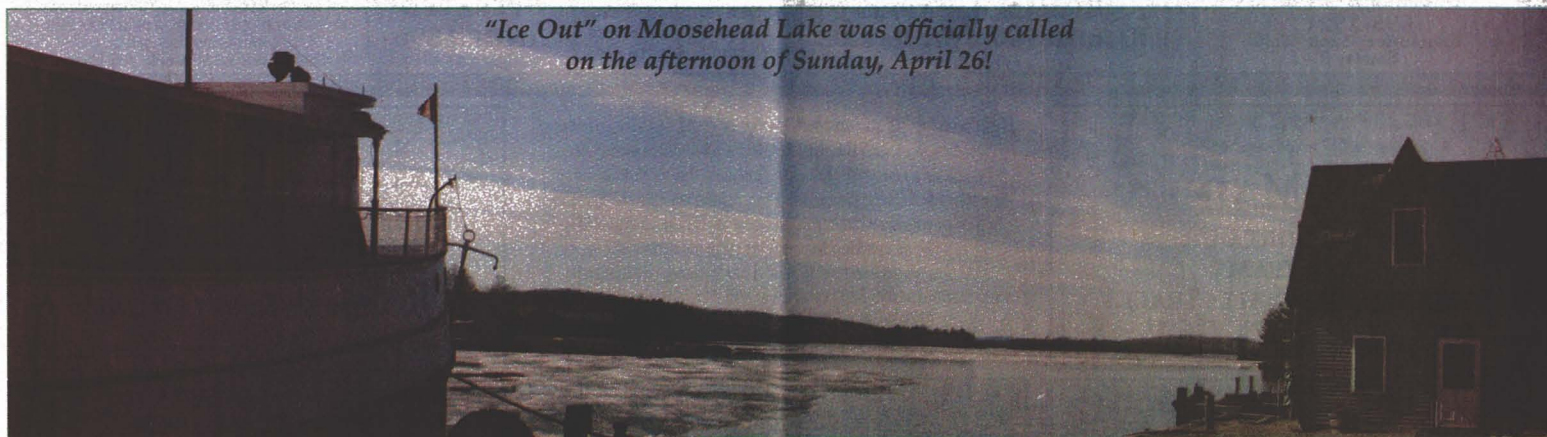


*"Ice Out" on Moosehead Lake was officially called  
on the afternoon of Sunday, April 26!*



## Do you know what's growing in Moosehead Lake? *Would you recognize an invasive aquatic plant if you saw one?*

MOOSEHEAD LAKE—To help find the answers to these important questions and more, the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) has launched an ambitious pilot initiative on Moosehead Lake. The primary goal: to help protect one of Maine's valuable aquatic ecosystems from the threat of invasive aquatic plants such as Eurasian water-milfoil. In the short term, the goal is to organize and conduct a screening survey of all shallow, sunlit portions of the lake (the entire shoreline and more) to rule out the presence of harmful aquatic invaders. Ultimately, however, the goal is to create a locally sustainable, citizen-based monitoring program capable of detecting problem species before they grow out of control.

This summer, the VLMP is offering free training to Moosehead region residents and visitors who are interested in participating in the survey, learning more about the pilot initiative and its goals, or simply learning more about the threat of invasive aquatic species. Beaver Cove Marina is hosting this comprehensive, day-long Invasive Plant Patrol workshop, on Saturday, August 15, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The workshop includes hands-on practice with live plant specimens; all attendees receive a free handbook and Maine Field Guide to Aquatic Invaders (value: \$40). Advanced registration is required. Please contact the VLMP at 207-783-7733 or [vlmp@mainevolunteerlakemonitors.org](mailto:vlmp@mainevolunteerlakemonitors.org) for more workshop information, and/or to register.

The VLMP kicked off its Moosehead pilot initiative last summer, with a major grant from The Betterment Fund. Working in collaboration with a wide array of project partners—including Maine's natural resource agencies, organizations, Moosehead region businesses, community leaders and others, year one was a resounding success. One of the highlights of summer's activities was Moosehead Lake Survey Week. The accomplishments of the survey team (comprised of volunteers, agency personnel and VLMP staff) were significant:

The littoral areas (areas capable of supporting aquatic plant growth) of nearly half of the expansive (74, 890 acre) lake were surveyed. The focus of 2008 was on the southern half of the lake; 2009 will cover the more northerly portions.

No invasive species were observed.

The survey included a native plant inventory. An inventory of this magnitude had never been attempted on Moosehead Lake. A total of 55 aquatic plant species were identified including five native milfoil species.

The daily activity of the team in and around the lake generated a great deal of local interest. Many of the people met by the team expressed an eagerness to attend IPP training sessions next year and to become more directly involved in ongoing survey activity.

The impacts of the spread of invasive aquatic plants are well known: habitat disruption, loss of native plant and animal communities, impaired fishing and degraded recreational experiences, reduced property values and other significant economic losses. As with a seri-

ous illness, early detection is key; the earlier the introduced plant can be detected, the greater the chances for finding an effective treatment and reducing the risk of spread. With over 6,000 lakes and ponds, and thousands of miles of suitable stream habitat to be monitored for the presence of aquatic invaders on an ongoing basis, the challenge here in Maine is enormous.

The Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) is the oldest, and one of the largest, citizen-based lake monitoring programs in the nation. Building upon its nationally-recognized Invasive Plant Patrol (IPP) program, the VLMP has developed this Jump-Start initiative to address a critical gap in Maine's current early detection system: despite the fact that Maine's early detection system grows steadily every year, survey activity on some of Maine's most valuable lakes remains sparse to non-existent.

The purpose of Invasive Plant Patrol (IPP) Jump-Start is to help protect Maine's native ecosystems now threatened by a wide array of invasive aquatic organisms, by "jump-starting" locally-sustainable citizen-based invasive aquatic species monitoring, in areas of the state where such activities are currently lacking. The core of the program is the annual formation and coordination of the IPP Jump Start team: comprised of novice patrolers and other members of the target community who will work and learn directly along side of trained IPP volunteers, state agency personnel, VLMP staff and other professionals. Engaging and leading by example, the IPP Jump-Start team conducts an invasive aquatic plant screening survey as well as a baseline native aquatic plant inventory on the waters of the region. During the week the team is based in the community to conduct the survey, members engage in one-on-one educational outreach and broader forms of public relations (informational meetings, local events, communication with community leaders and the local press, etc.) to raise awareness of the IPP Jump-Start project, and more broadly, the threat of invasive aquatic species in Maine. IPP Training is offered to local community members, and workshop attendees may opt to participate in one or more days of "survey week."

VLMP's Invasive Plant Patrol workshops are funded in large part by a grant administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, with funds generated by the Maine Lake and River Protection sticker program.

For more on the Moosehead Lake Jump-Start initiative, please visit the VLMP's on-line photo journal at [www.mainevolunteerlakemonitors.org/photos/Moosehead/](http://www.mainevolunteerlakemonitors.org/photos/Moosehead/).