

Community groups and lake associations raise tens of thousands of dollars in private funds to protect public resources. This level of fundraising is not sustainable in the face of growing challenges to lake health.

I am a LakeSmart evaluator for Friends of Messalonskee, serving Oakland, Sidney and Belgrade. I am a volunteer. My work and those of other volunteers provide matched funding for grants that we write to help raise funds to protect the health of the lake. We raise funds through membership to our organization, collaborating with other lake organizations, holding raffles and as many ways as we can think of and manage as a small nonprofit local organization.

Messalonskee has one of the highest milfoil rates in the state due to a problem in a major inlet stream. It will take an immense amount of resources to address this problem. Our fundraising goal in 2027 will grow astoundingly to \$2 million. If this situation is not addressed soon, a major natural resource could be inaccessible to the Maine region and may well expand milfoil contamination to the Kennebec River!

Our lakes provide an essential connection with nature, a vast resource for outdoor sport and recreation, while providing a major source of revenue to our local towns through taxes. We need to protect them! We need funds that don't further tax our residents of Maine. LD2141 does this!