

Featured Interview – Alex Sirois



Alex Sirois is the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) for the Town of Raymond. Alex started his service

in municipal government for the Town of Poland in 2011. He then served as the CEO in Casco in 2016 before becoming the CEO for Raymond in 2020. He has a Bachelor's Degree from the New England School of Communications (Husson University). He can be reached at alex.sirois@raymondmaine.org

WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR JOB?

I enjoy helping people navigate the Town's zoning rules which can often be confusing and difficult to interpret. I and my assistant, Chris Hanson, enjoy helping people find a way to get what they want, while still maintaining

compliance with local and state rules that they might not know about.

WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF YOUR JOB?

Unfortunately, sometimes it is impossible for a landowner to build a structure, or remove trees in a part of their yard that they were hoping to clean up, and it can be difficult to be the one to tell them, "I'm sorry you cannot do that." This is made much more challenging by individuals that do work without permits.

WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU NOTICED ON RAYMOND'S LAKES, GOOD OR BAD?

Development has been very busy along the shoreline of Raymond's lakes/ponds, which was amplified during COVID. Fortunately, Raymond has shoreland zone standards that are far

stricter than state minimums. We have a larger shoreland zone and require a much larger minimum lot size. This has prevented large parcels of land from being overdeveloped. Most of the construction that takes place near the water now is just rebuilds or additions.

WHAT SUGGESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF OUR LAKES?

One way to help maintain and improve the quality of our lakes/ponds is to ensure that your lot has an adequate buffer system in place. The 100' area around the lake should be left as natural as possible with trees/shrubs being allowed to grow and absorb as much ground/stormwater as possible. We also encourage residents to call us and let us know if they see activity taking place near the water that they might think is questionable.

Annual Meeting on June 24 at 9:30 a.m.



The RWPA will once again hold its annual meeting in person at the newly renovated and historic Hawthorne House. Located at the throat of

Raymond Neck at 40 Hawthorne Road in Raymond, Hawthorne House was the boyhood home of one of America's preeminent literary figures in the 19th century, Nathaniel Hawthorne, author of *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of Seven Gables*.

Our **featured speaker** is Chris Hanson, assistant Code Enforcement



Officer for the Town of Raymond. Hanson, who grew up in Gray, is no stranger to Raymond's lakes. "I was swimming at my grandparents' camp on Sebago when I was six years old," he said. Chris will discuss Raymond's zoning laws and how they protect the quality of our lakes. He will explain how lakefront residents can make home improvements while adhering to these regulations.

Courtesy Boat Inspection Program – A Look Back and Ahead

The RWPA has run Raymond's Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) program for the last 15 years. Funded by donations from RWPA members and grants from the Town of Raymond and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the CBI program helps prevent the spread of invasive plants in Raymond's lakes.

2022 was a challenging year for the CBI program, which hires and trains individuals to inspect boats for invasive species at public boat ramps on Sebago Lake, Crescent Lake, Panther Pond, and Thomas Pond. Due to labor shortages caused by the Covid pandemic and other issues, we found it difficult to attract boat inspectors without raising hourly wages. In addition, RWPA board member Locke MacDonald, who oversaw the CBI program, became ill during the summer and passed away in early September.

Thanks to the efforts of several individuals who filled in the administrative gaps and others who volunteered their time at the inspection sites, we were able to maintain adequate inspection coverage at all public boat ramps in Raymond. We did best at our

Overall, in 2022, we performed 3,367 inspections from July 1st to September 5.



Sebago ramp with 92% inspector coverage throughout the summer but we had less coverage at the boat ramps in the other three lakes. As the 2023 season approaches, we encourage anyone 15-years or older who might be interested in becoming a CBI inspector this summer to contact us.

Overall, in 2022, we performed 3,367 inspections from July 1st to September 5. Our 10 paid inspectors and three volunteers found eight plants, none of which are considered invasive species. Despite not finding traces of invasive species on boats entering our lakes, we think it's imperative to continue the CBI program indefinitely. Why? Because the inspections are a form of education that raises the awareness among boaters about the problem of invasive aquatic species and what they can do about it. And obviously, it's working!

Milfoil in Sebago Lake

Except for Sebago Lake, we are fortunate that Raymond's lakes are milfoil free. RWPA has spent many years removing invasive variable milfoil from the Raymond waters of Sebago Lake, Dingley Brook, and the upper Jordan River. Having reached the point where we can no longer justify fielding a summer crew for Diver Assisted Suction Harvester (DASH), we've turned the remaining milfoil removal work over to the Town of Raymond and we've donated our remaining DASH equipment to the Town. We expect the Town will contract with a commercial milfoil operator to finish the job. RWPA will maintain contact with the Town in an advisory capacity. RWPA will continue to monitor Dingley Brook and the upper Jordan, where conventional DASH equipment can't reach, and do small-scale remediation work, if needed.

Need a Summer Job? Or a Volunteer Opportunity?

RWPA is hiring Courtesy Boat Inspectors for the 2023 season! We are also looking for volunteers to serve as inspectors when paid staff are unavailable.

Inspectors greet boaters at boat launch ramps, explain the voluntary inspection process, and conduct thorough examinations of boat exteriors, including trailer and vehicle wheel wells, trailer bunks,

motors, propellers, and boat interiors, including live wells, fishing gear, etc. The inspector removes all plant material, bags them, and delivers the bags at the end of the shift to designated drop-off sites. The inspector records required information on a phone app provided by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

Inspectors must be at least 16-years old, like being outdoors, and have transportation to and from launch sites. Shifts run 6 to 8 hours and are on weekends and holidays and occasionally on Thursdays and Fridays. Launch sites are at Sebago Lake, Crescent Lake, Panther Pond (Mill St.), and Thomas Pond. **The pay rate is \$18/hour.** Contact us at info@raymondwaterways.org.

Keep Lawns Green, Waters Clean

Phosphorus is like junk food for algae, causing it to grow out of control, turning lakes green, lowering water quality, and even killing fish. Even if you live far from the shorefront, all storm water eventually makes its way to our waters, with half draining into lakes and the other half draining in rivers and bays.

The easiest thing you can do to limit phosphorous in our lakes is to use “phosphorous-free” lawn fertilizer. Every bag of fertilizer has a 3-digit number on the label. Make sure the middle number is 0. For example, 10-0-10 has equal parts nitrogen and potash but no phosphorous. Use that!

According to Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), most soils in Maine have enough phosphorous to keep a lawn lush and green. They recommend phosphorous only when establishing a new lawn, re-seeding, or when recommended by a soil test from a lab. They also recommend using only half the amount of fertilizer recommended on the bag; if the



response isn't suitable, apply the remainder. More is not necessarily better.

Rather than fertilizing, the Maine DEP recommends leaving grass clippings on established lawns to serve as natural fertilizer. New lawns need more nitrogen so a 10-0-0 mix is ideal. We know many lakefront

owners are replacing lawns with natural and native plantings. Who wants to mow a lawn when you can be swimming, fishing, or resting comfortably in a hammock?

For more information, see <https://www.maine.gov/dep/land/watershed/fertilizer/index.html>.

RWPA Board

- Peggy Jensen – President (Panther Pond)
- Marie Connolly – Treasurer (Panther Pond)
- Neil Jensen – Member (Panther Pond)
- Wayne Eckerson – Member (Panther Pond)
- Elwood Beach – Member (Raymond Pond)
- Holly Hoglund – Member (Thomas Pond)
- Raymond Bersch – Member (Crescent Lake)
- Steve Crane – Member (Raymond Pond)

If interested in serving, let us know!

**Milfoil doesn't take a year off,
why should you?**

CONTRIBUTE HERE!

Or send your donation to RWPA, PO Box
1243, Raymond, ME04071.

About RWPA

Founded more than 50 years ago, the Raymond Waterways Protective Association is dedicated to protecting and improving the water quality of Raymond's lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams and fostering watershed stewardship.



Contact us: info@raymondwaterways.org

Mailing address: PO Box 1243, Raymond, ME 04071

Website: raymondwaterways.org



Raymond Pond (lower left), Crescent Lake (middle right), Panther Pond (middle-left), Thomas Pond (middle top- barely visible), and Sebago lake (top).