



On occasion, I have had lakefront property owners ask me the question: “What exactly am I getting for my LEA dues and donations?” When that happens, I have found it helpful to make the comparison of LEA to a municipality in terms of service provision within a geographic area. The difference, of course, is that LEA’s geographical area is our Service Area of 40 lakes. The table below illustrates the parallels between LEA and a typical municipality.

Service	Municipality	Lakes Environmental Association
Jurisdiction	Town Limits	Service Area of 40 lakes
Revenue Source	Taxes	Membership dues (70%) and grants
Maintenance	Roads, dump, parks, recreation	Water testing; erosion control
Education	Schools	Educational programs
Protection	Police/Sheriff	Non-point-source pollution prevention; boat inspections; lake research
Emergency	Fire/EMS	Invasives (milfoil) infestation control
Governance/ordinances	Select Board/other boards	Advocacy at local and state levels

The comparisons have their limitations, of course. Municipalities have the power to make and enforce laws, where LEA does not. Municipalities have the power to impose taxes, where LEA does not. And municipalities ultimately serve the will of the citizens/voters, where LEA is governed by a volunteer board.

That said, LEA takes our role in lake protection and service provision very seriously. Our staff are dedicated professionals and our board are dedicated volunteers. All are deeply committed to the LEA Mission: **To Preserve and Restore the High Water Quality of Maine Lakes.**

In order to fulfill this mission, LEA must fundraise. Our largest and most-efficient source of sustainable funding is from our loyal membership. Some LEA members have been continuous supporters for over 30 years. Membership is not expensive and the benefits of sustaining LEA are numerous. In addition, LEA is extremely efficient. We have one of the lowest administrative loads in the non-profit world, at 9%, meaning that 91% of your membership dues go to fund protection and services for our lakes.

If you are a current LEA member, we extend our sincere thanks. If you are considering membership in LEA, we urge you to “jump in”. As a lakefront property owner, you pay significant property taxes to your town for municipal services. Please consider LEA membership (\$100) a token “rider” on the cost of lakefront property ownership which helps to “insure” the water quality of your lake and therefore your lakefront “quality of life” and, importantly, property values.

Together, we can protect our lakes into an uncertain future.