



Hello Neighbor!

On behalf of the Amston Lake Association, we would like to welcome you to your new home. We are providing information which may help you get familiar with your neighborhood.

The Amston Lake Association (ALA) is a vibrant volunteer organization which offers a variety of social events for the Amston Lake community throughout the year. We are a Social Club and are a separate organization from the Tax District. Some of our events include: Concerts on the Green, Spaghetti Dinner, 4th of July Parade, Kids Fishing Derby, Sunset Cruise Night, Lobster Dinner with Live Music, Lake Day Celebration, Movie Nights, our Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner, Children's Halloween Party and a New Year's Gala.

We fund our events through annual dues and fundraising activities. Annual dues are \$30. If you wish to support us at a greater level, we would appreciate it. Due to covid-19 there is a dues holiday for 2020. We still would like you complete a short membership application – which you can find on this website.

We welcome your feedback on current and new social events and activities! We also would love to hear from you if there's a way you'd like to volunteer and be part of any of these events. Our club house is located at 16 Wood Acres Road and is maintained by ALA members.

Again, welcome to Amston Lake – whether you rent or own, are here year-round or for the season, established in the area or just discovered Amston Lake, please join us – we're glad you're here!

Oh – and one more thing - most of our communication happens through email, website and our Facebook page. We also post on the community message boards located at Main Beach and near the clubhouse.

Best,

John Matra
President

Amston Lake

Amston Lake is between the towns of Hebron and Lebanon, near the border of Connecticut's Mystic Country and River Valley tourism regions. Jurisdiction of this 186-acre lake was divided between the two towns, leading to confusion over services and maintenance. Wanting their own identity, Amston Lake property owners formed their own tax district and bought their lake outright. Although properties along the lake were privately-owned, the lake itself had been in the hands of an estate, the last of a long chain of private owners. The new tax district started life with the unusual situation of holding a lake mortgage, since paid off.

Amston Lake is entirely private. There is no public access to the lake. All tax-paying property owners (or their renters) are allowed use of the lake, even those who don't have lake frontage: The Amston Lake District holds a number of properties in common for the use of all, including two lovely sand beaches, a duck pond, and seven other lake access points for boat launching.

No gasoline motors are allowed on the lake, assuring peaceful fishing, canoeing, sailing and kayaking. Although about 700 property owners are listed on the tax rolls, several parts of the shoreline are undeveloped, leaving plenty of space and habitat for the abundant wildlife native to the area. Muskrats, possum, red-tailed hawks, turtles and harmless snakes are all seen regularly, and wayward beaver sometimes invade the duck pond. Migratory birds, ducks and geese show up seasonally, and residents have reported seeing wild turkey, osprey, blue herons, swans, cormorants and even a golden eagle.

We take our job of caring for our lake seriously. Both the Amston Lake District organization - the regulatory group - and the Amston Lake Association - the social and cultural group - work to assure water quality surveys are completed regularly and work to improve lake living for all residents. Please note that Amston Lake District properties are "carry in, carry out". When you leave, **please** be responsible, and respectful of your neighbors by taking whatever you brought with you, OUT. This includes cigarette butts, which are toxic for our lake as well as your children playing in the sand.

Because of its central location, Amston Lake residents can find many off-lake activities to enjoy. Nearby the Air-Line Trail extends a side spur down to the lake area. The Air-Line Trail State Park is a 50-mile hiking path that follows the old railway founded by a previous owner of the lake, Phineas Turner. The popular trail skirts such natural areas as Raymond Brook Marsh, Salmon River State Forest, Greyville Falls Park and, of course, the Amston Lake Dam. The trail is suitable for walking, cycling and, in some areas, horseback riding. In winter, it is used for cross-country skiing and, in the State Forest portion, snowmobiling.

Amston Lake has a long history of settlement. Chief Uncas, made famous by James Fenimore Cooper in his tale "Last of the Mohicans", and his tribes used the area as hunting lands. The first dam was built in 1735 across the unnamed tributary outflow of what was then known as North Pond to power a grist mill. A hundred years later an ironworks furnace occupied the site. By 1850, Phineas Turner had established three large and successful silk mills along the tributary to Raymond Brook. He rebuilt the dam, raising the lake seven-and-a-half feet, and doubled it in size to power the huge 44-foot waterwheel that ran his three factories. Turnerville, as Turner called the settlement that grew up around his factories, at one time held more than 30 homes, boarding houses, a store, and landed its own post office - of which he was the Postmaster. By the time of his death in 1903, the market for silk ribbons had passed its heyday and the business closed in 1897.

The next owner was Charles Ams, who promptly renamed the settlement and the lake after himself: Amston. Charles Ams was a successful industrialist until he attempted to produce the Ams-Stirling automobile at Amston. The automobile was plagued with design flaws and was unsuccessful. After two years and a grand total of 24 vehicles, all of which were returned for repairs, the business quietly folded for lack of investment capital. One thing that Ams did do was begin raising ducks on the three small mill ponds left from the Turner mills. Ams was far more successful in this hobby than he had been in the automobile business, likely because ducks come programmed to reproduce. One of these duck ponds still exists at Amston Lake.

