

Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions

Valuing the Economic and Ecological Benefits of Maine's Lakes

Sustainability Problem

Maine's lakes are vital for their natural beauty and significant contribution to the state's economy and social well-being.

Our lakes face mounting pressures from development, invasive species, and climate change.

These pressures fuel algae growth, invasive species spread, and public health risks, with direct consequences on recreational use, property values, and water supply.

Team and Partners

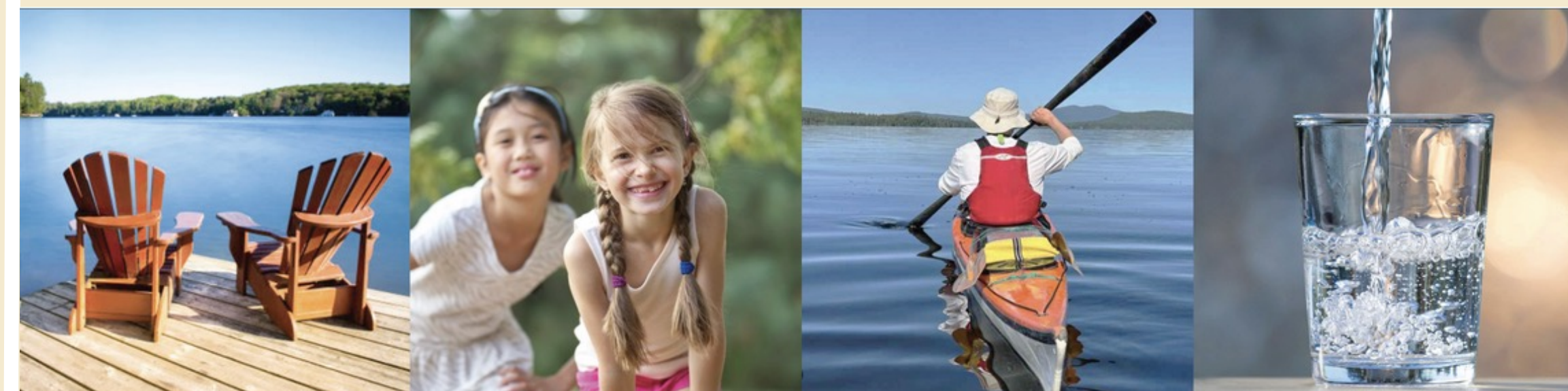
UMaine Faculty:

- Adam Daigneault (team leader)
- Jianheng Zhao
- Keith Evans



Students:

- Melissa Genoter, UMaine '24



Key Partners:

- Susan Gallo, Maine Lakes
- Linda Bacon, Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection

Solutions Approach

We employ survey and modeling techniques to assess the **total value of Maine's ~6,000 lakes**, finding that:

- Lakes provide over **\$14 billion in net economic value annually**
- They also generate **\$3 billion/year in direct and indirect sales**

	Lakefront Property	Lakefront Summer Camps	Lake Recreation	Water Consumption	Total
Net Economic Value (\$/year)	\$13 BILLION	\$15 MILLION	\$501 MILLION	\$334 MILLION	\$14.1 BILLION
Direct Expenditures and Direct/Indirect Sales (\$/yr)	\$865 MILLION	\$326 MILLION	\$1.6 BILLION	\$241 MILLION	\$3 BILLION

How Our Work Is Making a Difference

Our **research and outreach campaign** has generated interest from interest groups, policy makers, and media from across the state.



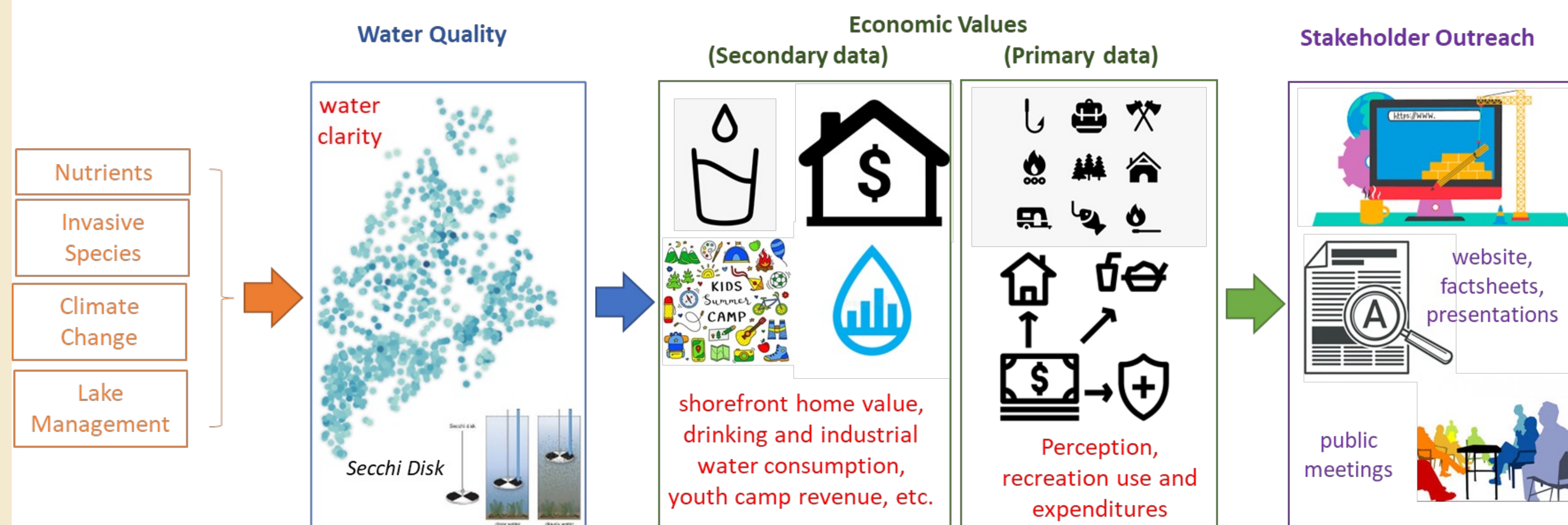
Lake protection communities and decision makers are using our findings to support:

1. Shoreland zoning rules that protect **shoreline health and water quality**.
2. Lake **funding bills** that bring needed revenue to **fight invasive species spread** and treat harmful algal blooms.
3. **Common-sense regulation** of recreational activity that **prioritizes lake and habitat protection**.

Want to know more?
<https://www.lakes.me/economics>



Maine Lakes Project Research and Outreach Framework



Policymaker and Individual Action

Solutions for a sustainable Maine