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Press Release

For Immediate Release
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Save the Dam Initiative to Preserve Amherst Lake
Plymouth, Vermont

Anyone using the boat launch at the northern end of Lake Amherst will quickly see that the water level of the lake is way down. A walk or drive on Scout Camp Road reveals two marshes in the process of drying up. The road is littered with bodies of frogs and salamanders. The river is so low in places that the water has a greenish cast. What is going on?

A sign posted at the boat launch by the State of Vermont tells some of the story. "Notice — Due to public safety concerns with the condition of Amherst Lake Dam, the water surface is being maintained at the current level for the foreseeable future."

In response to the significant changes to the lake, with the imminent threat of further lowering of the lake level if the dam is removed, a nonprofit, PAL-VT Association, has been formed by concerned landowners and citizens. The mission is to preserve Amherst Lake, starting with saving the dam.

The dam, constructed in the 1950s by the power company, has been inspected by the state and deemed in need of repair if it is to remain. PAL-VT believes the dam can be repaired —estimates range from $50,000 to $500,000 —and is seeking support, members and donations. PAL-VT has applied for 501C3 tax status so donations are tax-exempt from the date the application was filed.

"We have to intervene now to preserve our lake and avoid the state's determining the future," says Richard Ruggiano, president of PAL-VT. "We intend to take ownership of the dam from the current owners who plan to apply for a grant to remove the dam."

Organizers of PAL-VT believe in the duty of the greater community to retain Amherst Lake's beauty, ecological health, vitality and its role as a beloved recreational site.

For more information, contact board@palvt.org
or by phone; Jess Glynn 401-837-1230 (harkjess81@gmail.com)
website: palvt.org