**WHAT DOES IT COST TO START AND RUN A LAKESMART PROGRAM?**

The quick, flip, answer is “it all depends!” That is, depending on the size of your mailing list, expenses will vary. Therefore, this estimate gives a ballpark set of expenses for a small start-up, and it is quite conservative. You can “get away” with less printing, but the quality of education you provide will not be as good if you scrimp on informational hand-outs.

Overview: LakeSmart requires record-keeping, printing, mailing, and meetings. You will need a good computer, printer, scanner, and supply of stamps, envelopes, copy paper, file cabinet and a place to keep this equipment. You will need to figure out that part of the equation for yourself.

Meeting Costs: LakeSmart requires that you have one person to coordinate activity, your Team Leader, and *at least* one property Evaluator. As time goes on, you will enlist other evaluators. This will lighten the burden of responsibility, make it easier to respond to requests tied to a specific time, and make it more fun. So, you should aim to create a LakeSmart Team. To keep everyone current and have the best product, it’s best to plan on 2 team meetings a year. Figure a cost of $4/person at each meeting for refreshments – so say $24 for a team of 3.

Mailing:

* Ideally, you will snail mail all actual or potential association members telling them about LakeSmart, probably enclosing the “Be LakeSmart” brochure (brochure is free). Figure a cost of $0.70/letter. Multiply as needed. For 100 people, $70.00.
* You will also snail mail official Award and Commendation letters to each person who has had a LakeSmart visit to recognize their participation and the outcome of the visit. The Award letter is a simple 8.5x11 sheet of paper with envelope and stamp; the Commendation (if you choose to use this idea and the LakeSmart template) is printed on an unfolded cardstock 8.5x11 certificate which costs $1.25 to print and mail.

Printing: These costs can vary greatly, depending on whether you print full-color or B/W, and choose to hand out lots of materials beyond those simply required. *(For instance, the required Evaluation Form is 4 pages, B/W, 2-sided; one for each requested visit. If there are recommended “fixes,” these can be printed or sent as an electronic attachment so they aren’t included in the estimate. On the other hand, optional educational info can be costly. Common Native Shrubs of Central Maine Shorelands, a useful booklet for homeowners stumped about buffer plantings, is 8 pages, full color, 2-sided.)* For planning, opt for the high end of the estimate included below because you will print a stock of handouts to have on hand at the start which you will use gradually over time.

Equipment TBD

Meeting refreshments $24

Mailing all members (100?) $70

Award/Commendation mailing $40

Literature for Team and homeowners $400 (high end) to $100 (least costly)

Contingency $150

Total $684