

**Three Lakes Council
Annual Meeting Minutes
July 26, 2014**

The Annual Meeting of the membership of the Three Lakes Council at was held on July 26, 2014 at the Waccabuc Country Club Carriage House. Approximately 65 people attended.

Welcome And Thanks

Janet Andersen, President of the Three Lakes Council, opened her remarks by welcoming everyone to the Annual Meeting. "I want to thank all of you, our members who have made it possible for the Three Lakes Council to be working on lake conservation for 44 years! It's wonderful to see familiar faces here, and I'm really happy to have met some new folks here too."

"Some people make this annual meeting possible. Special thanks go to:

- John Assumma and the Waccabuc Country Club for providing the use of their facility and supporting us all year.
- The Picnic Coordinators and helpers: Kelley Housman took over coordination last year, and she came back!, the helper-in-chief Kathy Rothfeld, Jean Lewis and John Lemke who greeted you as you arrived, and all the others on our set up and clean up crew.
- The cooking and carving crew: Ron Tetelman, Robby Rothfeld, Gene Tedaldi, Paul Lewis, Lou Feeney, and Joe Tansey.

I'd also like to acknowledge and thank members of the Board and Executive Committee for their continuing efforts on behalf of the Three Lakes Council. The members of the Executive Committee, in addition to me, are Peter Gross, vice president, John Lemke, treasurer, and Jean Lewis, secretary. I also want to thank Paul Lewis who serves as the chair of the Lake Preservation Committee and is always ready with his insights on anything related to ecology.

Board members, representing each lake association, are:

- Lake Oscaleta Association – Joe Tansey
- Lake Waccabuc Association – Doug Housman
- Lakeside Association – Beth Llanos
- Perch Bay Association – Ellen Bailey, a new board member this year
- South Shore Association – Alayne Vlachos

- Two Lake Club –Peter Gross
- Waccabuc Landowners Council – Seth Christian
- Waccabuc Country Club - Darrell Alfieri”

Key Initiatives and mission of the Three Lakes Council

“Our goal continues to be to protect and preserve the waters and the watershed of our three lakes. The waters truly are a reflection of all of our actions in the watershed. We act on our mission through education and information, research and monitoring water quality, studying issues that may affect our lakes, and taking science-based action when needed. Our initiatives are focused on:

- Safeguarding water quality and lake ecological systems.
- Conducting scientific studies.
- Encouraging good lake and watershed management practices.
- Addressing issues and coordinating community action when needed.

Those are our goals. What are our actions?”

Three Lakes Council Actions

“I’ll report on the activities since our meeting this time last year. I’m going to go through items pretty quickly but please ask questions if I’m not clear.

Fall/Winter

- During the Fall and Winter months we plan for the upcoming year: budget planning, revenue projections, and prioritize our initiatives for the following year.
- Of course this work depends on a successful year-end fundraising, and I want to thank every contributor for their generosity and support.
- We planned and developed a contract to make effective use of our Lake Manager’s expertise.
- Winter gives us a chance to update and refresh our website pages. If you have questions about the lakes, this is a good first place to look for information.
- There are also 375 people on our Google email communication group. If you are not on this email list for stewardship information and you want to get on it, see me.

Spring

- In April, it was time for our annual goose adventure. This was the seventh spring of geese population stabilization activities. Peter and Lyn Beardsley, together with J Durst, oiled eggs in the cold spring weather. Their work really makes a difference in the amount of geese that stay on these lakes during the summer. This year we oiled 43 eggs in 9 nests. This effort has slowed the growth in the number of geese who call our lakes home.
- Most of you are well aware that beavers are in our lakes. They have established lodges at the east end of Lake Oscaleta and had a winter food cache in the channel. This spring, members of the Beaver Committee, led by Peter Gross, revisited the criteria that we established for taking action on the beavers. The committee confirmed that the criteria continued to be appropriate, and they also proposed a new criteria based on the number of beavers. The beaver plan and the details of the criteria are available on our website. Many volunteers, coordinated by Joe Tansey, have worked for the past couple of years to keep the channel clear of debris. The Three Lakes Council installed gates at the culvert to make this a bit easier, but this still takes a lot of work, and I want to thank them all. The Town Highway Department picks up the debris. We continue to be guided by science in our response to this situation.
- In May, we started our annual membership drive. So far we have about 170 members, thank you! Having a substantial number of members from the community really amplifies our voice.
- In June, Joe Tansey and his fish committee stocked 500 trout in Waccabuc and Oscaleta. Joe leads an active fishing committee. Contact Joe Tansey or John Lemke if you want more information.
- Also in June, our annual newsletter was planned, written, formatted, printed, and mailed. Thanks to Stephanie Harding who did the layout. We sent out 475 newsletters to our community at the end of June, and gave about 100 to the country club. If you didn't get one, take one of these available here, and make sure we have your address.

Summer

- We continue water sampling/testing on Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta and Rippowam as part of the NYS DEC CSLAP (Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment) program. Every two weeks, we measure clarity, temperature, color, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, nitrates, chlorophyll, pH, conductivity, and calcium in our lakes. Last year we sampled 12 times from March to Thanksgiving. Our volunteers on this work are Lou Feeney, Jean and Paul Lewis, and me. Scorecards from the CSLAP reports for each of our lakes are on our website. Our research is helping us understand the normal range for our lakes, so we are alert if we go away from normal, and how our lakes compare to other lakes in our region.
- We also are participating in sampling and research on harmful algal blooms. We regularly sample the lakes whether we see any sign of a bloom or not, and we can send in special samples if we see discolored water. The water has been fine on all three lakes so far this year. If you have a bad bloom on your section of the lake, get in touch with me, and I can send in a sample.
- Lake water gauges are monitored with the help of Bobbie and Lew Terman. In 2011, with hurricanes Irene and Lee, there was a 33" swing in water levels. Our more typical low to high swings are about a foot. The swing in high to low water in 2012 was about 11", in 2013, it was about 15", and so far in 2014 it's been about 11".
- Long Pond Preserve Property at the western end of Lake Waccabuc is owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). We have assisted TNC in stewardship activities such as erosion prevention and clean-up.
- Although we don't own the property, and have limited control over its use, we have been working with TNC to find ways of reducing access to the lake by unauthorized users. Our focus is to keep out any articles that could carry invasive species into our lakes. John Lemke leads a team of people who patrol the area to discourage unruly behavior and rule breakers. We will continue to work with TNC to improve signage along the property and investigate other possible actions.
- We resumed our "goop and zoop" studies of the algae and zooplankton at the base of the food web in the three lakes, and took samples earlier this week. It's amazing to see differences in these 3 connected lakes.

- On Tuesday of this week, our lake manager performed the annual plant survey of Waccabuc. This survey searches for invasive species and monitors plant diversity on the lake. While we don't have a formal report yet, they confirmed what we've observed - that the plant growth in the lake is vigorous this year despite heavy ice cover, and that Eurasian watermilfoil is especially prevalent.
- They also did not spot any Brazilian elodea. As you saw in the newsletter, we declared success on our Brazilian Elodea eradication project (BEEP) this year. In 2008 the Three Lakes Council decided to aim for eradication using suction harvesting done by a vendor and a lot of continued hand pulling done by volunteers. All of you in the Three Lakes Community showed an incredible amount of trust in us by investing funds for this work. It is rare that people actually set a goal of eradication because it is so difficult to be successful. Most times, in most lakes, invasive plants are not eradicated - if anything they are controlled, often by herbicides. So far - so far - we seem to be the exception. After eradication efforts in 2009 and 2010, we haven't found any Brazilian elodea since, including this week's survey. This rare success against an invasive is something that we should all be proud of - we couldn't have even tried this without the support of the community. We can cheer our results on BEEP...
- But we can't rest. Along with the good news about Brazilian elodea, we heard some bad news from the plant survey team. Another new invasive, water chestnut, is now on our lakes. Because it was in the ponds in Mountain Lakes Park, we knew that we had to keep an eye out. But it's one thing to know it in theory, and another to actually find this invasive in our lakes. Five small plants were found and collected off South Shore in Waccabuc. Water chestnut, or *Trapa natans*, is not the same as the edible water chestnut. It is a floating leaf plant with a rosette that spreads out across the surface of the water. And that's the problem. This plant covers the water surface completely, much more densely than our native water lilies. It stops oxygen and light from getting under the canopy, and it leads to a decline in fish, and a big change in water chemistry and environment. It has very sharp nutlets that will even go through shoes, so wading and swimming are impaired. I brought samples today so you can see this plant compared to some of the other floating leaf plants. Those found on Lake Waccabuc are small, but the plants can get to be the size of dinner plates or larger, as you can see from the samples that Paul Lewis brought from Mountain Lakes Camp. If you are out among the floating leaves, keep an eye out for any floating leaf plant that has

serrated or jagged edges. Try to pull it carefully to get the root. If you are not sure, try to take a picture of the suspected water chestnut and send it to me. If there is any good news about this plant, it is that it is an annual plant, and it's also relatively easy to spot. If you can collect it before the nutlets drop, you can keep it under control. A lot of lakes around us have a small water chestnut invasion and they have an annual kayak pull to control the plant. This is another plant that is difficult to eradicate, but well worth the effort to try.

- Some small stands of an invasive plant could be out there somewhere. We need your eyes on the lakes. Please report any unusual plant sightings to me. If you see anything that looks weird, please call, send an email or a photo, or even leave a sample on my porch.
- While we are on the topic of invasive species, last year there were some questions about zebra mussels and native mussels, so I have more show and tell. The native mussel is quite large, especially when compared to the fingernail-sized zebra and quagga mussels. The other small white clam shells are also invasive, these are Asian clams. If you see a large mussel, no worries, but if you see any of these smaller shells, let me know."

Petruccelli Proposal

"While I've talked about activities by season, we also have an activity that has occupied us – and many of you – all year. And that is the proposed development on Oscaleta Road. Last year I mentioned that we had done some investigation and had written a couple of letters. I don't think anyone thought that a year later we'd still be working on this project.

To recap, this is a proposal to develop a lot that is entirely either wetland or wetland buffer. To build the house, Mr. Petruccelli, the applicant, will fill in a wetland and put a septic system closer to a wetland than DOH guidelines allow. The executive committee joined by Fred Cowles and Paul Lewis have spent a lot of time on this. With the support and approval of the board of directors, we also hired a lawyer, David Wright, and a wetland expert, Lenny Meyerson, to help us present the facts on this case.

We have submitted both oral and written facts and opposition to the Planning Board and, after talking with the building inspector, we respectfully and amicably appealed one of his decisions to the ZBA. I'm grateful to everyone who has spent an immense amount of time on this project over the past 18 months.

So where are we on this project? The days of talking are over. We have to submit written arguments in the next week. Then, we wait for the Planning Board to make a decision, sometime between now and October 21.

The support from the community has been terrific on this. Standing room only crowds at the public hearings, and wonderful letters written from the heart. I don't know how it's going to turn out, but we have fought long and hard and well. What a wonderful community we live in. We believe that the right decision will be made, and we'll keep you updated as we find out more."

Financial Report

"Treasurer John Lemke summarized that in 2013 we raised \$35,000 and spent \$22,000. The expenses are low in part because some of our bills didn't come in until 2014.

In 2014 we received a very generous donation to help us hire the right people to work on the Petruccelli development that I have talked about. In addition, thus far in 2014 about \$20,000 has been contributed by 170 members. After we pay for the survey on Waccabuc this year, the BEEP fund will have a balance of about \$10,000. Your generosity will fund on-going plant monitoring for invasives, continued CSLAP water testing and monitoring for HABs, goop and zoop research, our work to oppose the Petruccelli development, and hiring Lake Management Consultants to survey aquatic vegetation and give us advice on our actions."

Closing

"Again, all of our activities are dependent on participation by volunteers. We're grateful for the many people who help, and you can join us. If you are interested in helping with any of our activities, including water monitoring, hunting for invasives, helping at the preserve, joining the beaver team, or helping with future gatherings like this, please let me know."

The meeting was closed at 7:30 and was followed by a picnic.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Lewis, Secretary