

# **Three Lakes Council Annual Meeting Minutes July 30, 2016**

The Annual Meeting of the membership of the Three Lakes Council at was held on July 30, 2016. Due to rain, the meeting was held at the Waccabuc Country Club Carriage House. Approximately 106 people attended.

President Jan Andersen welcomed all present and thanked the members for making it possible for the Three Lakes Council to be working on lake conservation for 46 years. Jan also acknowledged and thanked:

- John Assumma and the Waccabuc Country Club who provide their facility for this event and support us all year.
- The Picnic Coordinators and helpers: Kelley Housman continues to coordinate and improve this event . Also thanks to Kathy Rothfeld, Jean Lewis, Ellen Bailey, Liz Lemke, and John Lemke, our treasurer, and others on who help out on set up and clean up.
- The cooking and carving crew: Ron Tetelman, Robby Rothfeld, Gene Tedaldi, Paul Lewis, Joe Tansey, Lou Feeney.
- And, of course, all of the members who bring delicious contributions to our shared meal.

Jan acknowledged and thanked members of the Board and Executive Committee for their continuing efforts. **Executive Committee members** are: Jan Andersen, President; Peter Gross, vice president; John Lemke, treasurer; and Jean Lewis, secretary. Jan thanked Paul Lewis, chair of the Lake Preservation Committee, for always being a great contributor in any lake discussions.

## **Board Election**

Board members are appointed by each association around the lakes and are your voice to the council. They are:

- Lake Oscaleta Association – Joe Tansey
- Lake Waccabuc Association – Doug Housman
- Lakeside Association – Ron Tetelman
- Perch Bay Association – Ellen Bailey
- South Shore Association – Jonathon Peter
- Two Lake Club – Peter Gross
- Waccabuc Landowners Council – Joy Brenner
- Waccabuc Country Club - Darrell Alfieri”

“In addition to those appointed by the organizations, the members can also elect at-large directors. The current at large directors are Fred Cowles and Jean Lewis. The board recommends that you re appoint these at-large directors.”

The motion was approved by a show of hands.

## **Three Lakes Council Mission:**

All Three Lakes Council actions are based on the Council’s mission, which continues to be to protect and preserve the waters and the watershed of our three lakes. The waters in our lakes truly are a reflection of all of our actions in the watershed. We act on our mission through outreach and information, research and monitoring water quality, studying issues that may affect our lakes, and taking science-based action when needed.

## **KEY INITIATIVES OF THE THREE LAKES COUNCIL DURING 2015 - 2016**

Our initiatives are focused on:

- Safeguarding water quality and lake ecological systems
- Conducting scientific studies
- Encouraging good lake and watershed management practices by residents around the lakes
- Addressing issues and coordinating community action when needed

### **Given those goals, what have we done since our last annual meeting?**

#### **LONG POND PRESERVE ACQUISITION**

“This year, one really big event permeated our entire year -- the acquisition of Long Pond Preserve from The Nature Conservancy. As you might recall, TNC approached us years ago about transferring the preserve to us. They also let us know they were in talks with Westchester Land Trust. At that point, we felt that taking on the preserve was too big a challenge for our small organization, and we began to work with WLT on continuing our stewardship and activities on the preserve. But WLT decided not to take it. Then, over a year ago, TNC came back to us, saying that they were also talking to other potential new owners, including the town. The board felt we had to take a look at this opportunity - or challenge - again.”

**Rationale:** Long Pond Preserve is an important part of our watershed, and its habitat filters runoff that enters our lake. Because the property is directly tied to and strongly influences one of our lakes, the Board decided we needed to preserve the watershed to protect the waters. We had some serious concerns that were discussed at last year’s Annual Meeting, but after doing what we felt was the appropriate due diligence, the board agreed we should proceed, and we now own it.

#### **Actions taken to date:**

- A survey of the property was done.
- The boundaries were posted with updated signs, indicating the many restrictions that TNC had for use of the preserve, which are continued under our ownership.
- Kevin Karl and a team of 3LC members posted the trail and picked up trash.
- John Lemke is leading a crew to communicate the rules, patrol the land, and gather garbage.
- New signs have been ordered to replace The Nature Conservancy signs.

#### **Continuing obligations:**

Jan said, “This acquisition makes us into a serious organization with more requirements for continuity. The acquisition means that we can’t go quiet, we can’t go dark, we’ve got to stay active. I’m confident it’s the right thing for us. But of course this puts an obligation on us to continue to find strong volunteers to keep the organization going.”

“The town installed a storm water basin that removes a substantial amount of phosphorus from the water entering the lake. We have heard some complaints about the appearance of the concrete weir, and with the help of a friend who is an artist, we’re going to try to add some decorative painting to try to make it look less obvious and more like a stone wall. We hope to do more erosion control and invasive management on the preserve as well. We’ve got a lot to do.”

## **REPORT - ONGOING THREE LAKES COUNCIL ACTIVITIES**

### **Fall/Winter**

- During the Fall and Winter months we plan for the upcoming year: budgets, revenue projections, prioritizing our initiatives.

- Of course what we do depends on a successful year end fundraising, and I want to thank every contributor for their generosity and support.
- We contract for 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. We get about 6000 website views a month. The content is good, the appearance is tired - I'm working on an update but I need to get some technical skills involved.
- About 400 people are on our Google email communication group, which is a source of lake news. If you are not on this email list for stewardship information and you want to get on it, see me. This also means when you reply to the list, 400 people get the message.
- Three Lakes Council members also helped advocate for a dry hydrant that was installed by the South Salem Fire Department in Lake Oscaleta, at the far end of Twin Lakes Road.

### **Spring**

- April is when our annual goose adventure takes place! This was the tenth spring of geese population stabilization activities. Peter and Lyn Beardsley, together with J Durst, oiled 20 eggs in 5 nests, a number that is gradually dropping. Their work really makes a difference in the amount of geese that stay on these lakes during the summer with their goslings and has slowed the growth in the number of geese who call our lakes home. Prior to this activity, there were complaints about 30 to 35 geese leaving their daily calling cards at the Two Lake Club beach. We have far fewer staying around now. This is probably the single action that has brought the most immediate environmental benefit to our lakes, and I thank those who brave the cold weather and the squawking geese to get this done.
- May starts our annual membership drive. To date we have about 198 members - about 25 more members than we had last year at this time. Having a substantial number of members really amplifies our voice with the town and state when we comment on proposed regulations.
- In May, 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.
- In June, our annual newsletter was planned, written, formatted, printed, and mailed. We sent out 475 newsletters to our community at the end of June, and we distribute more via the Waccabuc Country Club. The 2015 newsletter received the annual newsletter award in the large lake category from the NYS Federation of Lake Associations - and since we are up against professional teams from the Finger Lakes and Lake George, I'm especially honored to have this come to our volunteer organization. Thanks to Stephanie Harding, who puts the format together, and all contributors.
- The beavers have not been especially active recently. Most of you are well aware that beavers have returned to our lakes. Our beaver plan and the details of the criteria are available on our website. Many volunteers, coordinated by Joe Tansey, have worked for several years to keep the channel clear of debris. This is a lot of work, and I want to thank them all. We continue to be guided by science in our response to this situation.

## Summer

- We continue water sampling & testing on Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta and Rippowam as part of the NYS DEC Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program, or CSLAP. Like last year, I've been sending out a report after every formal CSLAP session, showing the clarity of the lakes. But that is not all we test. Every two weeks, we measure clarity, temperature, color, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, nitrates, nitrites, chlorophyll, pH, conductivity, chloride, and calcium in our lakes. In 2015 we sampled 12 times from March to Thanksgiving, 8 times as part of the official season, and 4 more shoulder season samples. Reports for each of our lakes in 2015 are on our website. Our research is helping us understand the normal variability for our lakes and how they compare to other lakes in our region, and will help bring an early alert if we go off track. It also provides important information for our lake management action plans and contributes to statewide research on lakes.
- We also are participating in sampling and research on harmful algal blooms. This continues to be a news topic, with Times articles, Toledo's drinking water issues, and neighboring lakes and the WCC beach being closed. We regularly sample our lakes whether we see any sign of a bloom or not, and we can send in special samples if we see discolored water. The sample is analyzed first for the type and amount of algae and, if a lot of blue-green algae are found, whether toxins are present. Not all blue green algae blooms produce toxins, but you can't tell by observation. DEC has 38 lakes on their algae notification list this week, and none of our lakes are included. Waccabuc was on the list earlier this year, and was dropped after a few samples did not contain any toxins, even tho the lake still has a green tint. If you have a bad bloom on your section of the lake, get in touch with me. I can assess it and send in a sample.
- We continued 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.
- We have also one of two lakes in the state participating in a pesticide study. In prior years the only pesticide found on Lake Waccabuc was a fungicide. Cornell U is expanding the range of tested pesticides for current year samples.
- This year, we asked our plant manager to survey all three lakes. On July 21, July 26, and July 28 our lake manager performed these plant surveys. They didn't complete the survey on Waccabuc and they will be back next week. As we've described, we've done annual monitoring on Waccabuc, but this is the first time that Oscaleta and Rippowam have been surveyed for several years.
- So far no new invasives were seen, but they haven't finished looking at the area where Brazilian elodea had been. Each year I hold my breath until the professionals complete their survey. The eradication of an established invasive plant is a rare success that was only accomplished with the support of the community. So thank you.
- This survey is to look for invasive species and to look for trends in plant diversity on the lakes. 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. It's not the lack of ice cover last winter - the prior year we had a lot of snow and still had ample plant growth. But both years the lakes got warm early and stayed that way. We keep trying to figure it out.
- Some small stand of another invasive plant or animal could be out there somewhere. We need your eyes on the lakes. Please report any unusual plant or animal sightings to me: call, send an email or a photo, or leave a sample on my porch.

### **Upcoming 3LC Resident Survey**

"It's been 10 years since we did our first, last, and only resident user survey. That was really valuable to us – we found out about what you liked and didn't like so much about our lakes and about how you wanted issues addressed. It was also how we found important Waccabuc is as a household water supply. Geese were identified as a major problem, so we took actions on that. In the last ten years, we have a lot of new people and many new issues. So please, when you get the survey later this summer, fill it out and return it to us. We will pay attention to what you say."

### **Financial Report**

Treasurer John Lemke summarized that in 2015 we raised about \$30,000 from our membership drive and annual appeal. If you look at our formal IRS filing, it also includes the donated value of the preserve, so it looks like our donations took a huge jump – but it is non-cash. Our expenses in 2015 were about \$25,000, with some bills carried over until 2016.

So far in 2016 about \$23,000 has been contributed by 198 members. The plant surveys this year will deplete the BEEP fund. We told you we would spend it all on invasive removal, management, and monitoring, and we did. Your generosity will fund on-going plant monitoring for invasives, fish stocking, continued CSLAP water testing, and monitoring for toxic algae, goop and zoop research, and hiring lake management consultants to survey aquatic vegetation and give us advice on our actions. We are just starting to prioritize the work on Long Pond Preserve so we anticipate directing additional funds to management of that preserve. This year we anticipate a financial loss, as we did a plant survey on all three lakes and will increase spending on the preserve.

### **Jan's closing remarks:**

"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."

"I have brought copies of a book called "Biology and Control of Aquatic Plants". The foundation that published it is largely funded by the chemical companies that produce herbicides, so it's a little herbicide friendly, but it is also fairly informative, and it is free. I thought of this book when messages about benthic barriers and hand harvesting started circulating. Please pick one up on your way out."

Jan then answered a few questions from the members about weed management and harvesting.

The annual members meeting was closed at 7:30 and was followed by a pot luck dinner.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Lewis, Secretary