

Three Lakes Council Annual Meeting Minutes August 19, 2017

The Annual Meeting of the membership of the Three Lakes Council was on August 19, 2017. The meeting occurred at the Waccabuc Country Club Beach with 94 members in attendance.

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 47 years. Jan also acknowledged and thanked:

- The Waccabuc Country Club, which provides their facility for this event and supports us all year.
- The Pot Luck Coordinators and helpers: Kelley Housman, who continues to coordinate and improve this event . Also thanks to Kathy Rothfeld, Jean Lewis, Ellen Bailey, Liz and John Lemke, and others on who help out on set up and clean up, and Doug Housman for the audio setup.
- 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 also acknowledged and thanked members of the Board and Executive Committee for their continuing efforts. Joining her on the Executive Committee are Peter Gross, vice president, John Lemke, treasurer, and Jean Lewis, secretary. She also thanked Paul Lewis who serves as the chair of the Lake Preservation Committee and is always a great resource in any ecological discussions.

BOARD ELECTION

Board members are appointed by each association around the lakes and are your voice to the council. The lake association representatives 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, members can also elect at large directors. The board nominated and recommended re-appointment of at-large directors, Fred Cowles and Jean Lewis. The motion was approved by show of hands.

PRESIDENT’S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Key Initiatives and mission of the Three Lakes Council

The Three Lake Council’s goal continues to be to protect and preserve the waters of our three lakes. The waters in our lakes truly are a reflection of all of our actions in the watershed. Given those goals, what have we done?

FALL/WINTER – was busier for us than usual

- **Survey:** Last fall we repeated a survey of our lake users for input on your priorities, and we reported the results to you last November. It was not surprising that our biggest issues remain similar to those in our first survey done 10 years ago - algae and weeds. Motorboat courtesy also remained a concern, but we saw an increase in concerns about harmful algal blooms and ability to travel through the channels. We're grateful to receive your input, and I'll address some of our actions as I continue.
- **Proposed Town Wetland Code Revision:** Last November, the Town Board proposed a new wetland code that was seriously flawed and, if passed, I believe it would have drastically reduced protection for our lakes. The Three Lakes Council spoke up – but very importantly, so did many of you. Thank you. While the voices of other groups and agencies were important, I am sure your voices as residents and voters made the difference. The Town Board postponed further discussion until after the Town elections this fall. We'll be watching. If necessary, we'll get revved up again. Stay tuned!
- **Long Pond Preserve:** It's hard to believe that we've only owned Long Pond Preserve for a little over a year. Last fall we installed new signs at Long Pond Preserve with clear guidance about the Preserve rules. I'm happy to say that I have actually seen people reading these signs. Because some of the people on Mead Street were concerned about the appearance of the outlet of the storm water basin, a friend and I painted it to look like a stone wall. It did make it less obvious although it won't go in the Met. More updates about the Preserve a little later.
- **Google Group:** About 450 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, give me your name and email address.
- **Website:** At the end of last year, we updated our website format and refreshed most of the pages. I hope you'll agree it's a more attractive format – it's certainly easier to maintain and update. If you have questions about the lakes, this is a good first place to look for information. If you have suggestions for topics, let me know. The website is one of our main methods of outreach and it is how many people get to know us.
- **Facebook:** We set up a Three Lakes Council Facebook page as another way to reach our community.
- **Board Planning:** During fall and winter months, the Board plans for the upcoming year: budgets, revenue projections, prioritizing our initiatives, and arranging actions with the lake manager.
- **Fundraising:** Of course what we do depends on a successful year-end fundraising. Membership fees bring in about \$11,000 and the rest is extra donations so I want to thank every contributor for their generosity and support.

SPRING – as the snow melts ...

- **Goose stabilization:** In April we held our eleventh spring of geese population stabilization. Peter and Lyn Beardsley, J Durst, Lou Feeney and I oiled 42 eggs in 6 nests, a higher number than the prior few years. This 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. We have far fewer geese staying all summer, which reduces the amount of nutrients they release into the lake waters. This is likely the one action that brought the most immediate environmental benefit to our lakes, and I thank those who brave the weather and the squawking geese to get this done.

- **Vernal pool walks**, led by Paul Lewis, are becoming an annual spring tradition for 3LC members. This year the wood frogs put on a real show, while reminding us of the importance of wetland protection.
- **Membership drive**: In May our membership chair Doug Housman started our annual membership drive. To date we have about 185 members, thank you! Having a substantial number of members really amplifies our voice with the town and state when we comment on proposed regulations.
- **Newsletter**: We mailed our annual newsletter to 475 residents in June, and we distributed more via the Waccabuc Country Club. As the board reviewed the survey, one of the suggestions was to publish a set of lake guidelines, so we designed page 3 of our newsletter as a pull out for members to use to inform guests and renters.
- **Beavers**: The beavers have not been especially active recently. Many volunteers, coordinated by Joe Tansey, have worked for several years to keep the culvert clear of debris. For the channels themselves, we hired a tree guy this spring to remove winter debris left in the channels by the beavers. This action made travel through the channel much easier.
- **Boat sticker initiative**: Our old stickers were looking faded, worn, torn – and our list of the boat stickers was wildly out of date. So we decided to reissue boat stickers this year. I'm pleased that we've sent out over 500 stickers – but I see a lot of boats that don't have new stickers. Go to threelakescouncil.org/boat to sign up for boat stickers.

SUMMER

- **Fish Stocking**: In June, Joe Tansey and his fish committee stocked 500 trout in Lakes Waccabuc and Oscaleta.
- **Water Sampling**: This summer we continued water quality sampling and testing on Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta and Rippowam as part of a NYS DEC program called CSLAP. After every formal CSLAP testing session, I have been posting a report of test results, showing the clarity of the lakes. Of course, we test more than clarity. We also measure temperature, color, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, nitrates, nitrites, chlorophyll, pH, conductivity, chloride, and calcium in our lakes. In 2016 we sampled 13 times from March to Thanksgiving. Reports for each of our lakes in 2016 are on our website. Our research is helping us understand the normal variability for our lakes, how they compare to other lakes in our region, and should alert us quickly if we go off track.
- **Algal blooms**: We also continue our research on harmful algal blooms. We regularly sample our lakes for blue green algae, whether we see any sign of a bloom or not. If we see discolored water, as we did on Rippowam in July, we send samples to the DEC for

analysis. If high concentrations of blue-green algae are present, tests are done for toxins. Rippowam had blue-green algae earlier this year, but no reported toxins. In 2016, all three of our lakes had high levels of blue green algae at some point, but no samples had toxins. If you have a bad bloom on your area of a lake, you can get in touch with me if you want it sampled.

- **Nutrient Study:** This year we are also doing an internal nutrient study on Waccabuc. We expect insight on how much of our nutrient pollution comes from the watershed, and how much is released from sediment at the bottom of the lake. This will help us evaluate possible future actions.
- **Pesticide Testing:** We received the results of our 2016 pesticide testing and we are happy that we had no problems
- **Weed Committee:** During the discussion of last year's resident survey at our board meeting. Joe Tansey offered to lead a weed committee to help our community address problem weeds. The Committee agreed on three initial steps. The first is to try out a few **weeding tools** and to set up a lending library of the ones that were the most helpful. This will start next week. You have to sign a waiver if you want to borrow them, and you'll pick them up and drop them off a few days later. The second item will be preparation of **educational information** about how your actions can minimize weeds. The third item that I expect the weed committee to bring to the Board will be a plan to **ease the navigation into and out of the channels**. The recommendation is likely to be to lay down a benthic barrier early in the spring before the weeds get going, and pick it up late in the year. The weed committee is still exploring costs and approaches.
- **Weed Survey:** In 2016 we surveyed plants on Oscaleta and Rippowam for the first time since 2008. That enables us to look at **trends** at the survey locations around the perimeter of each lake. On Rippowam, the percentage of survey sites with vegetation decreased, and 10% or less of the sites had nuisance density. On Oscaleta, the percent of survey sites with weeds stayed about the same, but about 30% of the sites had nuisance densities. I want to remind you, that's not 30% of the lake – it's 30% of the sample sites along the shorelines and shallows. Waccabuc had about the same number of sites with weeds, and of the sites surveyed, about 20% had nuisance densities. This analysis gives us some idea how much the weed population is changing over time, but it's taken at one point in the summer. It doesn't reflect that the weeds seem to start earlier in the spring and last later into the fall.
- **Invasive Plant Monitoring:** Our plant manager was back to survey Waccabuc in early August, and we're glad to report that they did not find any new invasives. Each year I hold my breath until the professionals complete their survey.
- **Keep your eyes open!** A small stand of another invasive plant or animal could still be out there somewhere. You are the eyes on the lakes. Please report any unusual plant or animal sightings to me. Call, send an email or a photo, or even leave a sample on my porch.

- **Long Pond Preserve:** A huge thank you to Kevin Karl who has maintained the **trails** on the Preserve. This spring we planted some more willow stakes to stabilize the stream that runs through the preserve. We found some **terrestrial invasives** on the preserve that we are addressing. One of these is an invasive weed called mile-a-minute. Next week we're releasing weevils that only eat that one weed, and they should moderate its spread. I'm grateful to those who have helped **monitor the use of the preserve** and have picked up the trash on its shores. We're trying to get someone to remove the rope swing again. In the newest initiative - for the last few weeks, we have hired **police officers to patrol** on Mead Street. These uniformed officers discourage kids from coming on to the preserve with boats and rafts. This is a big expense but we think it's worthwhile. Thanks to John Lemke who worked with the town police to make this happen. We've received very positive feedback so far. This is a good time to remind people that **Castle Rock and Long Pond Preserve are private property.**

Financial Report

We're in good financial shape. In 2016 we raised just over \$35,000 from our membership drive and annual appeal. Our expenses in 2016 were also about \$35,000. So far in 2017 about \$20,000 has been contributed by 185 members. Your generosity will fund on-going invasive plant monitoring, fish stocking, continued water quality testing, monitoring for toxic algae, and hiring lake management consultants to survey aquatic vegetation and give us advice on our actions. We continue to prioritize the work on Long Pond Preserve and as you have heard we directed additional funds for the patrols. This year we anticipate we will need to dig into our reserves to fund some of these actions.

Remembering Shannon Robinette

I can't close without remembering and thanking a long time supporter and friend of the Three Lakes Council, Shannon Robinette, who died just over a week ago. She quietly supported many local organizations, and the Three Lakes Council was fortunate to be one of them. Shannon set up and ran the original Three Lakes Council website and she maintained the boat sticker database since the start of the program. We will all miss her.

Closing: Shannon's generosity reminds us of the importance of volunteers. We're grateful for the many people who help. If you are interested in helping with any of these activities, including our committees, website, water monitoring, helping at the preserve, joining the beaver team, or helping with future gatherings like this, please let me know.

The Annual Members Meeting was closed at 7:30 and was followed by a potluck dinner.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Lewis, Secretary