

Three Lakes Council

Summer 1996

Preservation



Conservation

Education

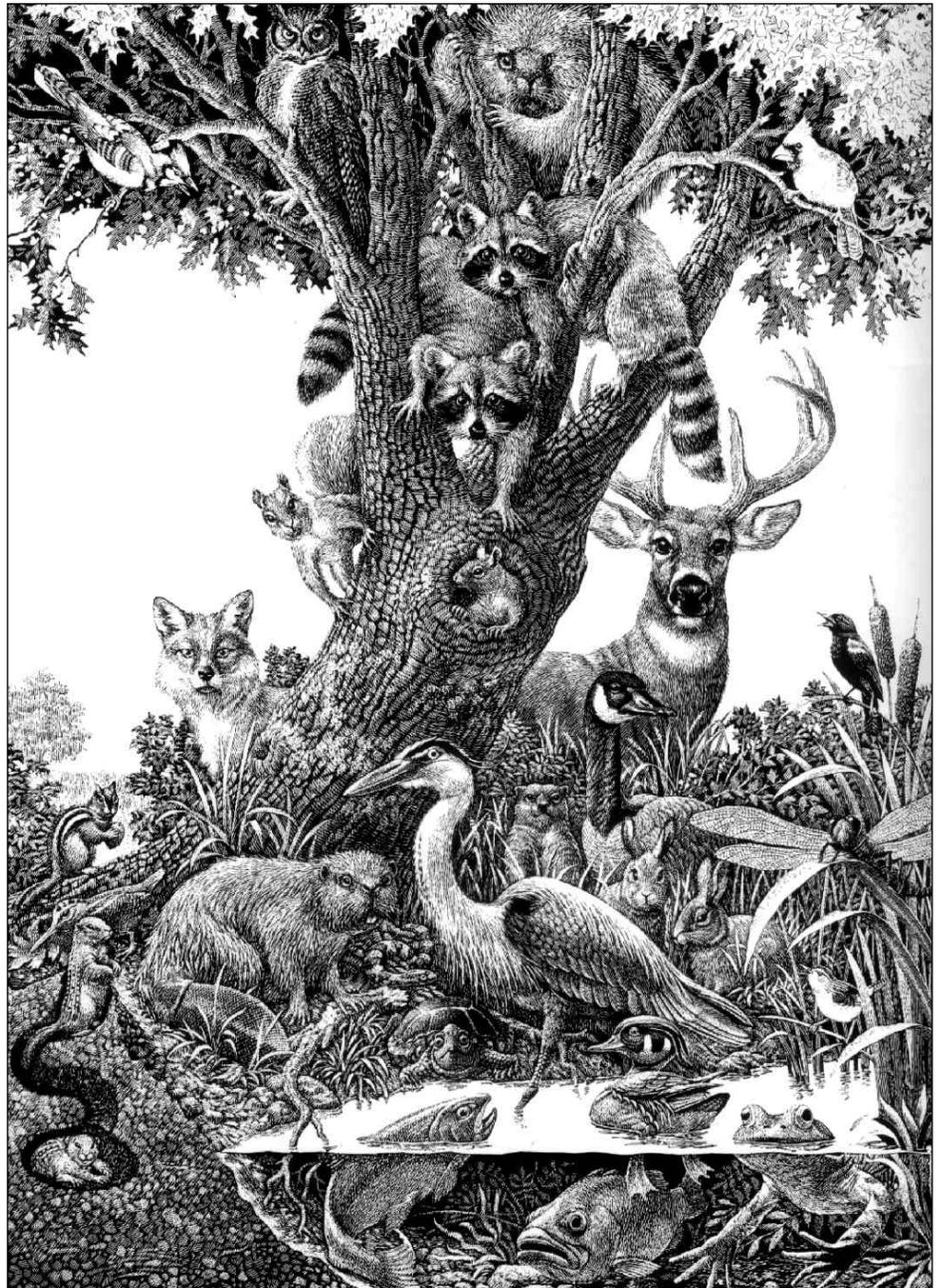
Dear readers and fellow lake dwellers,

Welcome to summer! To your right is an illustration depicting all the other species that are celebrating this time of year with us homosapiens. Let us be reminded we are not the only creatures sharing the air, water, and land in this special environment.

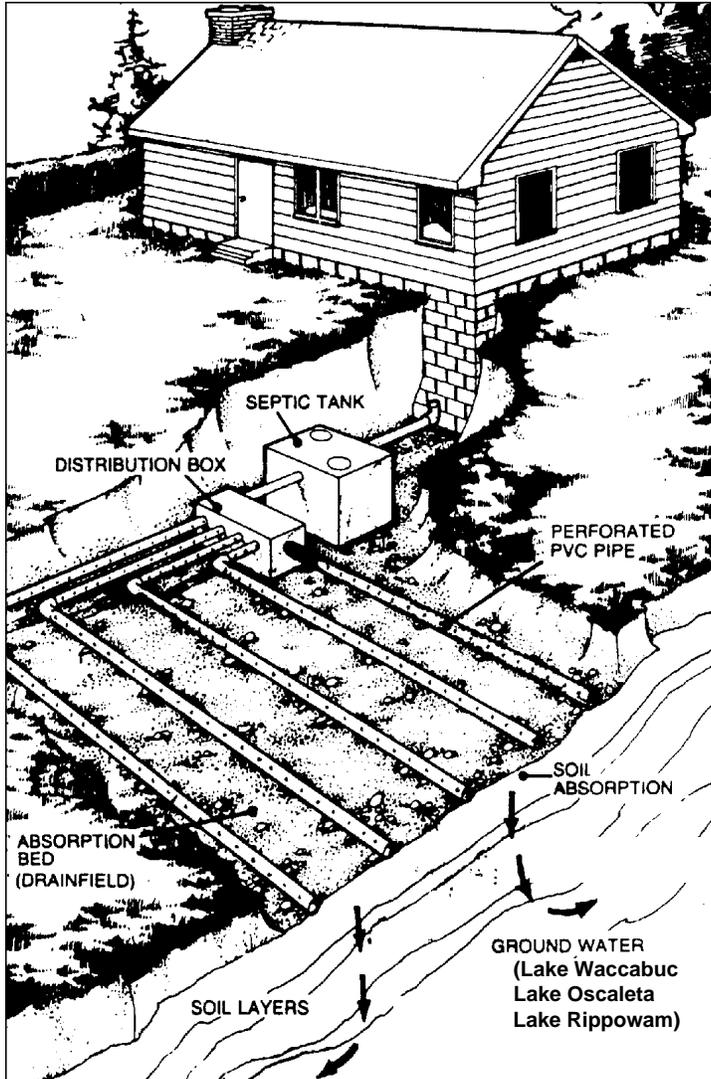
In this newsletter you will find an article by Three Lakes Council president Dr. Peter Treyz, with the most updated information concerning motorboats and our lakes. Through our questionnaire, Three Lakes Council has been reminded by you, our members, that the use of motorboats is a hot topic and we are responding by keeping informed and publishing the most up-to-date information.

Additionally, look for an article by Keith Eddings, a former reporter in Westchester, reporting on the newly formed Lewisboro Land Trust, a group of community members interested in providing the mechanisms to guide sensible growth and protect the environment by protecting valuable open spaces from development.

Also, you will find information regarding septic systems, our fish stocking program, zebra mussel alert, lake monitoring and education, upcoming activities, and **membership drive**.



THE HEALTH OF YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM



When sewage enters a septic tank, solid waste settles to the bottom to form sludge. Liquids flow out through the outlet pipe and are distributed throughout the drain field.

The health of your septic system depends on how you use it on a daily basis:

- Don't overload your system. Know its capacity. When it approaches its daily limit, conserve household water. Each gallon of bath, laundry, and toilet water must be treated and dispersed.
- Spread out your laundry during the week rather than doing it in a single day.

- Be conservative in the amount of laundry detergent you use. *Use ecologically safe cleaners.* Sarah Horowitz, a local neighbor, recommends *Simple Green* (Sunshine Makers, Inc.) as a good, all-around cleaner. Her company is using it to clean Grand Central Terminal! It is a non-toxic, non-flammable, biodegradable cleaner. James Blechman, our Editor in Chief,

Sign up with Three Lakes for a 25% discount for a septic tank cleaning. Call 763-8617 (Dr. Treyz) and we will set up groups of 4 homeowners at a time to get the discount.

Septic tanks must be cleaned yearly for lake front owners and biyearly for others. If solids, sludge and scum reach a high level, they will wash into and clog the drain field (the drain field is the soil treatment system.)

recommends *Uniclean* (by Urtekram), which is also readily biodegradable and completely natural. It has won numerous environmental awards in Europe for excellence. Both cleaners can be found or requested at the local natural markets.

- Never drive or park over the drain field. A vehicle's weight will compact the soil, reducing its ability to absorb.
- Coffee grounds, tampons, cigarette butts, and other non-degradable items won't decompose and will clog the drain field. These materials, as well as cooking fats and greases, should be hauled to the garbage can.
- Use septic safe bathroom tissues such as *Scott Tissue* (made from a natural, biodegradable product called cellulose; no additional chemicals are added that slow up the septic process).

THE LEWISBORO LAND TRUST

By Keith Eddings, local resident.

We live amid a giant grove of hemlocks, a 700-acre park that is the third largest in Westchester and three fingers of lakes that are the deepest and purest in the county.

We share it all with migrating loons and great blue herons that see our lakes as a stop on the way, and with at least one pair of osprey that stalk the lakes for fish from the perches of our backyards. Open your northern window some night this summer if you want to hear the call of a coyote from Mountain Lakes Camp. If you've never heard the spring chorus of a bullfrog looking for a mate, hike down to the channel that connects lakes Rippowam and Oscaleta any evening this month.

More than anything, what has preserved our neighborhoods has been the steep terrain that confines our watershed and holds development at bay. Sensible land use regulations also have helped to keep out the dense development that crowds the shores of neighboring lakes, including Peach Lake in North Salem and Lake Mahopac in Carmel.

But much more still can be built in the three-lakes neighborhoods and in other parts of Lewisboro that aren't so well protected by rough terrain and tight zoning. Indeed, the 1,200 homes that were built in town during the 1980s pushed our population up 28 percent—to 11,300 people by 1990—and permanently transformed the town.

In recent months, residents from the three lakes joined our neighbors from other parts of town to form a land trust to ensure that the upcoming decade in Lewisboro is greener than the last.

Our purpose is not to stop development, but to direct it away from land that might serve a better public purpose. Our goal is to protect not just environmentally sensitive land, but land whose value is the view it offers, the history it holds, the wildlife it shelters or the solitude it might bestow on a family looking for a quiet place to hike. Our tools include conservation easements in which



property owners donate their right to develop their land; gifts of title, in which property owners donate their land outright; and gifts in trust, in which land owners agree to donate their land or its development rights at a later date.

We believe that everyone will share in the tax relief that comes from preserving open space. Look at your property tax bill if you want to gauge the impact of the 1,200 homes built here in the 1980s. The Katonah-Lewisboro schools spent \$30 million to educate 2,678 students in 1980. This year, with 3,285 students, the schools will spend nearly \$40 million.

But we believe the benefits of preserving our open space go far beyond the taxes we save by avoiding the crushing burden of development. The real shelter that land trusts offer is from bright lights, clogged roads, crowded classrooms and suburban sprawl.

The Planning Board recognized this when it adopted a new master plan for Lewisboro 10 years ago. "The key element in maintaining and protection of open space lands," the plan says. "The rolling hills, lakes, heavily wooded areas, streams and open fields provide an exceptional environment for the town's residents."

Much of that remains, but much could be lost forever in the next few years.

Today, 20 parcels of land with more than 10 acres each are being offered for sale by local real estate brokers. Two of the parcels are larger than 100 acres. In all, the properties total nearly 750 acres.

The town has no plans to acquire any of those sites, in part because the state and federal money that once aided local land conservation efforts no longer is available. In the new era of smaller government, preservation and conservation are expendable programs. The task is left to groups like ours.

We believe that Lewisboro land is worth preserving. We envision our town as a place of something more than single-family lots and isolated subdivisions. We believe that choosing carefully those areas that should be protected is not contrary to economic vitality, but essential to it. We believe that development that destroys common resources, natural features and historic heritage is environmentally and economically wasteful. We believe that land conservation is a sound investment.

We see our neighborhood and our town as a safe haven for migrating loons and great blue herons, for osprey looking for dinner and bullfrogs looking for mates, and for the human spirit. If you share our vision and want to share our effort, please contact the land trust by calling Susan Henry at 763-5767.

HOW CAN YOU BUY THE SKY?

The Words of Chief Seattle

(As said to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington DC, 1855)

How can you buy the sky? How can you own the rain and the wind? My mother told me, every part of this earth is sacred to our people. Every pine needle. Every sandy shore. Every mist in the dark woods. Every meadow and humming insect. All are holy in the memory of our people.

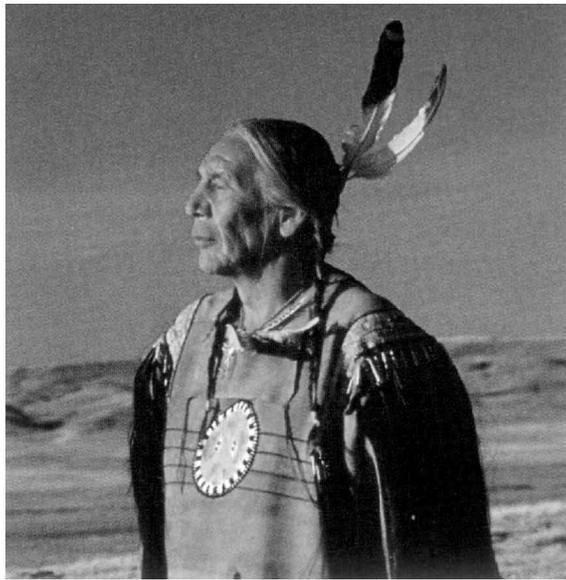
My father said to me, I know the sap that courses through the trees as I know the blood that flows through my veins. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters. The bear, the deer, the great eagle; these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the meadows, the ponies, all belong to the same family.

The voice of my ancestors said to me, the shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not simply water, but the blood of your grandfathers, grandfather. Each ghostly reflection in the clear waters of the lakes tells of memories on the life of our people. The waters murmur is the voice of your great-grandmother. The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst. They carry our canoes and feed our children. You must give to the rivers the kindness you would give to any brother.

The voice of my grandfather said to me, the air is precious. It shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave me my first breath also received my last sigh. You must keep the land and air apart and sacred, as a place where one can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadows flowers.

When the last red man and woman have vanished with their wilderness,

and their memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, will the shores and forests still be there? Will there be any of the spirit of my people left? My ancestors said to me,



The Earth does not belong to us, we belong to the earth. We love this earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. Preserve the land and the air and the waters for your children's children, and love it.

This we know: The earth does not belong to us. We belong to the earth.

The voice of my grandmother said to me, teach your children what you have been taught. The earth is our mother. What befalls the Earth befalls all the sons and daughters of the earth. Hear my voice and the voice of my ancestors.

The destiny of your people is a mystery to us.

What will happen when the Buffalo are all slaughtered? The wild horses tamed? What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are heavy with with the scent of many men? When the view of the ripe hills is blotted by talking wires? Where will the thicket be? Gone. Where will the Eagle be? Gone! And what will happen when we say good-bye to the swift pony and the hunt? It will be the end of living and the beginning of survival.

This We Know: All things are connected life the blood that unites us. We did not weave the web of life, we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

We love this earth as a newborn loves its mother's heart beat. If we sell you our land, care for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you receive it. Preserve the land and the air and the rivers for your children's children and love it as we have loved it.

To Native American people, every creature and part of the earth was sacred. It was their belief that to waste or destroy nature and its wonders is to destroy life itself. Chief Seattle's words were not understood in his time. Now his words haunt us. They have come true. Before clean air and water become an even greater rarity in our time, we must listen.

A suggestion: tomorrow morning get up at 5 AM and go to the lake to partake in the raw, mystic nature as the mist rises, the water fowl come to life, and the fish jump—and contemplate the words of Chief Seattle!

News & Notes

Saturday, July 27th, 8:00 PM

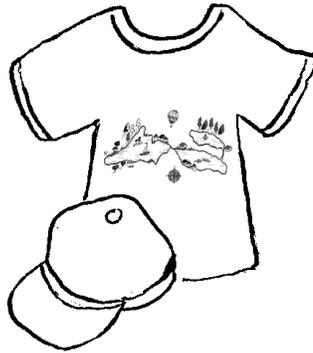
South Salem Library

The Natural History of the Three Lakes

Ken Soltesz, curator of Reid Sanctuary in Rye, and our neighbor, will speak on the flora and fauna of Lake Waccabuc, Lake Oscaleta, and Lake Rippowam. Illustrated by slides taken of our lakes, Ken will speak of our beautiful and unique habitat afforded by the plants and animals which make this region their home. A very interesting lecture for those who want to learn more about our precious surroundings!

Three Lakes T-shirts and Hats:

Everyone will look twice when you wear our custom illustrated 100% natural cotton (no dyes) t-shirts, designed by our local artist. The hats will keep the sun off your eyes while maintaining a three lakes statement. The best part is your money goes directly to helping our aerators, water testing, and our conservation goals!



A perfect gift for family members!

Order now, call 763-8976 (Tania) for fast delivery!
(t-shirts-\$12, hats \$6.)

Reminder:

Don't fertilize your grass, it fertilizes the weeds in the lake! There are no two ways about it.

Pump your septic! See page 2 for our special offer.

Don't forget to send us your membership dues!

A Note of Apology:

We would like to extend our apologies to all the families who received a second aeration fund notice when they had in fact already donated last year. This fall we made a change of hands of our secretarial duties (not our bookkeeping duties) and second notices were inadvertently sent out when they should not have been. All our records are now in order and the problem should not occur again in the future. Thank you for your understanding.

A Welcome to Pinkerton Security

Many people have called Three Lakes Council because they have noticed foreign boats (not registered) being launched at private right-of-ways. They have concerns about whether these boats are carrying the zebra mussel larvae from other contaminated waters. Additionally, people have noticed fishermen catching bass off their nests out-of-season. In one instance it was reported that fishermen had filled their pick-up truck with over 100 bass. Three Lakes Council investigated, and the fishermen were fined for fishing without licenses, fishing out-of-season, and for trespassing on a private right-away. For these reasons, the Three Lakes Council has consulted with Pinkerton Security and arranged to have a uniformed security person spot check boats for the Three Lakes identification stickers, fishing licenses, and disseminate information regarding lake preservation and conservation. Please welcome and support their work.

Aeration update:

For those of you who have recently moved to the area, here is a brief history of the aerators' function:

In 1972, the Union Carbide Corporation gave us the two aerators in Lake Waccabuc and the compressor station on the grounds of the Waccabuc Country Club. The aerators help slow down the deterioration of water quality, a process known as eutrophication. Aeration allows the normal cleansing process in the lake to continue by pumping in more oxygen to the water. It also prevents the release of nutrients from the bottom sediments which would stimulate further plant and algae growth.

The aeration compressor is housed in a soundproof building on the south side of Lake Waccabuc. This winter, in one of our many storms, a huge tree fell smack down in the middle of this building and crushed the whole structure. We will be reconstructing it in the near future. Because of the extremely loud noise the compressor makes, we will not run the aerators until a new house is built for it.

Additionally, many remember that the east aerator was not producing full volume. We will be attempting to repair it this summer, sending a group of divers down to fix it. This is an extremely difficult and expensive operation but we are hoping for the best.

TROUT STOCKING PROGRAM/FISHING NEWS

By Matt Wilder, fishing guide, composer, and local resident.

For several years now, we have stocked the lakes with trout. The proper number of fish to be planted has been conservatively estimated by acreage. We have done this for several reasons. Trout do not naturally reproduce in our habitat, but once introduced do exceptionally well, growing at a rate of almost two pounds a year on our over abundant supply of Alewives (locally called "Sawbellies"). In fact Brown Trout are probably the most effective means of controlling the numbers of Alewives, another non-native species we have that reproduces *too well* and to the detriment of our ecosystem.

The flip side of this potential Alewife problem is that the trout get enormous gorging themselves on the Alewives. Six pound trout are now common in our lakes, and fish exceeding ten pounds are present. The brown trout's closest relative is non other than the Atlantic Salmon, which gives you an idea as to why

they fight so well. They are elegant, majestic fish.

It is important to remember that fish are a resource that we all share—and we are indeed blessed with excellent fishing for trout and bass. While it is fine to eat fish from time to time, releasing fish unharmed means someone else, maybe even you, may have the pleasure of catching that fish again. Releasing fish means everybody gets to enjoy the best fishing possible. It is important to handle

fish that are to be released as little as possible, and with wet hands. If fish are gut hooked the line should simply be cut, and the hook will usually rust out. Please ask any guests you might have that fish to respect our resource.

Bass season does not open until June 21st., which means it is illegal to keep any Bass until that time. Our smallmouth population is apparently still on the increase which is good news for Bass fishermen.



Please take the time to educate and inform people about proper fishing practices and about practices to prevent a zebra mussel infestation.

The Three Lakes Council fish program is dependent on your contributions, and unfortunately like the U.S. government, we have spent more money on this than we have taken in. If you would like to see this program continue please send us whatever you can and indicate "fish stocking". The monies will be then be used solely for this purpose. *Without your support within a few years trout will cease to exist in these lakes!*

Yes! I want to support the Three Lakes causes...

Dear TLC,

Enclosed you will find my dues of \$25 for membership...

I would also like to donate to the: _____ fish stocking program
_____ aeration fund
_____ general gift

Total amount of check: _____

Name _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

THREE LAKES COUNCIL, INC.

LAKE WACCABUC - LAKE OSCALETA - LAKE RIPPOWAM

P. O. BOX 241

SOUTH SALEM, NEW YORK, 10590

Membership Statement

Membership Statement

FOSSIL-FUEL COMBUSTION MOTORS AND OUR LAKES

By Dr. Peter S. Treyz, President of the Three Lakes Council

As promised at our Three Lakes Council Picnic last summer, here is the "position paper" on the effect of internal combustion motors on our three lakes.

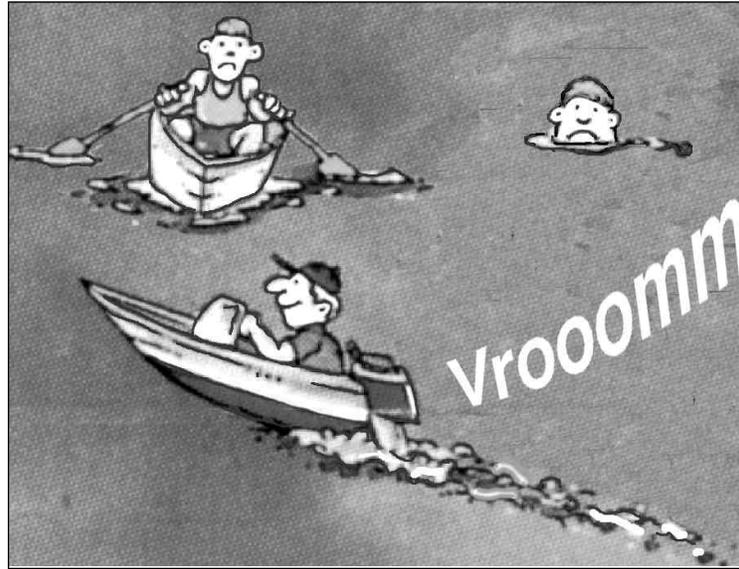
Motorboats create a type of pollution in lakes called non-point pollution. Non-point sources of pollution include run-off pollutants from roads into sewers (and water bodies), run-off chemicals and nutrients from homeowner's lawns and golf courses, and motorboats, which constitute multiple, mobile sources of noise and chemical pollution.

It is very difficult to quantify motorboat pollutants in lakes since they are mixed in with the other mentioned pollutants. The situation also varies with the number of boats on any given lake at a particular time.

An important factor is that the peak boating season coincides with the highest water temperatures and thus the lowest solubility of oxygen in the water and the highest metabolism rates of aquatic organisms. As temperatures increase, dissolved oxygen levels decrease.

Fortunately for the three lakes, and all folks who enjoy the benefits of the work the TLC does (such as maintenance of the aerators, constant educational efforts towards increased awareness of ecological and environmental issues, and consistent water testing for both bacterial and chemical pollution), our dissolved oxygen levels have been high for the last 24 years.

There is no doubt that as motors continue to improve technologically, pollution from this mobile non-point source will decrease. The downside, of course, is that there are more and more people on our lakes becoming inter-



When you are at the lake, and you are taking in the sights, sounds, and smells of lake life, consider how the sound and smell of a combustion engine effect you.

ested in recreational motorboating.

The most viable option to control motorboat pollution is to replace old, inefficient, dirty motors. They should be replaced with the new four stroke engines, or better yet with electric motors.

In two-cycle outboards built before 1972, the crankcase drained directly into the water resulting in wastage of up to 40 percent of the fuel. Although still relatively inefficient, two-cycle outboards built since 1972 have included devices that recycle the oil/gas mixture collecting in the crank-case.

Virtually all outboard engines discharge gases containing hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrous oxides, sulfur oxides, aldehy-

des, lead and other compounds directly into the water.

I found no studies that address outboard engines as a direct nutrient source to lakes, yet motorboats discharge a potentially significant source of phosphorus and especially nitrogen to a lake's nutrient budget.

Four cycle, internal combustion engines, or electric motors obviously contribute less nitrogen to lake waters than do two-cycle engines. All

internal combustion engines should be properly maintained for the sake of efficiency and for the health of the aquatic environment.

Another concern is the response of lakes to the resuspension of bottom sediments and associated phosphorus caused by boat wash. Are Ph levels affected by sustained boat use? What are the long term effects of motorboats on biota? What effect does inorganic carbon loading from exhaust have on aquatic flora, especially in already rich waters? These and many other ongoing scientific studies are underway but definitive answers are not yet available.

There is also the need for us to consider a motorboat's impact to swimmers, canoers, and sailors. Some of the lakes' swimmers have complained that the sound of the engines under water is frightening.

Many people on the lakes cherish the quiet and natural sounds of the environment. The soothing rustle of tree leaves in a balmy breeze, the singing of various birds, and the quiet rhythmic lapping of the water on the lake's edge can be disturbed by an internal combustion engine's roar echoing across the lake's surface.

GETTING YOUR HOUSE AND YARD IN ORDER

There are many things you can do right in your home and yard to protect your lake. By keeping things out of your lake you can actually prevent problems. The most important things you can do are:

- conserve water
- Eliminate the use of chemicals
- manage your shore line
- improve lawn care practices
- maintain your septic system
- compost wastes (away from lake)

Conserving water is old fashioned but it works. This simple principle will save the lake by preventing pollution from the septic.

Eliminating the use of toxic chemicals in your home and yard reduces the harm to your lake. If you follow the tips presented here you will be reducing the amount of toxic materials reaching the lake.

- don't wash your car near the lake

- don't change your car's oil near the lake
- handle all petroleum products with extreme care
- keep your boat and motor in good condition
- do not use bleach drain cleaners and other strong cleaning agents
- avoid pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and fertilizers.
- Take extreme care when using paints and paint removers

Managing your shoreline can be an efficient natural buffer system between the lake and the surrounding landscape. In fact, shorelines are the most important tool you have to protect your lake.

- leave an unmowed buffer strip along the lake at least 20 feet wide
- set your lawn mower to leave grass two and a half to three inches high
- plant steep banks with native vegetation that binds the soil and traps water

- terrace steep banks to slow water and sediments from rushing into the lake
- never tamper with existing wetlands

Less lawn care means more lake protection. If we love our lakes, we need to change our idea about what looks good. That short weed-free lawn that many of us admire can actually hurt our lake because it:

- takes more chemicals to keep it green
- does not provide good habitat for wildlife

Excess fertilizers and pesticides go into the lakes, rivers and wells. The resulting algae blooms remind us that using less chemicals is better. If you must fertilize, use phosphorus-free fertilizers with slow release nitrogen and leave a buffer area near your lake where no chemicals are used.

ZEBRA MUSSELS THREATEN OUR LAKES

Primary prevention is the only answer!

The "zebra mussel" is an invader to North American fresh surface waters that has the capacity to disrupt food webs and ecosystem balances, interfere with sport fishing, navigation, recreational boating, beach use, and filtration devices.

Zebra mussels were first discovered in the Great Lakes Basin in 1988. The zebra mussel is the only bivalve fresh water mollusk that can attach itself to any hard surface, i.e. docks, boats, motors, intake valves, etc. When zebra mussels are introduced into a body of water they multiply at such a staggering rate (10–20 thousand per square inch is the norm) that a "feeding frenzy" is created, in which the zebra mussel attacks and destroys the bottom of the food chain and

sets up a chain reaction which will eventually effect all aquatic life. The zebra mussel shell is so sharp that shoes would be needed to walk on all beaches. The obnoxious smells from the decomposition of mussels also would detract from the enjoyment of shoreline recreational activities.

In short, we must prevent the zebra mussel from entering our lakes!

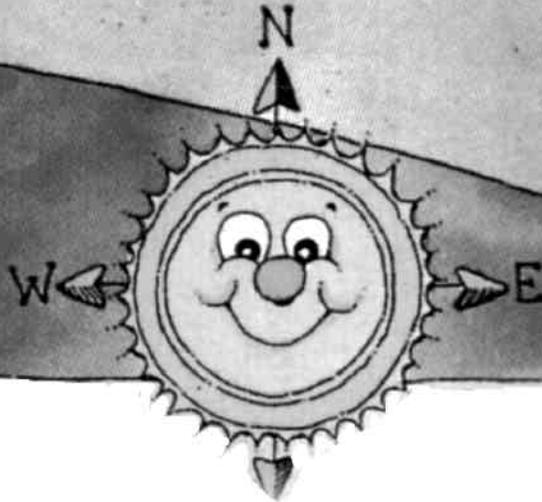
Recommendations:

- Do not transport your boats or motors from one body of water to another. If a friend's boat is transported to one of these lakes, **to destroy zebra mussel larvae** the boat must be steam-cleaned or



allowed to dry in the sun 1½ weeks before launching. Do not transport motors.

Remember, zebra mussel larvae are resilient and undetectable to the human eye. The Three Lakes Council strongly urges you to protect our lakes by informing all who may be transporting a boat into our lakes.



Three Lakes Council Annual Picnic

Enjoy the beach, your neighbors, the lake, music and dancing! We'll have our grand cookout featuring filet minot, salads, beer, wine, soda, hamburgers, hot dogs, etc. Get informed on all the new Three Lakes news!

Place: Lake Waccabuc Country Club

Date: Saturday, August 10th

Time: 6:00 PM-to ?

Admission: free for families who have paid their \$25 yearly dues. All guests and non-members welcome at \$8.00 per person.

Reservations are crucial for us to plan how many people will be attending. Please fill out the information below and mail to: Three Lakes Council, P.O. Box 241, South Salem, New York, 10590

name of family: _____

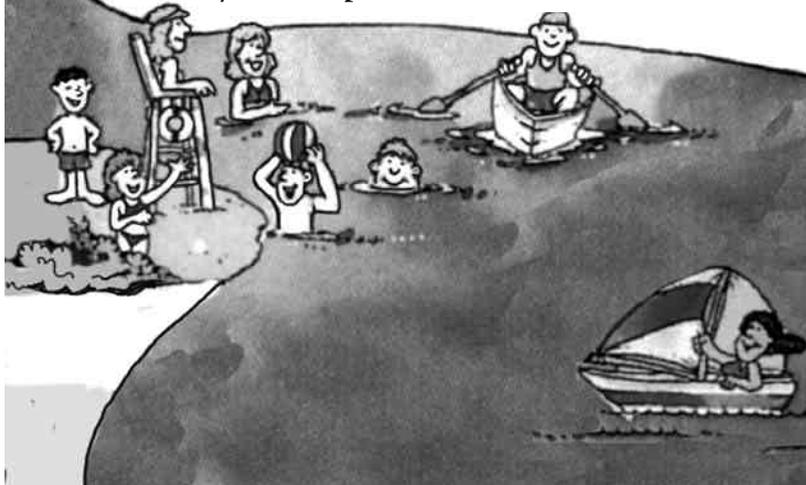
number attending: _____

will you bring

salad for 8 _____

dessert for 8 _____

your telephone #: _____



Securing Your Lake's Future
Fishy Business!
Lakes/Picnic Delights
Getting Festive With Three
Motoring on Our Lakes
Six Septic Secrets
Inside Find:

Three Lakes Council Annual Newsletter

Membership Dues form enclosed



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LAKE WAC CABUC - LAKE OSCALETA - LAKE RIPPOWAM
P. O. BOX 241
SOUTH SALEM, NEW YORK, 10590

Conservation

Preservation

Air

Earth

Soil

Trees

Water

Education

Oxygen

Wildlife