

**Three Lakes Council  
Annual Meeting Minutes  
August 1, 2015**

The Annual Meeting of the membership of the Three Lakes Council at was held on August 1, 2015 at the Waccabuc Country Club Beach. Approximately 92 people attended.

**Welcome And Appreciation**

President Janet Andersen welcomed all to the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Three Lakes Council.

"First, I want to thank all of you. It's you, our members, who have made it possible for the Three Lakes Council to be working on lake conservation for 45 years!"

Special thanks went to:

- John Assumma and the Waccabuc Country Club who offer the use of their facility and support us all year.
- The Picnic Coordinators and helpers, with special thanks to Kelley Housman for continuing to coordinate and improve this event. Jan also thanked "helper-in-chief" Kathy Rothfeld, Ellen Bailey, all others on the set-up and clean-up crew; as well as Jean Lewis (secretary) and John Lemke ( treasurer) who greeted you as you arrived.
- The cooking and carving crew: Ron Tetelman, Robby Rothfeld, Gene Tedaldi, Paul Lewis, Joe Tansey, and Lou Feeney.
- Jan also thanked everyone present "for bringing your delicious contributions to our shared meal."

Additionally, Jan thanked the other members of the Board and Executive committee: Peter Gross, vice president, John Lemke, treasurer, and Jean Lewis, secretary; and Paul Lewis, chair of the Lake Preservation Committee.

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

- Lake Oscaleta Association – Joe Tansey
- Lake Waccabuc Association – Doug Housman
- Lakeside Association – Beth Llanos
- Perch Bay Association – Ellen Bailey
- South Shore Association – Alayne Vlachos
- Two Lake Club –Peter Gross
- Waccabuc Landowners Council – Seth Christian
- Waccabuc Country Club - Darrell Alfieri

## **New Board Member elected**

The Board had nominated Fred Cowles to be an at-large delegate to the Board of Directors. The members of the Three Lakes Council approved Fred's appointment to the Board of Directors by a show of hands.

## **Mission of the Three Lakes Council.**

Jan explained that our goal 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. 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."

## **Key Three Lakes Council Initiatives**

During 2015 there were many initiatives based upon our mission and goals.

- We continued our opposition to a proposed development on Oscaleta Road to develop a lot that consists entirely of wetlands or wetland buffer. The applicant, Mr. Petruccelli, proposed to fill in a wetland and install a septic system closer to a wetland than DOH guidelines allow. The executive committee, with the support and approval of the board of directors, hired a lawyer, David Wright, and a wetland expert, Lenny Meyerson, to help us present the facts on this case to the Planning Board. We submitted a 20 page summation of our concerns to the Planning Board, and it heard our concerns. In October of last year, although it approved the subdivision application, the Planning Board denied the wetland application, thus denying the applicant the ability to build the house as proposed.

Jan acknowledged the strong community support throughout this process. A large number of Three Lakes area residents communicated their concerns to the Planning Board through letters and by attending and speaking at Planning Board Public Hearings.

She added, "We would like to think this is over. However, Mr. Petruccelli has indicated to the Department of Health that he's considering another application for a smaller house. We haven't seen anything, but we'll continue to follow these developments, and we'll keep you updated."

Jan then reviewed the other Three Lakes Council activities that had taken place since the last annual meeting, following a seasonal calendar.

## **FALL/WINTER ACTIVITIES**

- During the Fall and Winter months the Executive Committee and Board planned for the upcoming year through budget planning, revenue projections, and prioritizing initiatives for the following year.
- A contract for effective use of our Lake Manager's expertise was planned and developed.
- Our website pages were updated and refreshed. It is a good place to go for information about our lakes, and there are about 8000 website views a month.
- There are also 400 people on our Google email communication group which is an email list for stewardship information. Jan invited anyone interested in joining this messaging group to contact her.
- Membership Chairman Doug Housman and Ellen Bailey prepared welcome packets for new homeowners in the area.
- Jan noted that all this work depends on a successful year end fundraising effort, and she thanked all contributors for their generosity and support.

## **SPRING**

**Beavers** have established lodges and a big food cache in the channel between Lakes Oscaleta and Waccabuc.

- During the spring the Council had another discussion about whether the criteria established in the beaver plan remain appropriate, and we decided to keep the criteria unchanged.
- The beaver plan and the details of the criteria are available on the Three Lakes Council website – [www.threelakescouncil.org](http://www.threelakescouncil.org). Many volunteers, coordinated by Joe Tansey, have worked for the past couple of years to keep the channel clear of debris. Jan thanked all for their dedication to this effort.
- The Council continues to be guided by science in our response to the beaver situation. Peter Gross has contacted Clive Jones, a scientist at the Cary Institute in Millbrook, who is willing to visit, although to date we haven't been able to settle on a date for the on-site visit. Jan added that although this is a difficult topic for many people, she is pleased that discussions have been centered on concerns about environment and about the roles of wildlife and humans in our world.

## **Goose Stabilization**

- In April, our eighth annual goose egg oiling took place. Twenty-six eggs were oiled in six nests. This effort has slowed the growth in the number of geese who call our lakes home. The number of eggs and nests are both dropping. Jan thanked Peter and Lyn Beardsley and

J Durst for braving the cold spring weather and squawking geese to oil the eggs this year.

### **Membership Drive**

- In May, our annual membership drive began. To date, we have about 175 members. Jan thanked all present for their membership and support, adding that having a substantial number of members from the community truly amplifies our voice.

### **Fish Stocking**

- 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 for more information.

### **Newsletter**

- In June and July, our annual newsletter was planned, written, formatted, printed, and mailed. Jan thanked Stephanie Harding who did the layout. About 475 newsletters were mailed to residents of our watershed and more were available for members in attendance.

### **SUMMER – Water Sampling and Testing activities**

- We continue water sampling/testing on Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta and Rippowam as part of NYS DEC CSLAP (Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program). New this year – after every formal CSLAP session, Jan posted a report showing lake clarity to our google group ([3lakes@googlegroups.com](mailto:3lakes@googlegroups.com)). Every two weeks we measure temperature, color, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, nitrates, chlorophyll, pH, conductivity, chloride, and calcium in our lakes. Last year we sampled 12 times from March to Thanksgiving. Reports for each of our lakes including 2014 results are on our website.

Jan explained, "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 constructing lake management action plans."

- The Council is also participating in DEC sampling and research on harmful algal blooms. Whether or not we see any sign of a bloom, we regularly sample our lakes. Not all algae blooms are toxic, but you can't tell by observation. By sending samples of discolored water to the DEC for testing, they will identify the type of algae and whether toxins are present.

- To keep track of lake water levels, gauges are monitored with the help of Bobbie and Lew Terman. Our lakes' typical low to high swings are about a foot, although we had swings of almost three feet in 2011 when two major storms passed through.
- 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 of the property.

We worked with the town this year on the stormwater retention pond on Mead Street. This pond is designed to remove about 3.6 kg of phosphorus from the inputs to the lake each year. That's about 8 pounds – which would grow to about 8000 pounds of algae and lake weeds. The pond will also reduce erosion and protect the wet meadow habitat on the preserve.

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 uses. Our focus is to keep articles that could carry invasive species away from the lake. 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. Samples were taken in July which showed interesting differences in our 3 connected lakes.
- On July 16, our lake manager, Allied Biological (ABI), performed the annual plant survey of Waccabuc to look for invasive species, and to monitor plant diversity on the lake. While we don't have a formal report yet, they confirmed what we've all observed - that the plant growth in the lake is vigorous this year despite a cold and snowy winter, and that Eurasian watermilfoil is especially prevalent. Interestingly, although the heavy ice cover resulted in lower weed growth on many other lakes, that was not our experience.
- The plant survey did not spot any Brazilian elodea this year. Jan said, "Each year I hold my breath until the professionals have done their survey. This rare success of eradication of an established invasive plant is something that we should all be proud of – we couldn't have even tried this without the support of the community. So thank you."
- There was more good news - ABI did not find any water chestnut. Last year, that plant was found and pulled before it could become established. Since water chestnut is prevalent in the ponds at Mountain Lakes Park, we will continue to monitor all our lakes, including Oscaleta and Rippowam.

## **Financial Report**

Treasurer John Lemke summarized that in 2014 we raised \$30,000 from our membership drives, and we received two exceptional donations. One allowed us to hire a lawyer and wetlands expert to assist us in our opposition to the Petruccelli development. We also received a bequest from Gladys Wolkolf, one of the founding members of the Three Lakes Council.

Our expenses in 2014 were about \$28,000, although some bills carried over until 2015. So far in 2015 about \$21,000 has been contributed by 175 members. After we pay for the survey on Waccabuc this year, the BEEP fund will have a balance of about \$8,000. Membership generosity will fund on-going plant monitoring for invasive plants, fish stocking, continued CSLAP water testing, monitoring for toxic algae, goop and zoop research, and hiring Lake Management Consultants to survey aquatic vegetation and give us advice on our actions.

## **Q&A**

During a question and answer period, Long Pond Preserve monitoring and ownership were discussed.

## **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 pot luck dinner.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Lewis, Secretary