

Three Lakes Council
Annual Meeting Minutes
July 24, 2021

The Annual Meeting of the membership of the Three Lakes Council was held on July 24, 2021, at the Waccabuc Country Club's lakeside facility. About 120 people attended.

Welcome and thanks - President Jan Andersen welcomed all. After having a zoom gathering in 2020 because of the pandemic, Jan expressed her pleasure in once again seeing both familiar and new faces, adding that "this event is our chance to tell you about the lakes and what the Council has been doing over the past year, and what we're planning to do for the rest of 2021."

Jan thanked all members for their support which makes our lake preservation efforts possible, and thanked all who volunteer to carry out our initiatives, adding: "It takes a team to get it all done." She then thanked all who made this Annual Meeting/potluck such a success:

- The Waccabuc Country Club which provided their facility for this event and is helpful in so many ways.
- The potluck coordinators and helpers: Kelley Housman, event coordinator and shopper; Kathy Rothfeld, pot-luck organizer; Ellen Bailey, Jean Mitchell, Fred Cannon and all other set-up and clean-up helpers; Jean Lewis and Carol Weale at the check-in table; and Peter Gross who provided the sound system and music.
- The cooking and carving crew: Ron Tetelman, Robby Rothfeld, Gene Tedaldi, Paul Lewis, Lou Feeney and Jean Emond.
- And all of the members who brought contributions to our shared meal.

Jan thanked members of the Board for their continuing efforts.

Officers: "Besides me, the officers are Peter Gross, vice president; Katie McGinn, treasurer; and Jean Lewis, secretary." She also thanked Paul Lewis who serves as the chair of the Lake Preservation Committee.

Board members are appointed by, and represent, each association around the lakes:

Lake Oscaleta Association – Kevin Karl
Lake Waccabuc Association – Doug Housman
Lakeside Association – Ron Tetelman
Perch Bay Association – Ellen Bailey
South Shore Association – Jonathan Peter
Two Lake Club – Peter Gross
Waccabuc Landowners Council – Randy Gladding
Waccabuc Country Club - Darrell Alfieri

In addition to those appointed by the organizations, members can elect at-large directors. This year the nominees were two officers, Katie McGinn and Jean Lewis. The nominees were approved by a show of hands, and Jan thanked Fred Cowles who stepped down as a director.

THIS YEAR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Jan Andersen introduced her report by acknowledging the effects of the pandemic on all of us. "Many seasonal residents spent more time here. Many homes housed multiple generations, and more people worked and schooled from home. I hope that spending more time around our lakes enabled many families to make some delightful, lasting memories despite this difficult time, and now treasure our lakes and our communities even more."

Jan introduced her summary of this year's accomplishments by saying, "The Three Lake Council's goal is to protect and preserve the waters of our three lakes using science-based approaches. We focus on actions that affect the watershed, because the waters in our lakes truly reflect what happens in the watershed."

FALL & WINTER

- The 50th anniversary of the Three Lakes Council was last October. In recognition, we published Reflections on the Three Lakes, a history of our lakes and of our organization. It took a team to put this together. Over 235 have been sold so far and there has been a positive response from so many in the community.
- Last fall, we assisted the Town in applying for a grant administered by NEIWPC (New England Interstate Water Pollution Control) for septic studies on lakes Waccabuc, Truesdale, and Kitchawan. A different engineering firm was contracted for each lake to assess the impacts of septic effluent on the lakes, and to propose engineering solutions. The contract for Waccabuc was awarded to Barton and Loguidice. A public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, July 28 from 7 to 9 pm at the Waccabuc Country Club. Barton & Loguidice will talk about the study and possible solutions. They want input, so residents of the Waccabuc watershed are urged to attend.
- Behind the scenes, the board continued meeting to keep the organization running and in compliance. In keeping with social distancing protocols, meetings were held via Zoom.
- We refreshed our website and added new reports. For questions about the lakes, our website (www.ThreeLakesCouncil.org) is a good first place to look for information.
- We communicated lake-related information, such as lake testing results and algae concerns, via our google group email list. To be put on that list, contact Jan. You can also like us on Facebook.

SPRING – We started moving our activities outside.

- **Goose egg oiling** - In April, the Beardsleys and J Durst carried out their 15th season of geese population stabilization by oiling 34 eggs in 8 nests, and the Suteris oiled another 5 eggs on Rippowam. This remains one of the most impactful actions we take because reducing the number of goslings encourages adult geese to leave. This reduces the amount of phosphorus geese contribute to the lakes.
- **Storm water runoff management** - For years, runoff and erosion from Tarry-a-bit Road has added a significant amount of phosphorus pollution to our lakes. This spring, with our support, the East of Hudson Corporation let a design contract to control this runoff. It will be designed this year, and we expect construction next year. The early estimate is that this

project could keep 100 pounds of phosphorus out of our lakes. This is a huge amount, so we're excited to see this move forward.

SUMMER

- **Long Pond Preserve** - We have now owned the Preserve for just over 5 years. Kevin Karl has continued to do an amazing job of keeping the trails on the Preserve walkable and safe. In addition to building bog bridges that help visitors cross wet areas, he has so diligently whacked back invasive phragmites in the wetlands on the edge of the lake that it has not gone to seed since we took over the Preserve. We were not able to hire security this year because police staff weren't available, another pandemic effect.
- **Newsletter** - Our award winning Newsletter was mailed to residents of the watershed earlier this month, and some were provided to the Waccabuc Country Club for distribution to its members. With more new people enjoying the lakes, this is an especially important way of introducing lake stewardship concepts.
- **Aquatic plant survey** - This year's plant survey will take place next week on Waccabuc. A biannual survey is a systematic way to track what plants are doing over time. In general, as global warming continues and the lake warms, we are going to see more plants. Having a good baseline will help us assess the effects of any stormwater or septic improvements when they happen. And it's a way to look for new invasive species before they get too well established. Anyone seeing a strange plant is asked to take a photo and send it to Jan Andersen for identification.
- **Lake water testing** - We continue water quality sampling and testing on Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta and Rippowam as part of a NYS DEC program, CSLAP. Our pre-season sampling resumed in April. As in past years, after each formal monitoring session, Jan posted a lake clarity report to our Three Lakes Council google group. In addition to testing for clarity, we also measure temperature, color, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, nitrogen, chlorophyll, pH, conductivity, chloride, and calcium in our lakes. In 2020 we sampled 13 times starting in April and ending around Thanksgiving. Reports for each of our lakes in 2020 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.
- **Algae blooms** - We also continue sampling for harmful algal blooms. We regularly sample our lakes for blue-green algae whether we see any sign of a bloom or not, and we send special samples to the lab if appropriate. If high concentrations of blue-green algae are present, the samples are tested for toxins. Not all blue-green algae blooms produce toxins, but some do. Last year and so far this year, no toxins were found.

FINANCIAL REPORT Our Treasurer Katie McGinn reports that we are in good financial shape. After a couple of years of spending more than we took in, last year was different. Some of it was because of pandemic restrictions: our Annual Meeting/potluck wasn't held last year, Long Pond security wasn't hired, and water testing was deferred until the lab became certified as essential business and could reopen. We have sufficient funds to begin some actions suggested in our 2019 Management Plan, but we will need to raise more to implement recommended nutrient reduction approaches for our lakes. Our board is awaiting DEC studies before making a decision. In addition, the CSLAP program is endangered and we may need to

use our funds to continue at least some of the sampling we do under that program. Meanwhile, we were pleased to have so many people donate despite the pandemic; 227 residents of our watershed area joined as members last year, some donated very generously, and we received extra income from sales of our 50 year anniversary book.

Q&A – Jan Andersen addressed issues of concern to many members, and explained how the amount of phosphorus entering the lakes causes the problems now being experienced.

Why is Waccabuc so green? “There were two different kinds of green blooms on Waccabuc this year. Earlier this spring we had bubbling green filamentous algae. It usually looks like cotton candy underwater, but when the gasses it releases get caught in the filaments, it rises to the surface. It is a nuisance, but not harmful. The other bloom, the green particles in the water causing the water column to be green and soupy, is cyanobacteria, a blue-green algae. The bloom was perhaps triggered by our heavier than usual rain events. Heavy winds might have mixed nutrient-rich bottom waters of Waccabuc into the top layer, providing more nutrients for the bloom event, and perhaps explaining why the bloom is on Waccabuc and not on our other lakes. We will continue to take bloom samples as part of our regular sampling.”

How can we stop these increasingly frequent blooms? The septic and stormwater actions might help. We could try the nutrient reduction approach recommended in our Management Plan. That would involve putting a layer of clay or of alum (aluminum sulfate) on the bottom of the lake to seal off the bottom sediments so phosphorus isn’t released. The DEC hasn’t approved alum yet, and lanthanum-modified clay – brand name Phoslock - is more expensive. We expect treatment would cost at least a half-million dollars. Although some local lakes treat their lakes chemically, the addition of chemicals probably isn’t feasible for our lakes. It can accumulate to create toxic sediments which is problematic for homes that use lake water for household use, and it can poison critters and fish. “It has lasting ecosystem impacts, and it doesn’t address the long term issue.”

Weeds at the ends of the channels. “We know these are a problem and affect how our residents use the lakes. Our Weed Committee proposed dredging wide areas of the lakes at a cost of close to a million dollars, and the channel was only 12% of the work. We’ve asked them to give us a proposal that would focus on the channel. We would then assess the various options that they may present.”

Can the aerators be restarted to control the weeds? Anoxic sediments release phosphorus. The purpose of aerators is to supply enough oxygen to stop that effect. In 1973 two aerators were installed in Waccabuc by Union Carbide to explore the business opportunity of lake aeration. Three Lakes Council took control of the aerators and their operation in 1975. In 2004 our testing showed that the aerators did not supply adequate oxygen for their purpose. In 2005 we stopped operating them because they were both ineffective and costly to operate. A few newer aeration methods are now available, but no studies have been reported for sizable, deep lakes. We will keep watching.

Support for bathometric study. T. Rajwer spoke in support of a bathometric study.

Tribute: Ed Cantine spoke to recognize the dedication of Gene Tedaldi. He has been an active member of the Three Lakes Council since its inception, and although in his mid-90s, is here today as a member of the pot-luck grilling team!

All present applauded Jan Andersen for her outstanding dedication and leadership.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Lewis, Secretary