

Annual meeting comments – July 19, 2025
South Salem Fire House

Called to order at 6:45pm. Approximately 70 people attended.

Janet Andersen directed comments to the members as follows:

Welcome, everyone, to the 2025 annual meeting of the Three Lakes Council (3LC). This is our 55th year. It is so great to see everyone here, some familiar faces and some new ones in the group. I'm Janet Andersen, and I'm your President. Tonight, we are so happy to be together to enjoy a great meal with our neighbors, but that's only part of it – this wonderful event is how we entice you to attend the annual members meeting of the Three Lakes Council. That's why I'll take a few minutes 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 this year.

Before getting into the report, I want to thank all of our members – that's you. Also thanks to the many people who make this annual meeting possible. And all our volunteers. As you know, we're an all-volunteer group. Please hold your applause until the end – it takes a large team to get it all done.

- The Potluck Coordinators and helpers: Kathy Rothfeld, who once again led the coordination and set up, and to helpers Jane Balanoff, and Jean and Paul Lewis at our check in table, and others who help with set up and clean up. We can use more helpers tonight for cleanup.
- Thanks to Peter Gross for the sound system and music, as well as his musical offerings on Lake Oscaleta.
- The cooking crew: Ron Tetelman, Robby Rothfeld, Jean Emond, Lou Feeney, and our carvers Paul Lewis, and our 100 year old volunteer, Gene Tedaldi.
- And, of course, all of you for bringing your delicious contributions to our shared meal.

We depend on wonderful volunteers, including the members of the Board for their continuing efforts. Thanks to our officers - Ron Tetelman as VP, Nan Dale as Treasurer, and Judy Hausman as Secretary. We thank members of the beaver crew for maintaining passage through the channels, and Kevin Karl for the work on the Long Pond Preserve.

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

- Lake Oscaleta Association – T Rajwer
- Lake Waccabuc Association – Sue Harris
- Lakeside Association – Ron Tetelman
- Perch Bay Association –Ellen Bailey
- South Shore Association – Jonathan Peter
- Two Lake Club – Paul Lewis
- Waccabuc Landowners Council –Chris Hucke and Linda Broudy
- Waccabuc Country Club - Peter Hall

In addition to those appointed by the organizations, members can elect at-large directors, who serve for 2 years. The board has renominated Kevin Karl and Jean Lewis. If there's not any discussion, I'd like to ask for your vote to approve by a show of hands these appointments to the board. All in favor? All opposed? Motion was approved by show of hands. OK now let's thank everyone with a round of applause!

With that done, I'll report on the Three Lakes Council activities. I'll try to go quickly, and focus on some of our bigger initiatives. I will take questions at the end. As you know, the Three Lake Council's goal is to protect and preserve the waters of our three lakes. We focus on research, take actions informed by science to affect the watershed -- because the waters in our lakes truly reflect what happens in the watershed.

FALL & WINTER

- The board continued to meet to keep the organization running and in compliance. We refreshed our **website** and added new reports. If you have questions about the lakes, our website is a good first place to look for information. Threelakescouncil.org . Our septic pages have info about septic pumpout vendors.
- **Communications** - You can like us on Facebook. Especially consider joining our Google group for emails, this is how we communicate important information, including about lake health. For example, that's how we sent the recent notice about localized harmful algal blooms on Waccabuc. See me to get on the group.

SPRING – Our activities move outside

- In April, Peter and Lyn Beardsley and J Durst carried out their 19th season of **geese population stabilization** by oiling 27 eggs in 6 nests. Chris and Rick Ferrarone oiled eggs on a nest on Rippowam, and Carlos Fonseca and Bernie Baldwin oiled eggs in a nest in the channel to Waccabuc. Thanks to these intrepid volunteers for their close encounters with the geese. This group can use new volunteers too!
- Did you see the “get pumped” septic signs? Thanks to Nan Dale and Renee Goldstein for keeping the reminders going. If you don't know when you last pumped your septic, it just might be time to do so again. And remember it's a law to pump at least once every 5 years, but experts say those lakeside should pump every 2 or 3 years. We're happy that more people are pumping, keep it up!
- Boat sticker demand picks up in the spring. They help keep out invasives and continue to reunite wandering boats and wandering owners. Get yours if you don't have one! ThreeLakesCouncil.org/boats

SUMMER

- Summer brings more activity to **Long Pond Preserve**, which we've owned for 9 years. Kevin Karl continues to do an amazing job of keeping the preserve trails walkable, and he built bog bridges to cross wet areas. He's also been diligently whacking back the invasive phragmites in the wetlands. He can use some help on the preserve. We budgeted to hire police to help manage the entrance to the preserve again this year if we see an issue with boats, trash, and behavior. John Lemke is our police liaison.
- We mailed out our **newsletter** in June, and distributed some to Waccabuc Country Club members. With more new people enjoying the lakes, it is especially important to say how to be a good lake steward and lake neighbor. We have extra copies here if you didn't get yours or want extra for guests or if you have a short term rental. Be sure to look for the beautiful photographs taken by Claudia Aronow. Her photographs highlight another reason to protect these wonderful lakes – they are a home to wildlife too!
- Our **plant survey** will take place in two weeks, this year it's on Waccabuc. One major reason for our survey is to find new invasive species early enough to take action. Our survey is also a systematic way to track the changes in plant growth over time. But we can see that there's more plant growth. Global warming provides a longer growing season. Warmer lake waters mean more places with plants and denser stands of plants. You're watching your part of the lake all the time. If you see a strange plant, please take a photo and send it to me. I'd much rather have a false alarm than miss something that is just gaining a foothold.

- We continue **water quality sampling** and testing on Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta and Rippowam as part of a NYSDEC program, CSLAP. I'm so happy that Carlos Fonseca Sr. and Jr. are monitoring Rippowam this year. As in past years, I've sent a report after every formal monitoring session, focused on the clarity of the lakes. Of course, we test more than clarity. We also measure temperature, color, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, nitrogen, chlorophyll, pH, conductivity, chloride, and calcium in our lakes. This long list combines to give a picture of lake conditions. The DEC 2024 reports for each of our lakes are on our website. Our research helps us understand the normal variability for our lakes, how they compare to other lakes in our region, and should alert us quickly if there's a troubling trend. For example, salinity was reported as a concern in the NYC reservoirs. Our measurements of chloride, one component of salt, are actually trending down over the past 10 years in each of our lakes.
- Regarding **harmful algal blooms**, the DEC has moved to visual observations only. Our website has some sample photos to check if you are not sure if what you are seeing is a HAB, and I've got some copies of a DEC sheet up here. Send me a photo! Not every HAB has toxins, and there's no way to tell visually. **If in doubt, stay out!** I've been asked about the green bubbling algae. It is nasty, but it doesn't produce toxins.

Big initiatives

Oscaleta Road culvert. This is not directly a 3LC matter, but it's important to our community. Anyone notice the dip in the road? In 2023 the Town was awarded a DOT grant to replace the culvert that carries Oscaleta Road across the channel between lakes Waccabuc and Oscaleta. I am practicing zen and learning patience on this one. We have identified an engineer to start the design work but that contract has not been finalized by the Town. I'm expecting two sets of costs, the cost if we keep one lane open, and the cheaper option, to close the road for a period during construction. I expect a public information session as we get closer.

The **stormwater retrofit for streams that cross Long Pond Preserve** has been on our list for a long time. After a series of meetings with lawyers representing some residents on Tarry-a-bit Drive, EOHWC moved this project to their postponed list. The board and I are trying to get this back on the active list.

Sewers. Another big project is the Truesdale – Waccabuc wastewater solution project, WOTR. Again, this is not just a 3LC project, it spans a larger area, but it's important for residents of our lakes community to understand. 2021 studies showed that septic systems are contributing phosphorus pollution to our lakes. The Town sized a \$40M sewer plant to serve about 300 homes at the east end of Waccabuc, some homes in Twin Lakes Village, and a portion of Truesdale, as well as the Town House, Library, and highway garage. A new sewage treatment plant will be built behind the Town House near where the Town recycling center currently exists. Some maps are here: they are slightly out of date but show the general idea. Last June we submitted grant applications, and received one grant for \$6.875M. We've made progress with the Westchester Board of Legislatures who will vote whether to give about \$12M of NYC funds towards this project: Erika Pierce, who represents our district, has been very supportive. And finally, it looks likely that we will be able to get about \$16M later this summer from NYCDEP. I am finalizing another grant application to be submitted next week. So this project continues to move forward slowly. Here's why it's important to talk about. Nothing concrete will happen until the homes to be served by sewers vote to approve a tax district to pay for ongoing operations and maintenance. Current estimates are that it would cost about \$1500/year, or about \$125/month. It's a sizable amount but you never have to worry about septic systems again, the lakes should benefit, and home values will increase. Full disclosure, I'm not in the currently proposed sewer district, but I firmly support it. If

we get the grant, it's likely that we will get more detailed information on the tax district early next year with a goal of a vote in June of 2026.

Septic repair. The County currently offers means tested help for septic repairs, and we are hoping to get income limits removed. We are so happy that we have had a good response after asking people to pump, please continue!

So that's the year in review – right up to tonight's gathering.

Let me provide a brief **Financial Report**. Three Lakes Council is in good financial shape. We had a couple of years where we spent more than we took in. Last year was different. We had support from a generous donor in 2024, bringing our revenue to \$55,822. That means although we spent more than typical for the year, \$32,725, we increased our cash reserves by \$29,113. Last year we had 215 members. So far this year, our 170 members, with another very generous donation, contributed \$48,780. So far this year we spent \$15,557, and we have more expenses coming. What will we do with any unspent funds? Our 2019 lake management plan suggested that we consider nutrient inactivation approaches for our lakes. If and when DEC allows this action, which is allowed in every other state, I'd like to see us consider this treatment on Waccabuc and then Oscaleta, and we've had some preliminary board discussions. The DEC has pilot projects on Peach and Mahopac lakes. There's a bill in the state legislature which will push DEC to ease getting permits to take this approach. If this is approved, we will need to raise more to implement that recommendation. Also, we want to continue to explore ways to ease passage through the channels and the weeds that crowd them. I expect we will spend money on the sewer initiative as we communicate with residents about that project.

One more item. **Waccabuc Country Club** has renovated their beachfront facility over the past year. While not a major change in footprint, it is a significant investment. The club renovated the boathouse, replaced a storage building with a covered pavilion, and replaced the snack bar. You can see accessible ramps. The work included an improved septic system with new septic fields further from the lake, and stormwater runoff management. I personally see their investment as a statement of confidence in lake conditions. However, some members of the community sued over the plans. The Waccabuc Country Club did not want anyone who was actively suing them to be on the property, and our member meetings have to be open to all members. So we found a new venue for this year, and I'm grateful the fire district and to all of the annual meeting and potluck team who worked to make this happen.

As always, thank you all our members and our volunteers.. So thank you all, we can't do it without you!

Q&A. A summary of some of the Q&A topics follow.

Culvert replacement:

Q Can't one lane remain open during construction? How will we manage if Oscaleta Road is completely closed during construction? How long would it be closed? Could it be jacked up?

A Everyone would like to keep one lane open during construction, but the Town will want to stay within the budget, and that is why the Town is asking for two options. We estimate a closure would cause about a 15-minute detour. All are aware that the culvert is cracked and dips in the road over the culvert are becoming

deeper. We won't know how long it will take until the Town has received a design proposal from the engineers. It's not possible to jack it up. There's no solid ground to support jacks.

Summary from Jan: "Until we receive a design proposal from the engineers, we won't know what to expect. All I can do is continue pressing the Town to replace the culvert with minimum disruption to traffic along Oscaleta Road, and to get moving on it quickly."

Nutrient inactivation:

Q What is the estimated cost of treating the lakes?

A In our 2019 lake management plan, the estimated cost of treating Waccabuc was \$350,000.

Q Will nutrient inactivation reduce the amount of milfoil?

A It will reduce growth of algae and some plants. Since the primary effect is to reduce phosphorus in the water column it has less effect on plants that can get phosphorus from the lake bottom.

Removal of dead trees

Q What is the protocol for removal of dead trees?

A It depends on where they are. If they present danger to your house, it's fine to remove them. If they aren't close to the house or areas where people are active, leave them because they provide habitat for birds and animals. If they are in the lake in an area where they don't interfere with your access, leave them because they provide great habitat for fish.

The meeting ended at 7:20 pm and dinner and socializing ensued.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Hausman

(Comments-Jan, Q & A-Jean)

Future 3LC meetings: Oct.16, 2025, Jan. 15, 2026, April 16, 2026. (earlier or more often if necessary)