

Annual meeting comments – August 15, 2026
Waccabuc Country Club Waterfront

Janet Andersen called the members meeting to order at 6:45 pm. In attendance were 94 members from 55 homes around the lakes. Her prepared remarks are presented here as minutes of the meeting.

Welcome, everyone, to the 2026 annual meeting of the Three Lakes Council. This is our organization's 56th year. It is so great to see everyone here, some familiar faces as well as new ones. 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. I'll take a few minutes to tell you about the lakes and Three Lakes Council activities.

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 Event Management Team and helpers: This includes the cooking and carving crew: Ron Tetelman, Robby Rothfeld, Jean Emond, Lou Feeney, Paul Lewis, and Gene Tedaldi, who continues on the carving team at 102.
- And the patio crew: Kathy Rothfeld, who once again led the coordination and set up, and to her helpers: Jane Balanoff, and Ellen Bailey, and Jean Lewis and Susan Harris 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 curating the music.
- And, of course, thanks to 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 – VP Ron Tetelman, Treasurer Nan Dale, and Secretary Judy Hausman, and also Ellen Bailey as membership chair, Kevin Karl for Long Pond Preserve Stewardship.

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 – Linda Broudy
- Waccabuc Country Club – Susan Ellis
- At large – Jean Lewis and Kevin Karl

We are also grateful to the Waccabuc Country Club for allowing us to use this wonderful venue.

As you know, the Three Lake Council's mission is to protect and preserve the waters of our three lakes. We focus on research and actions that affect the watershed because the waters in our lakes truly reflect what happens in the watershed. The actions we take are informed by science.

I'm going to run through some of our regular and on-going activities and then spend more time on some of the big projects affecting our lakes.

- This spring Three Lakes Council ran our third user survey, following prior user surveys in 2006 and 2016. Thanks to Carlos Fonseca who was an intern for us this May, we sent out and compiled results. It's very interesting to see that

the concerns and the preferred actions have not really changed. Algae and weeds remain big concerns. You expressed a bit more concern with unauthorized users and inconsiderate boaters. The full results are available on our website. Thanks to all who participated, you help us assess priorities and actions.

- One of the big concerns in the survey 20 years ago was goose poop everywhere. That problem wasn't really brought up in this year's survey, and that's thanks to the geese team! In April, Peter Beardsley, J Durst, and Renee Goldstein carried out their 20th season of **geese population stabilization** by oiling 31 eggs in 5 nests. Thanks to all of them. This group can use new volunteers.
- Don't forget to get boat stickers. They help keep out invasives and continue to reunite wandering boats and their owners. Get yours if you don't have one! Request one at ThreeLakesCouncil.org/boats
- The bloom on Waccabuc this year caused a lot of concerns, but it got more people aware of how to recognize a harmful algal bloom. Our website has photos, newsletter has some photos, I have extra copies as well as some handouts here. This is especially important for renters and new residents. You can always 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.
- The bloom reduced some of the activity on **Long Pond Preserve**, which we've now owned for 10 years. Kevin Karl continues to do an amazing job of keeping the preserve trails walkable.
- Thanks to Nan Dale and Renee Goldstein who continue the never-ending work to remind people to pump out their septic systems.
- Our **plant survey** on Oscaleta and Rippowam was on August 5. One major reason for our survey is to find new invasive species early enough to take action. No new invasives were found this year. Our survey is also a systematic way to track the changes in plant growth over time. We all can see that there's more plant growth. Global warming provides a longer growing season, and warmer lake waters accelerate plant growth. I won't have the reports of the plant survey until later this winter.
- We continue **water quality sampling** and testing on Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta and Rippowam as part of a NYSDEC program, CSLAP. Thanks to the Fonseca family for monitoring Rippowam again this year. As in past years, I've sent a report after every formal monitoring session, focused on the clarity of the lakes. 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. These data help justify grant funding of a septic solution and if we go forward will help us track progress.

So that's the quick summary of our activities. Let me now turn to a few big projects are underway that significantly affect us.

The first project is the EOHWC stormwater project we've talked about before. Last year I reported that EOHWC had taken the **stormwater project on Long Pond Preserve** off their active list. They had no funding for defense if they were sued. I'm happy to say that the Three Lakes Council board has offered a financial backstop to EOHWC, and they have returned the project to their active list. I hope it will come before the planning board this fall and be ready to go. It's estimated to keep about 37 pounds of phosphorous out of Lake Waccabuc annually.

The second project is the **Oscaleta culvert**. As you know, it was badly deteriorated, and collapsed in March of this year. While it was quickly repaired, it still needs to be replaced. The Town was awarded a grant to replace it in 2022. It's taken a lot of time, but the current schedule has the new culvert in place by year end 2027. That means that for the rest of this summer and next, most of us will not use the channels to move between Waccabuc and the other lakes. I know a few people make the journey through, but it's not available to most of us. The Town just reviewed the engineering plan and it's moving forward. My big concern on this is not the culvert itself, it is that with little traffic for two years, when the culvert does reopen the channel might be impassible because of weeds and debris. I recognize that passage between the lakes is important to everyone, and we're going to have to come up with a solution. I hope to put a team together this fall.

The third big project is the Town plan to address **septic system pollution**. A study was done in 2021 saying, yes, our septic systems pollute our lakes. The solution was originally a sewer system that would serve about 300 homes. While securing \$39 million in funding commitments, the cost rose to \$49 million. Unfortunately, our final grant application to bridge that \$10 million gap was unsuccessful. Rather than continuing to chase elusive financing for a project with ever-increasing costs, in January the Town pivoted to an Enhanced Septic System and a Septic District approach.

Why use advanced septic system technology? Available wastewater technology has evolved significantly since the engineering reports of 2021. Advanced treatment septic systems can significantly reduce phosphorus, which makes the septic solution more comparable to a sewer approach. These units remove 90% to 95% of phosphorus from the septic system effluent.

Why a septic district? Westchester County Department of Health (DOH) will require this approach to ensure that the septic tanks are maintained throughout their life.

This shift is not just a backup plan—it is a more effective way to protect our environment:

- We can't use all the sewer funding for septic replacement. But even with less funding, the Town thinks this septic solution will serve 500 to 600 homes, double the 300 homes that would have been served by the sewer system.
- This plan will have lower annual costs for the homeowner. The engineering estimate of operations and maintenance which would be charged to the homeowner is half that of the sewer system.
- The EPA estimates the useful life of a septic system to be about 30 years. I don't know how often any of you think about your septic system, but Town management will mean you never have to think about pumping or repairs ever again.
- I must add that the solution for South Shore will have to be developed. That area is unique because some of the homes have no septic system at all and so the approach to take out the existing tank and put in another don't apply.

Many of you attended the Town meeting on June 30 where this septic approach was discussed. I'll give an update on some of the steps. We had expected the DEP funding application to be available in July, and on Tuesday we heard to expect it in September. The later the Town knows about funding, the later the project. The Town had \$100K of Westchester County funding for the sewer map, plan, and report and we hoped to just transfer it to the septic version, and we've been told we have to go back and get separate legislative approval, which will take more time. We continue to work with the Department of Health, and continue to make progress on that front.

I want to emphasize that the opportunity to get grant money to put in these advanced septic units is a generational opportunity. It will permanently improve our lakes because it will permanently reduce the amount of phosphorus that flows into our lakes each year. I know change is hard, and I sympathize with people who are concerned about the disruption that a new septic system will cause. With continued phosphorus inflows and climate change, we will see more frequent blooms like the one that essentially closed Waccabuc this July, and we'll see them on all our lakes. We've seen blooms most frequently on Waccabuc, but all of our lakes have had them over the last 20 years. This is a chance for our community to work together for a real long-term benefit. I want to hear concerns and I will work to address them. I also welcome ideas on how to give updates, whether in association meetings or on zoom calls.

So that's a review of the big projects affecting our community.

Before taking questions, 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. The last two years were different, thanks in part to some very generous supporters and also because Nan Dale found a safe investment for our deposits. In 2025, we had amazing donations of \$78,906. We spent \$26,023, and increased our cash reserves by \$61,542. Last year we had 202 members. So far this year, we have donations of \$38,943 from 174 members, and we have spent \$18,929. What do we do with any unspent funds? Our 2019 lake management plan recommended nutrient inactivation for our lakes. We expect DEC to

permit this in the next few years, and I'd like to see us consider this treatment on Waccabuc and then Oscaleta. The board has been saving funds for this. We've also used our cash to get EOHWC moving on the Long Pond Project by offering a backstop in the event they get sued. And, as I've just said, with the Oscaleta culvert out of use, boats are not keeping the weed growth down. When the Oscaleta culvert gets fixed, we are likely to have an expensive project to improve the ability to get through the channels. I expect we will also spend money on the septic initiative as we communicate with residents about that project.

As always, thank you all our members, our volunteers, and we are especially grateful to those who very generously provide additional donations. So thank you all, we can't do it without you! Protecting these lakes is a shared effort, and as we navigate these major projects, your voices and involvement are vital. We want to keep this conversation going, whether in upcoming association meetings, online info sessions, or right here tonight. I know we've covered a lot of ground. Now, what questions, thoughts, or concerns do you have?

In closing: we have a rare, generational opportunity right now to permanently safeguard our water quality and ensure our three lakes stay healthy for decades to come. It will take time, flexibility, and community cooperation, but the long-term benefit to our environment and our property values is immense. Thank you all again for being here, for supporting the Council, and for caring so deeply about our community.

The members' meeting was closed at 7:15 pm. Dinner and socializing ensued.

Waccabuc Country Club staff provided extraordinary support from beginning to end. Staff members set up tables for serving and were on hand throughout the evening to lend assistance wherever needed. The team used a large golf cart to taxi people between the regular and handicapped parking areas. Everyone enjoyed the beautifully renovated lakefront facility.

The members expressed their appreciation for all of the work of the Three Lakes Council and its volunteers.