

# Lake Waramaug Association

August 2016



## End-of-Summer Community Gathering and Meeting Sunday, September 11th, 2016 - 2:00 PM Lake Waramaug Country Club

We hope to see you at our tenth annual meeting held jointly with the Lake Waramaug Task Force, an opportunity to enable the Task Force to discuss its programs and achievements directly with Association members.

Tom McGowan, Executive Director of the Lake Waramaug Task Force, will lead a discussion on key challenges facing Lake Waramaug. The growing threat of excessive cyanobacteria, invasive plants, worsening soil erosion and nutrient inflow from Sucker Brook and its expanding delta, and over-development on the lake shoreline area are all concerns which need attention and vigilance. The efforts of the Task Force and the entire Lake community, which face these unprecedented challenges, will be strengthened.

We will welcome Margie Field, the latest member to join our Board of Directors.

Please join us and take advantage of this opportunity to learn about important matters affecting the protection and preservation of Lake Waramaug.



### 100 Years: Lake Waramaug

In connection with a larger project commemorating our 100th Anniversary, we are asking all friends, residents and Association members to kindly look in their attics, family albums and forgotten shoe boxes to see if you have any photos (*or other interesting documents*) you'd be willing to share with our community.

Please contact us at -  
lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com with any contributions, which will be carefully scanned and returned to you promptly.

*Photo courtesy of the Hopkins Family*

## Dues Reminder

If you received a dues payment envelope with this mailing, our records indicate that your 2016 dues remain unpaid. Please send your payment today. Your contribution supports our efforts to protect and preserve Lake Waramaug. If you are new to the Lake community, please consider joining us! And we look forward to welcoming you at the September 11th meeting.

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS SO THAT WE MAY CONTACT YOU PROMPTLY WITH LAKE NEWS AS THE NEED ARISES.



[www.waramaugassoc.org](http://www.waramaugassoc.org)

P.O. Box 2272  
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**Independence Day Fireworks**

Once again, our community celebrated Independence Day with pageantry on an unseasonably cool evening, Saturday July 2nd. Many thanks once again to David Shapiro and Abby Pogrebin for hosting the event, as well as to Rudy Montgelas and Carolyn Hartman of the Association for handling the details of its planning. The fireworks display is sponsored by the Association as a reminder to the lake community of the efforts of the Association and the Task Force to preserve and protect Lake Waramaug. The Association appreciates all our neighbors who contributed to the event.

*A Zambelli employee hands Mike Douskey one of the firework racks. Credit: Steve Nicholas, Sr.*



**2017: Our Centennial Year**

The Lake Waramaug Association will celebrate its Centennial next year. There is much to commemorate in all that we have accomplished in 100 years, including two of our most notable achievements in recent decades: the State designation of our lake roads as Scenic Roads in 1996, and the creation of the Lake Waramaug Agreement, that provided for an improved Washington Boat Launch with its Invasive Species Inspection Program. The latter was a joint endeavor with our partners in the Lake Waramaug Coalition, the work for which began in 1995 and culminated in 2008 with the launch's first season of operation.

In keeping with our mission to preserve and protect Lake Waramaug for generations to come, we will be launching two major initiatives at our September Membership Meeting to celebrate our Centennial: Plant 100 Trees and Save 100 Acres Around the Lake. As the year progresses, we will also be working on histories of the families who have been on the Lake for 100 years or more, gathering photographs for an online Lake Waramaug archive, and continuing to expand and update Lake and Association history. In the summer of 2017, we'll celebrate as a community at a Family Membership Picnic.

**Plant 100 Trees**

Goethe saw trees as the culmination of plant evolution, and certainly they concentrate the myriad virtues of the plant kingdom to a remarkable degree. Many human cultures around the globe have traditionally revered trees and held them in high regard for their vital roles in the natural world, as well as for their healing, protective, and even spiritual powers. Trees, especially mature trees, are a community treasure and often a personal one, too; many of us love the trees we grew up with as venerable elders and old friends. And who among us has never been held in awe by their grace and beauty?

Here in Connecticut and around the Lake, forests and mature trees contribute greatly to the beauty and character of the State and of towns such as our



*Shauna Holiman, Autumn Clouds, Lake Waramaug. Private Collection. 52" x 52". Oil on linen.*

and of towns such as our Lake towns of Washington, Warren, and Kent, all of which include the preservation of their rural character as a key element of their Plans of Conservation and Development. The environmental value and importance of trees is considerable and multi-faceted. First and foremost, trees protect watersheds, aquifers, and groundwater supplies. They provide habitat, clean the air, and anchor the soil and prevent erosion that can so degrade both land and water – especially important along watercourses and on steep slopes such as those that surround the Lake. Trees also play an important role in protecting water quality through the hydrological benefit they provide in both reducing storm-water runoff and cleansing it of pollutants.

It has been said that we do not plant trees for ourselves, but for posterity. Those who came before us planted the saplings that are the mature trees that grace our homes and sustain our

## Plant 100 Trees, *cont.*

environment today; we are connected to our forebears through them. If we want future generations to enjoy the beauty and the many benefits of trees as we do, we must plant those trees today. New Milford's Tree Warden, Carlos Caridad, echoed this sentiment in a recent interview in *The Spectrum* when he said, "Trees in the landscape serve as a living connection to the past, and our hope for the future." When asked what he wished everyone knew about trees, he concluded by saying, "I like to remind people that the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. . . the second best time is now."

It's easy to see why we have chosen "Plant 100 Trees Around the Lake" as one of the principal projects to celebrate our Centennial. We hope everyone will feel inspired to plant a Centennial Tree, whether you live on or near the Lake or not. We've set up a page on our website with information about native trees to give you some ideas and direction, and we hope that you will share photos of the Centennial Trees you plant by e-mailing us a photo at lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com (with "Centennial" in the subject line) as we track our progress.

## Save 100 Acres

It would be a very different landscape around the Lake if all the land that has already been preserved had been developed. Imagine the forested slopes and ridge lines of Mount Bushnell State Park, for example, filled with houses. Many other smaller parcels have also been preserved by generous individuals through local land trusts. More remains to be done, however, as the Lake faces unprecedented development activity, and the need to balance this development with preserved land becomes more important than ever before.

Large portions of the hills around the Lake are still forested, and there are still significant tracts of open space, though much of this land is as yet unprotected. The unspoiled environment of the Lake adds greatly to the quality of life for our residents, as well as to the enjoyment of our many visitors who come to the Lake for recreation on both land and water. But as development proceeds, undisturbed forest and open space near the Lake are lost or increasingly fragmented. Combined with the cumulative effect of denser development, especially on small parcels and steep slopes, with its concomitant changes such as increased impervious surfaces and the clearing of trees and other vegetation, the potential adverse effect on the environmental health of our lands and waters begins to grow.

As the authors of the *Forest Regeneration Handbook* (a guide created by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and the then DEP) point out, upland forest is especially important "in protecting water quality, wetlands, and other habitats. . ." They go on to note that "Landowners are aging and lots of land will change hands in the next 15 years. The average age of forest landowners [in Connecticut], for parcels greater than 10 acres, is somewhere

in the early 60s. As current owners approach the end of their tenure, property is often sold off or transferred to other family members." While the landscape is always changing, today's changes are often of a different order than heretofore: "Changes made to the land by modern society tend to be much more permanent than those made in the past. Cut-over, burned, or converted to pasture, the forest always grew back. The same cannot be expected from the conversions made to other land uses today." Therefore, the decisions we make about land use and land preservation and stewardship today affect future generations more profoundly than ever.

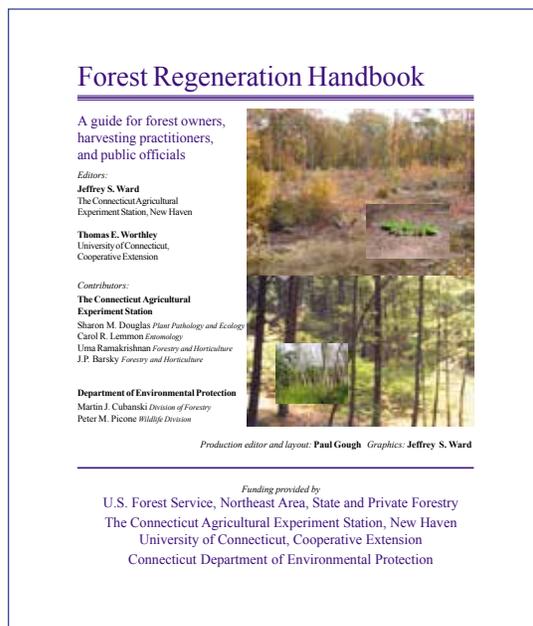
When we lose trees, especially mature trees, we lose all of their environmental benefits, as well as their aesthetic values. One important example of the environmental impact on the Lake from the loss of trees and tracts of intact woodland has to do with forest hydrology as it relates to storm-water runoff, a key issue for water quality. A tree both intercepts rainfall before it even hits the ground, and avoids runoff by drawing storm-water up through its root system. The larger the individual trees and the greater the amount of tree cover, the greater the hydrological benefit. When natural hydrology is intact, the benefit is enormous – a feat of nature's engineering that can never be fully replicated by remedial measures should it be severely disrupted or completely lost.

Trees also act to purify the water that does enter the ground and may eventually run off into our Lake. When Sean Hayden of the Northwest Connecticut Conservation District gave a talk at our June, 2014, Membership Meeting entitled "Maintaining a Healthy Lake," he told us that the primary source of pollutants in our rivers, lakes, and other water bodies is storm-water runoff, and the main cause of this runoff is impervious surfaces. In his talk, Sean focused on development around the Lake, and the importance of having lakeshore buffers of native vegetation and using Low-Impact Development techniques such as rain gardens and

other plantings to create what he called a "zone of magic": an area that allows storm-water to infiltrate the soil, where it is stripped of pollutants before any water enters the Lake. The deeper the roots in this zone, the better the clean-up process, which means that the most effective element of such a zone is trees. The use of environmentally-friendly best practices in storm-water management is critically important in development around the Lake. But looking at the environment holistically, it is also important to balance that development with nature's zone of magic: the unimpaired natural hydrology and other benefits of preserved land.

In our "Save 100 Acres Around the Lake" project, we'll be working with partner organizations, including the Lake Waramaug Task Force, as well as individual landowners of parcels large and small (even the preservation of a single building lot in a key location can be important). While we are not ourselves an organization that owns land or holds conservation easements, we hope to act as a catalyst and an organizing entity, with our Centennial as an inspiring event that brings people together to help protect the Lake and its environs with the lasting legacy of enough preserved land to ensure a balanced and healthy environment for generations to come.

For more information, contact lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com with Centennial in the subject line.



### *Forest Regeneration Handbook*

[http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/special\\_features/forestregeneration.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/special_features/forestregeneration.pdf)

## Now and Then

The Lake Waramaug Association's first president, Nelson Mead, not only helped birth our organization, but also built what has become an iconic home in the Pinnacle Valley on our shores. His cottage bears only little resemblance to today's expansive stately home, once formerly operational as The Boulders Inn.

According to the Commemorative Biographical Record of Fairfield County, Connecticut, Mead attended secondary school at The Gunnery, and later became a successful real estate businessman in Greenwich; his "large capital and shrewd judgement made him a leader in that enterprise. He [had] a most pleasing address, and [was] popular socially, sustaining well the enviable position held in the community by his honored ancestors." His contributions to the community of Greenwich extended to that of his summer home in Warren, forming the Lake Waramaug Association with his civic-minded fellow Lake residents, Robert Carey, Walter Pickett, William H. Bonyng, Mrs. George Allin and Ms. Anna Perkins. The first of their concerns was an examination of the sewage systems of all Lake properties, commissioning Dr. Howard Stevens, Health Officer to report on the efficacy of said systems.



*Photo courtesy of [www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com)*



*Above, 1895, Nelson Mead's new cottage in Pinnacle Valley. Stonework was added across the front in 1901, the rocks brought down from the hills in wintertime by ox-drawn sledges. In the 1930s the highway department raised the level of the east shore road. Credit: Jane Franklin Lowe*

## A Word on Land Use

All Lakeside towns have special regulations pertaining to development along Lake Waramaug. The Lake Waramaug Residential District represents the second largest zone in Washington, for which a special section of the Town Zoning Regulations is written.

Section Six can be found on the Town's website - <http://www.washingtonct.org/zoning-commission>

In Warren, please see section Sixteen - [http://www.warrenct.org/sites/warrenct/files/uploads/regs\\_adopted\\_may\\_2012\\_amended.pdf](http://www.warrenct.org/sites/warrenct/files/uploads/regs_adopted_may_2012_amended.pdf)

In Kent, refer to Section Ten - [http://www.warrenct.org/sites/warrenct/files/uploads/regs\\_adopted\\_may\\_2012\\_amended.pdf](http://www.warrenct.org/sites/warrenct/files/uploads/regs_adopted_may_2012_amended.pdf)

These regulations encompass any land within 1000 feet of the shores of Lake Waramaug, and should be read thoroughly and considered fully before embarking on any building or landscaping project within our District.

# 2016

**Emergency on Lake requiring immediate police, fire, or ambulance assistance:** call 911

**Unsafe condition or activity on Lake or Lake Roads, Noise Disturbance:**  
call Washington Police at 860-868-9671. If no response, call Troop L (Litchfield Barracks) 800-953-9949

**Invasive Weeds:** If you find a water plant which you believe to be an invasive weed, put it in a plastic bag with a wet paper towel and call Tom McGowan at 860-567-0555 for instructions. See pictures of invasive weeds at [www.lwtf.org/invasives](http://www.lwtf.org/invasives).

**Washington Boat Launch/Beach:** call Washington Parks & Recreation Commission at 860-868-1519

**Objects/Debris floating in Lake:** call Washington Police at above number. Report "lost" and "found" dock sections, watercraft, etc. to [Lakewaramauglostfound@washingtonct.org](mailto:Lakewaramauglostfound@washingtonct.org)  
(Be sure to mark your name and address or telephone number on your property.)