

**Minutes of the
Lake Waramaug Association Annual Meeting
June 9, 2013 at the Lake Waramaug Country Club**

Paul Frank called the meeting to order and introduced guest Mark Lyon, First Selectman of Washington, and guest speakers Daniel Esty, Commissioner of Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and his wife, Elizabeth Esty, Congresswoman for the Fifth District.

Paul then asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of the many members we lost in the past year: Allen Allured, Henry Brau, James Casey, Merrell Clark, Preston Gilmore, Robert Ladish, Helene Pennington, and David Reynolds.

THE STATE OF THE LAKE, Tom McGowan

Tom gave us a sweeping overview of the 38-year history of the Lake Waramaug Task Force, which was established in 1975, highlighting their many achievements during those years. He noted that the principal objectives of the Task Force have been and continue to be improving water clarity and quality; reducing bluegreen algae; and preventing or containing invasive plants. He also noted the role of the Task Force's talented advisors in reaching those objectives: limnologist Dr. Kortmann and invasive plant specialist Dr. Knocklein.

Reducing Phosphorus: A major achievement in reducing the amount of phosphorus that runs off into the Lake was the installation of the large waste lagoon on the Tanner Farm, which the Task Force was instrumental in helping to create and to fund, with additional monies from the then DEP and the USDA. The Task Force also contributed to the wine waste lagoon at Hopkins Vineyard. And a recent legislative victory that both the Task Force and the Association supported was the passing of a bill to prohibit phosphorus in lawn fertilizers.

Model Buffer Planting: In 2003, the Task Force was instrumental in the design and installation of a model buffer planting at 47 West Shore Road. 300 feet of shoreline were re-graded and a grass swale was installed to direct run-off into a biofilter. The model buffer planting at the site, which consists of native trees, shrubs, and other plants, is designed to protect the Lake by catching and absorbing storm-water run-off and inhibiting soil erosion.

Sucker Brook Erosion Control: The Task Force has identified many major erosion sites along Sucker Brook, the main feeder stream to the Lake, and has been working with two of the Tanner farms to obtain a grant from the USDA to correct the sites on their land; the grant would cover 75% of the cost of the work, and the Task Force would pay the remaining 25%. Erosion results in the loss of hundreds of tons of soil and the depositing of phosphorus-rich sediment into the Lake. The sediment carried into the Lake by Sucker Brook has created a huge delta, which blocks the flow of cold

well-oxygenated water into the Lake. Instead, warm phosphorus-laden water planes out over the delta, creating the perfect environment for the growth of bluegreen algae. The Task Force played a role in the dredging of Sucker Brook delta in 1985, at which time many serious erosion sites along the brook were also repaired. But the erosion sites are now worse than ever, as is the delta, which by 1999 had filled back in again. What to do about the delta remains an ongoing challenge, and the work on the erosion sites a continuing priority.

Land Preservation: Preserving undeveloped and forested land around the Lake is another important aspect of maintaining the healthy ecology of the Lake and its environs, and the Task Force has played a role in preserving several key parcels over the years. The Task Force paid for the appraisal of 66 acres of forest contiguous to Mt. Bushnell State Park and encouraged the State to add this land to the Park, which it did. The Task Force also played a role in the donation of several easements around the Lake, including seven acres on Bliss Road given by the Penningtons and the Allureds, and 67 acres donated by Cynthia and Lee Vance on North Shore Road. The Task Force is also developing a closer relationship with the Warren Land Trust to collaborate on land preservation projects.

Invasive Plants: The ongoing invasive plant program that the Task Force launched several years ago has four key components, Tom told us: Education, Monitoring, Rapid Response, and the Inspection Program at the Washington Boat Launch, which was begun in 1999. The inspection program serves the dual purpose of educating boaters and keeping invasive plants out of the Lake; all motor boaters must display stickers as evidence of inspection and are subject to a fine if they have not had their boats inspected. In addition, the Task Force conducts a thorough annual inspection of the Lake for invasive plants and if they are found, either pulls them out by hand or installs plastic blankets over them.

In-Lake Restoration Systems: These systems have played a significant role in the doubling of water clarity in the Lake in the period from 1980 to 2004. The system at the Frost Site on Arrow Point withdraws water from the Lake, aerates it, and returns it; it also draws naturally occurring iron out of the water, which binds with phosphorus in the presence of oxygen. The Layer Aeration systems also aerate the water, and are being used by the Task Force to prolong the cool water period in the spring and thereby the life of the diatoms which bind phosphorus when they die and take it to the bottom of the Lake; this also delays the onset of the bluegreen algae.

Tom noted in closing that maintaining and improving these very effective and inexpensive (compared to solutions such as alum treatment that are employed at other lakes) systems with the help of Dr. Kortmann continues to be one of the Task Force's top initiatives.

Paul then introduced our first guest speaker, Daniel Esty, who became Commissioner of

the State DEP in March of 2011, now the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

Daniel Esty, COMMISSIONER OF THE DEEP

Dan began by thanking Tom McGowan for his presentation and for all the work that he has done in helping to preserve the Lake. He noted that Lake Waramaug is in much better shape than many other lakes in the State, and said that he knows that all the work we have done here has not been easy, nor has it been cheap, "so that's a big deal." And he said that it will take ongoing vigilance and effort to maintain all that has been done and continue to make progress.

Dan then went on to say that it is "a challenging time to get things done" now in Connecticut because of the State's tight budget. He told us that he realizes that his Department needs to approach problems in new and different ways: to go "beyond the twentieth-century approach" and come up with twenty-first century answers. Innovation will be critical to this process, he said, as will partnerships with both local governments and non-governmental groups such as private conservation organizations. He noted that there is a "changed spirit" of cooperation at the State level that will be essential to making progress, and that his Department will have to become "more integrated in how we work."

Dan summarized three key aspects of the innovation that he is trying to implement at the DEEP. One is the "leaning" and re-engineering of the Department, and the creation of a lighter regulatory burden without sacrificing effectiveness, with permits issued more quickly and cheaply. A second is the effort to provide cheaper, cleaner, and more reliable energy delivered via twenty-first century infrastructure and a "more robust" grid composed of micro-grids that function on a smaller scale and are less vulnerable to a system-wide failure. And the third is the furthering of the State's "outdoor conservation agenda" having to do with the maintenance of parks and forests and the preservation of land; this is a particular challenge now, he said, with reductions in both funding and staff, and so it will be important to create "leverage" by working in partnership with others.

In closing, Dan told us that the Association is "an extraordinary model" and that all we have done in our almost one-hundred-year history has been a "great achievement." For the Association as for his work at the State level, he said, "a sense of community will be essential going forward."

Elizabeth Esty, CONGRESSWOMAN FOR THE FIFTH DISTRICT

Elizabeth opened her remarks by thanking the Association Board members for the tour of the Lake that she and her husband had been given that morning, and for taking the time to educate them on the Association's achievements and ongoing challenges. She said she had been especially impressed by the In-Lake Restoration systems, which use nature to correct environmental problems, and "do more with less money."

One of the committees on which Elizabeth serves is the Science, Space, & Technology Committee, and she said that their work is made more difficult at the moment by what she referred to as an "anti-science element" in Washington [D.C.] that is, for example, questioning current research on climate change. She emphasized the importance of making good decisions based on science at the local, State, and Federal levels, and of supporting basic science, calling it the "basis of innovation and success."

She went on to reiterate, not just the importance, but the difficulty of "making good long-term decisions." This difficulty is due in part to the way the Federal Government sets up its budget. Current operating expenses have "crowded out" long-term investments, for example in infrastructure. Elizabeth also serves on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, so she is well aware of the "enormous needs" for investment in that sector, and she told us that the Government has to rethink its budget process to allow for that investment. The most expensive solution, however, is not always the best, she noted. Making decisions based on science can help us to come up with solutions that are effective and also low-tech and relatively inexpensive. This effort presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

In closing, Elizabeth stressed that a key aspect of this challenge and opportunity is "how to make it easy to do the right thing." She said that she believes that people will comply with beneficial rules and practices as long as they understand the need for them and compliance is made relatively easy. She cited the Lake's Invasive Plants Inspection Program at the boat launch as one example of this. It provides people with the opportunity to do the right thing and also gives the Lake groups and those who run the program the opportunity — by continuing to monitor the program and receive feedback on its effectiveness — to make better decisions going forward.

TREASURER'S REPORT, John Santoleri

John reported that as of April 30th (the end of our fiscal year) Association revenues were \$31,200, about two-thirds from contributions and one-third from the Fireworks solicitation; this was down about \$5,000 from last year. Expenses for the year totaled \$34,000, 88% for program costs and the balance for administration. Expenses were up about \$5,000 due to the cost of the police patrol, which was re-instituted in 2012. Our assets at the end of the year were \$122,312.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS, Gail Berner, Chair of the Nominating Committee

The 15 Board members of the Association serve staggered three-year terms. Members with terms expiring this year are Heather Allen, Peter Bonachea, John Santoleri, Betty Sutter, and Cynthia Vance, each of whom has agreed to continue to serve. There is a vacancy for a one-year term created by the resignation of Harold Wellings.

The five incumbent Board members whose terms are expiring were nominated for new terms and Alice Hicks was nominated to fill the vacancy. This slate was elected to serve until April 30, 2016 (April 30, 2014 for Alice Hicks) or until successors are elected and

shall qualify.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS, Paul Frank

Invasive Plants Inspection Program: Paul noted that the boat inspection program is working very well and reminded us that all boats with motors must be inspected and stickered to evidence passing inspection. This includes car-top boats permitted to be launched at the State Park, where there is now a sign notifying boaters of the need for inspection and directing them to Dowler's Garage should the Washington Boat Launch be closed.

Roads and Traffic: Paul reported that the Association will again be hiring private-duty police officers to perform extra patrols on the weekends, as we did last year. The officers enhance safety and enforce the reduced speed limit on the Lake roads, and the patrol has proven to have a beneficial effect.

Regulatory Matters: Paul reminded us that the Lake towns have regulations relating to docks, and that installing new docks or making material changes to existing docks requires a permit. Washington and Warren both limit the size of docks to 360 square feet over the water and floats to 100 square feet. In addition, Warren also regulates the size of so-called inflatable water toys larger than 30 square feet to 120 square feet over the water, with a maximum height of 4 feet.

Paul also reminded us that both Washington and Warren limit the height of fences along the Lake side of the Lake roads, and that the definition of "fences" includes dense plantings that have the visual effect of fences and other visual barriers that unduly obscure the view of the Lake from the road. The height limit in Washington is 2 feet and in Warren it is 3 feet.

FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS AND FLARES, Rod Funston

The fireworks display will take place at 9:30 P.M. on the Fourth of July, with a rain-date of July 5th. Prior to the fireworks we will have the traditional lighting of flares around the Lake, and Rod told us that as in past years, flares will be available for purchase at The Hopkins Inn, County Wine, and 9 Main in New Preston.

REPORT OF THE LAKE WARAMAUG AUTHORITY, Edgar Berner, Chair

Ed gave us information and an update on the proposed Slow-No-Wake zone limiting motorized vessel speed to 6 miles per hour in the furthest north section of the arm of the Lake between the State Park and Arrow Point, an area that is 1750 feet from end to end and about 500 feet wide at its widest point. This relatively narrow area has been a safety concern for some time, because during the summer it is a busy and congested area that brings swimmers, kayaks, canoes, and motor boats into close proximity. Washington's Resident State Trooper, Steven Sordi, has said that he feels that the situation in this part of the Lake is an accident waiting to happen; he has been the strongest proponent of the Slow-No-Wake zone, and has met with the DEEP on several occasions to discuss ways to make the area safer, because the DEEP Boating Division

regulates such activities on Connecticut lakes. Paul read us the following email that he had received recently from Trooper Sordi:

"Regarding the area we have proposed as no wake. This area is mostly congested with kayaks, canoes, swimmers and such and not necessarily boats. The issue is not the amount of vessels located in this area causing me to advocate for this no wake area, but the difficulty and danger caused by the high numbers of non-motorized vessels including swimmers. Most of the people found in this area are from the state park, many are not very good swimmers and novice kayakers etc... That being said, having boaters zig zag around us (Police) (even if it's 3, 4, or 5 boats) while we try to save these people, or they try to save themselves is what creates the danger and my main focus. One more thought... Creating this no wake area provides a designated safe zone for the lake swimmers, so they may enjoy the lake and not worry about being accidentally struck by a boater."Ed told us that the first step in the process of seeking the creation of the Slow-No-Wake zone was for one of the Lake towns to petition the DEEP for such a regulation. On May 16th, at Warren's Annual Town Meeting, those present voted overwhelmingly in favor of such petition, which has been presented to the DEEP. If the petition is accepted, the DEEP will hold a public hearing on the matter, probably in Warren, at which all interested persons may present their views on the proposed zone. In response to some questions from members about such issues as how the zone will be marked and enforced, and whether it will be twenty-four hours a day year-round or just for certain hours in the summer, Ed noted that it is the State who will decide the specifics of the zone. He also noted that this proposal was not an initiative of the Association or the Task Force, but of the Lake Waramaug Authority, the three-town agency tasked with enforcing boating regulations and ensuring the safety of all who use the Lake.

In the absence of further questions or comments, Paul Frank adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Allen, Recording Secretary