

**Minutes of the
LWA Annual Joint Meeting with the Lake Waramaug Task Force
September 9, 2012 at the Lake Waramaug Country Club**

Paul Frank called the meeting to order, and began by introducing the Board members who were present. He then asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of Association members who have passed away in the past year: Elisha Dyer and Peg Duus.

REPORT OF THE LAKE WARAMAUG AUTHORITY, Chair Edgar Berner and Officer Pat Kessler

Ed noted that boat traffic on the Lake had been light this summer, and that people had generally been following the rules. He reminded us that the mission of the Authority is to "provide a safe and healthy environment for you and all others to enjoy the Lake."

Officer Kessler also noted that it had been "a pretty quiet safe season," and added that, while Lake traffic had been much lighter than in previous years, the number of kayaks and canoes (many of which are launched from the State Park) was a little greater than last year. There had been four violations, including a rowboat with an electric motor that had launched at the State Park without an inspection sticker; one water rescue for an overturned canoe whose occupant had no life jacket; and two medical assists, one for dehydration and one for a fishing hook caught in a person's hand. Officer Kessler was asked what we should do if we see someone in distress on the Lake, and he said that if it is an emergency - not, for example, just a boat that has lost power - to call 911.

Paul then brought up the issue of speeding on the Lake roads. He told us that the Board had consulted a traffic engineer who felt that the geometry of the roads was such that nothing structurally could be done to calm traffic. The Board had then decided that enforcement was the best if not the only solution to speeding, and had arranged for a private duty police officer to patrol the Lake roads periodically through the leaf season. Officer Kessler, who has served several shifts on such duty, reported that the biggest problem he had observed so far was not the cars, but the bicyclists, who "don't want to share the road." Bicyclists are supposed to follow the rules of the road, including obeying the speed limit and stopping at stop signs; they also must keep as far to the right of the road as possible, and move into single file when a car needs to pass them. This often does not happen, and Officer Kessler said that he saw many drivers having to accelerate and pull into the other lane in order to pass bicyclists. He also noted that the bicyclists had been "nasty" when he had tried to advise them that they must follow the rules of the road.

As far as the car traffic, the average speed Officer Kessler had recorded was between 28 and 35 miles per hour. And he had issued five tickets in the past week: one on North Shore Road, two on West Shore Road, and three on East Shore Road (Route 45). He

noted that none of the violators were locals. He also told us that "just seeing the police is good," and that a lot of people had stopped to ask him what he was doing. Someone at the meeting asked him about installing radar boxes on the Lake roads, and he said that this had been done previously on West Shore Road, but that the town had only a limited number of boxes and that they must be moved around town to various locations where speeding is a problem. Finally, he was asked if people concerned about cars speeding past their houses, especially if they have children who must cross the road, can put cones out in the middle of the road to try to slow traffic. The answer was no, it is not legal to do so, and furthermore, the person who placed the cones would be liable if they played a role in an accident. Small "Children at Play" signs are okay, however.

REPORT ON THE BOAT LAUNCH, Peter Bonachea

Peter reiterated that the motor boat activity on the Lake had been very calm this summer, and that the boat launch had operated smoothly. Seven boats had been turned away when invasive plants were found. And car-top boat operators using the ramp at the State Park had cooperated by having their boats inspected either at the Washington ramp, or at Dowler's garage when the launch was closed.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS, Paul Frank

Paul began by telling us that the score in the saga of the domesticated geese who have taken up residence on the shore along West Shore Road is Geese 1, Association 0. As he had told us at our June meeting, an attempt had been made to capture the geese so that they could be relocated to a pond in Warren, but when the geese were seen in the trap both the Washington Animal Control Officer and the State Game Warden had been called in.

Paul then thanked Dorothy Hamilton for once again hosting the July 4th fireworks display on her property; Peter Bonachea and Joe Rowan for their assistance with the display; and Rod Funston for handling the sale of the flares. Paul noted that the cost of the display had been covered by the generous contributions of 75 of our members. Finally, Paul reminded us of the various committees that Board members have formed. He spoke briefly about the Land Use Committee, whose Chairs monitor development applications and land use regulations, make suggestions for improved regulations, and attend land use meetings and public hearings. Paul noted the importance of keeping track of land use, and trying to take action to address inappropriate development before it's too late. The Co-Chairs of the Land Use Committee are Richard Kleinberg and Heather Allen, and Paul suggested that anyone interested in participating in the work of the committee, or who has any thoughts or concerns about land use around the Lake, contact them. He then asked Cynthia Vance to report on the Communications Committee.

REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE, Chair Cynthia Vance

Cynthia told us that a principal concern of the Communications Committee is how the

Association communicates with people around the Lake. The Association website is one way in which we are doing this, and Cynthia said her committee would like to "evolve the website to be more of a place for people to go." She said they would like to get feedback and ideas from members as to what kind of information they would like to see on the website, and invited response from the members present. Suggestions were made to include the minutes of the Membership meetings on the website (which we have just begun to do); have a link on the site to Paul's email alerts; and provide more information on best practices for construction around the Lake, as well as specific regulations. Cynthia then said that anyone who would like to contact her about the website or the work of the Communications Committee could reach her either through the "info" link on the website, or directly at cynthiakv@gmail.com.

THE WARREN LAND TRUST, Chairman Ted Morse

Ted had been invited to speak with us about the work of the Warren Land Trust, which has special importance for the Lake in that 80% of the watershed falls within Warren. Ted began by telling us that in the last three or four years the Warren Land Trust (which was founded in 1989) has "really taken off." They have a very active Board, and have done "exceedingly well," Ted said. One litmus test of their success, he noted, is the amount of money they have been able to raise. From an annual fund averaging twelve to thirteen thousand dollars, the average for the past three years has been twenty-nine to thirty thousand dollars.

The Warren Land Trust currently holds 15 conservation easements, Ted told us, and owns another 8 parcels. In the last four years, the number of acres protected by the land trust has risen from 340 to 680. Two recent donations are on Melius Road, one of 38 acres and one of 75 acres. And in a new development for the organization, an easement on Town Hill Road was recently adjusted to allow them to build a farm house there so that the land can be run as an organic farm.

The "big news," however, is that two years ago the Warren Land Trust voted to apply for accreditation from the National Land Trust Alliance. It has been "one heck of a lot of work," Ted said, 90% of which is drudgery such as reviewing files and writing reports. They have had to review every aspect of the land trust, and to take a hard look at their record-keeping, as well as their land management and stewardship practices. The Accreditation Report that is required is very lengthy, and the process of putting it together is also quite costly. They expect to submit their application in mid-2013, and hope to be accredited in 2014.

Ted also told us that the land trust has been meeting with the Lake Waramaug Task Force to identify mutual concerns and ways in which the two groups could work together to better achieve common goals — stabilizing the erosion sites along Sucker Brook, for example. To this end, one Board member of each organization will periodically attend a Board meeting of the other. Ken Hecken of the Task Force and Tim Angevine of the

Warren Land Trust will be the first Board members to participate in this exchange. Finally, Ted said that in an effort to bridge the "us and them" feeling that sometimes exists in Warren between the Land Trust and the rest of the town, the Land Trust is becoming more involved with Town groups and activities, including Park & Rec, the historical society, the library, and the clean-up of town roads. The Warren Land Trust will hold its annual meeting on November 17th, and Ted invited everyone to attend.

THE LAKE WARAMUAG TASK FORCE, Chair Linda Frank Linda told us that "the success of the Task Force is from people like you." New residents, she said, "have no idea how far we've come over the years." The new Task Force DVD, "Saving Lake Waramaug," gives people a good overview of all that the Task Force has achieved since its inception in 1975, and Linda once again acknowledged Task Force Board member and webmaster Jim Hicks, who produced and directed the DVD. She then turned the floor over to Jim, who told us that "Saving Lake Waramaug" should be up on the [Task Force website](#) before long, and that it would also appear in the near future on public access television.

THE STATE OF THE LAKE, Tom McGowan, Task Force Executive Director

Tom began by telling us how pleased the Task Force is to be developing a close relationship with the Warren Land Trust, and pointed out that the land they protect is largely in the Lake Waramaug watershed. He also noted that the recent donation to the land trust of 75 acres on Melius Road is at the headwaters of Sucker Brook, the main feeder stream to the Lake, and so has added importance to the Lake. He said he hopes that the collaboration between the Task Force and the Warren Land Trust will heighten exposure for both organizations, strengthen their work, and result in the preservation of more land.

Water Clarity: Water clarity has been "terrific" this year, Tom said. Nutrient levels at the surface of the water are low, and algae growth is down. The Task Force is continuing to find ways to utilize the natural iron in the water, which when exposed to oxygen, binds phosphorus. This fall they will use the in-lake aeration systems to "turn" the Lake in late September; this will oxygenate the water, and result in less phosphorus in the Lake next spring. They will also be using these systems to prolong the life of the diatoms (which take phosphorus to the lake bottom with them when they die) during the coming spring, as they did last year, and thereby delay the onset of the bluegreen algae.

Invasive Plants: Only six sites of curlyleaf pondweed were found this year, all of which were taken care of. The Task Force is now keeping a special lookout for fanwort as well, a very aggressive invasive plant that has been plaguing a number of water bodies in the State. Dr. Knocklein, who conducts a thorough inspection of the whole shoreline in the spring, will do another inspection this fall.

Land Use: The Task Force monitors land use applications around the Lake, with an eye both to construction and to landscape plans - the planting of shoreline buffers, for

example. Tom said that it would be nice if property owners thought about such considerations ahead of time, and came to the Task Force first for advice and information, before going ahead with plans that might be inappropriate. Most people, he believes, want to do what will benefit the Lake.

Sucker Brook: A number of trees had fallen into the brook along the stretch from where it passes under to Route 45 to its outlet, and the Task Force recently paid for trees — including some large ones — to be removed at twelve sites. They will then assess the banks to see what else might need to be done to stabilize them. The Task Force would like to establish relationships with property owners all up and down Sucker Brook so that they can have access to the brook for inspections, and then encourage the owners to work cooperatively with the Task Force to do what needs to be done to stabilize the banks and reduce erosion and run-off.

Tom also mentioned that owners of property along feeder streams to the Lake where there is a build-up of sediment might want to get together to hire a service to remove it. This might make a costly procedure affordable, and the Task Force would be willing to help organize such a cooperative venture.

Paul Frank thanked the Country Club for the use of this room for our meeting, and was just about to adjourn the meeting when longtime Association member and former Board member Maria Allen rose to her feet to address the group, praising Paul for all he has done during his presidency, and calling him "the engine that drives it all." This was greeted with well-earned applause. The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Allen, Recording Secretary