



General Membership Meeting

January 14, 2022

Mountain Lake Firehouse

Minutes {draft}

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order by Bob Ballou, President at 7:02pm. Thanks were extended to the Mt. Lake Fire Department for being such a wonderful partner and allowing us to host our meeting at the firehouse. A warm welcome was extended to all Lake Association members and others from our community, attending in person as well as on zoom. The agenda for the meeting were distributed to everyone attending in person and posted on our website, at MLCAWAG.org for those attending via zoom.

INTRODUCTION OF OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE: Bob Ballou, President; Daniele Nevins, Vice President; Nancy O'Leary, Treasurer; Buffy Harrison, Secretary; Alice Bechok, Trustee; Lorraine Thiel, Trustee; Patty Hofmann, Trustee

MEETING MINUTES - August 2021 Annual Membership Meeting

Danielle Nevins made a motion to approve; seconded by Buffy Harrison. Motion was approved unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/APPOINTMENTS

New Treasurer and Secretary: A new Treasurer and Secretary were introduced. Nancy O'Leary was appointed Treasurer by the Board upon the resignation of Joanne Ward as Treasurer in October. With Nancy's shift to Treasurer leaving a vacancy in the position of Secretary vacant the Board appointed Buffy Harrison to that position in November.

Membership Update: The final membership list for 2021 includes 247 total members and 168 paid memberships, including 14 lifetime members. We also continue to recognize and honor 6 members in memoriam. The membership list is posted on our website and bulletin board across the street from the Firehouse. As of January 1, we have begun the new membership year, which means that it's time to renew for 2022. Thanks to all your support, your engagement, and your commitment to keeping Mountain Lake clean and healthy now, and for generations to come, are deeply appreciated.

Volunteer Drive: As a complement to our successful membership drive, a volunteer drive has also been launched urging everyone to chip in just a bit of time as a volunteer. There are so many ways to get involved including our community events like our annual yard sale, our lake monitoring program, stream monitoring, data management, goose control, litter control, communications, and outreach, and much more. Those interested had an option of indicating this on the sign-up sheet, or by contacting us via

Facebook or our email, which is MLCA.WAG@gmail.com. Or by reaching out directly to any member of the Board.

Future Events in first and second quarter of 2022: All of our events will be posted on our website and announced via our Facebook page, as they take shape and as dates are finalized.

- Stream Monitoring Event (March) - Hosted by Watershed Ambassador Program
- 2022 Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program – Training/Kickoff (Saturday, April 2)
- Spring General Membership Meeting (March/April)
- Town Wide Yard Sale (Saturday in May; looking at the 21st, but need to make sure that date will work; stay tuned)

TREASURER REPORT:

Nancy O’Leary provided an overview of the Treasurer’s Report for 2021. She informed the group that total expenses fell below total revenue, so the Association’s financial footing is secure. The Association’s investments account, akin to its endowment, did well on the year, earning strong a strong return. Membership dues and donations are up as indicated above. Expenses: Funds were spent on three mailings in 2021, water monitoring equipment and analysis, PO box, insurance, donation to Mt. Lake Fire Company, Zoom subscription, magnets, NJ State Treasurer annual report filing, memberships to local watershed environmental groups and hiring Princeton Hydro as consultants for our water monitoring program.

LAKE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT:

In June of 2020, in response to increasing concerns regarding water quality conditions in Mountain Lake, the Liberty Township Committee established a Lake Subcommittee to foster communication, coordination and collaboration among key interests in our town. The group has continued to meet regularly since its inception and continues to serve as an effective forum for sharing perspectives and staying informed. Larry Supp, Chair of the Environmental Commission, a member of the Subcommittee, and a member of the Lake Association, provided a brief overview of the group and its recent activities.

MOUNTAIN LAKE 2021 WATER QUALITY MONITORING REPORT

GUEST SPEAKER: Chris Mikolajczyk, Princeton Hydro.

Chris provided his background experience and an overview of the Princeton Hydro analysis from the 2021 water monitoring program. Chris discussed that the phycocyanin levels in Mt Lake are not good in correlation to blue-green algal cell counts, however this is a lake-specific analysis. Zooplankton were also indicated as potentially being low in numbers and indicated a need to analyze this and discuss fish stocking overall. Additionally, Chris explained that the volunteer water monitoring program places Mt. Lake in an ideal position to obtain grant funding through the 319(h) program that was recently announced by the NJDEP. Chris offered his services pro bono to help Liberty Township/Mountain Lake obtain the 319(h) grant with the understanding that Princeton Hydro would receive the work to continue the water monitoring program in association with the funding.

GOALS FOR 2022:

Bob noted that goals are to continue to expand the in-lake monitoring program, acquire a multi-probe meter, collaboration with NJDEP for HAB monitoring, expand program to include tributary and storm drain monitoring (flag any hot spots/problem areas), weave data together with land uses to develop a nutrient budget and lake/watershed plan that prioritizes nutrient reduction efforts. Additionally, we will look to the lake/watershed plan to reduce nutrients by continuing to move forward with efforts to control known sources of pollution such as: geese, septic, weeds (esp dead biomass), muck removal, leaf pick-up program and reduction/elimination of fertilizer use.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES: Water Quality Restoration Grant, NJ Lakes Bill, Lake Association and Town Funds.

AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT: Bob discussed that with the water quality monitoring and lake planning initiatives, we also recognize aquatic plant/weed management as important to help maintain a healthy and balanced ecosystem, and support recreational uses. There are nuisance levels of invasive Eurasian milfoil and native water lilies, and the plan is to partner with Warren County College to conduct aerial mapping using drones to help guide and inform management actions. There are a range of actions to be considered, including mechanical harvesting, benthic barriers (weed mats), and herbicides. However, there may be new challenges associated with use of herbicides. The overall issue of aquatic plant management will be brought forward for discussion at the next membership meeting.

CLEAN COMMUNITIES PROGRAM: Trustee Patty Hofmann has been leading the clean community's program on behalf of the Association. Patty advised how efforts are linked with the township and Warren County's Clean Communities program, which provides the added benefit of grant funds. Patty will continue her efforts in 2022 and will post opportunities to volunteer on social media for anyone that can offer their time.

SPRING MEMBERSHIP MEETING:

Suggested issues and topics for the spring meeting include:

- Goals & Objectives
- 2022 Budget
- Communications and outreach
- 2022 Lake Monitoring Program
- Goose control
- Other topics?

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Chris Mikolajczyk remained available for questions, and took several.

- Ed Washuta asked about fish population and stocking issues, in reference to the presentation by Chris. Chris provided further clarification that an abundance of alewives could be causing low levels of zooplankton, which could be resolved by stocking a predator such as walleye or big mouth bass.

- Larry Supp noted that past samples from the bottom of the lake were high in manganese (2.36 parts per mil) and wanted to know if this might be a matter of concern. Chris indicated that the low-oxygen bottom waters could be triggering elevated levels, but since the lake does not serve as a drinking water source, it's probably not a significant issue. Chris mentioned he would discuss with his boss.
- Lorraine Thiel asked Chris what can we do with the grant opportunity that we're about to pursue. Chris suggested a full lake and watershed management plan involving a review of all historical data, a new bathymetric survey, sediment assessment, and nutrient loading analysis, among other things. This information would enable us to assess what nutrients are entering the water, how much, what areas are heavy or light as well as an assessment of storm water and streams. Chris further noted that if a plan is done as a first step, it will better position us for additional funding for implementation.
- Jeff Lyon raised concerns about elimination alewives as it could deplete the game fish. Chris clarified the solution is to create a balance not to eliminate them. Jeff also asked if heavy use of calcium chloride (road brine/salt) on the roads could impact water quality. Chris advised overuse could have an impact.
- Chris indicated that Mt. Lake is seeing more persistent blue green algae levels later in September.
- Ed Washuta asked Chris if herbicides contribute to algae blooms. Chris explained that fast acting herbicides can aggravate the nutrient content while systemic herbicides that take longer are better, because it is removed. Ed also asked about copper sulfate, which Chris advised is also fast acting and could be an issue when dredging. Chris indicated that having a management plan in place is the best option, because it provides an informed basis for prioritizing the next steps for lake protection.
- Bob Ballou referenced the abundance of invasive Eurasian milfoil in the lake and noted that there is a new herbicide called ProcellaCor that specifically targets milfoil and comes with a 3-year guarantee. It would be costly (\$25K?) to treat the entire lake, but it's worth keeping in mind as a potential option. Additionally benthic barriers such as lake mats were discussed. Chris mentioned the mats can be effective but require maintenance as they must be turned. Jeff Lyon added that there are several places that milfoil does not grow in the lake and Chris confirmed that areas with heavy amounts of clay, rocks or moving water make it difficult for milfoil to grow.
- Arthur Strong asked about having an endowment plan in place and Nancy provided additional details related to the investment account, addressed in the treasurer report.
- Where do we go from here? Chris indicated the need to understand where and when the phosphorus is mixing from depths of the lake. We need to determine if weather is driving the change. Chris feels the phosphorus levels have always been high in the depths of Mt. Lake, but he can't prove that. Bob Ballou mentioned the need to address the removal of root mass recently noticed/identified from the dead lilies that have formed snags and small floating islands of dead organic matter; some have reportedly moved into the outlet, so they do not cause a blockage.

ADJOURNMENT: At 8:56 pm Bob Ballou moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Daniele Nevins. Motion was approved unanimously