



## 55<sup>th</sup> Annual General Membership Meeting

August 19, 2022

7:00 pm

Mountain Lake Fire House

### Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to Order and Welcome:** Meeting was called to order by Bob Ballou, President at 7:04pm. 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 in attendance. The agenda for the meeting were distributed to everyone attending in person and posted on the MLCA website in advance.
2. **Approval of Minutes from April 15, 2022, Membership Meeting:** Rob Bechok made a motion to approve; seconded by Lorraine Thiel. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.
3. **Treasurer's Report:** Nancy O'Leary provided an overview of the Treasurer's Report for 2022 YTD. She informed the group that less was spent than was taken in YTD. Funds from the CD were rolled into the checking account, which is at \$21,709 YTD. The Investment account stands at \$23,133. Membership dues and donations account for \$8,156; additional revenue is from the yard sale, tote bags, magnets, and interest from checking account. Funds were spent on lake monitoring and weed removal, newsletter mailings, PO Box, insurance, donation to Mt. Lake Fire Company, tote bags, website, NJ State Treasurer annual report filing, and memberships to local watershed environmental groups.
4. **Election of Officers:** A recommendation was made by Bob Ballou to appoint the following slate of nominees: President – Bob Ballou, VP – Danielle Nevins, Treasurer – Nancy O'Leary, Secretary – Buffy Harrison, Trustees– Patricia Hoffman, Barbette Johnson, and Brad Russo. Rich Larson made a motion to approve, seconded by Art Addie. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.
5. **Guest Speaker:** Marty Kane, Chair, Lake Hopatcong Foundation

Marty provided an overview of his background experience and discussed the overall challenges of lakes in general. He noted that that most lakes in our region have similar challenges to the ones we face, including harmful algae blooms (HABs), which have caused one of the public beaches at Lake Hopatcong to close. Other key issues include Invasive species of weeds that are trailered in by boats.

He spoke about funding from state grants in 2022 that went to shore points over lakes and while none of lakes in NJ received grant money, he was optimistic that both Mountain Lake and Lake Hopatcong would receive funding scheduled for the fall. He mentioned that NJ lakes have strong allies in Senators Oroho and Bucco who have been pushing for more funding specific to lakes. He discussed that for their grant application they have done smaller scale proposals on their own, but in cases where a larger grant is available, they also use Princeton Hydro.

It was noted that Lake Hopatcong is currently in discussion of using a “pre-treatment” (such as alum) to try and counter their HAB as well as plans for septic system management and storm water management to combat the HABs.

Marty indicated they have two groups that manage the lake as they are much larger in scale. One is focused on governance and involves the four municipalities that border the lake. The second, the Lake Hopatcong Foundation, is focused on lake protection and restoration. Basic membership is \$25 with the assumption that those living around and using the lake will be more generous. They communicate with members every Friday (every other in the winter) by sending an email blast to members that have proactively signed up for the newsletter. They also have a magazine (supported and printed by local business) that comes out a few times a year that is subscription based.

- 6. Appreciations, Recognitions, Ruth Ballou Award:** The Association recognized two Board members who were stepping down -- Alice Bechok who served as an officer and trustee for 21 years and Lorraine Thiel who served as a trustee since 2019. Recognition was also given to the members of the Lake Subcommittee consisting of: Rich Larson, John Ward, Danielle Nevins, John Inscho, Larry Supp & Dave Rogers. Special appreciation was extended to John Ward, Art Addie, Jeff Snyder, Jenn Breslin, Sean Packard and Joe Bello, all of whom volunteered their time by either assisting with grant application, water sample collection, drone shots, goose control, etc. Additionally, to the Mt Lake Fire Co. Pete Hubert and Ron Buckenmeyer for their partnership and allowing use of the Lake View room.

The Ruth Ballou Award for 2022 was presented to Larry Supp for his continued dedication and involvement in the lake monitoring program. Larry even invented the depth monitoring device that has been used to effectively collect samples as part of the monitoring program.

- 7. Water Quality Report:** The program is in its second full year. It has allowed us to track water quality conditions in the lake from early spring through late fall. Parameters being monitored include clarity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, PH, and phosphorus. Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) are also monitored using both a meter and via water samples collected monthly and submitted to NJDEP for analysis. Although a HAB was present in April and early May, it has not been present since. Going forward it was discussed that we plan to extend the monitoring program, perhaps as early as next year, to include tributary monitoring at Mountain Lake Brook. The General Store Brook and Jenny Jump Brook might also be included.

8. **Lake Subcommittee Report:** Danielle Nevins provided an overview of the formation of the subcommittee, the group's interest in seeking funding support for a green infrastructure project at the Town Beach and boat ramp, the unfolding partnership with Warren County Community College's drone lab, and weed harvesting.

9. **Year in Review:**

Arthur Strock put us in touch with Geese Chasers (Joe Bello) who lives in Liberty Township and is volunteering his services. In 2022, they located 4 nests and humanely added total of 15 eggs. The resident goose population in 2022 was down significantly from 2021, decreasing from about 200 to 50. The nest and egg control program may have contributed to the decrease.

As reported in January, MLCA worked with Princeton Hydro to submit a Nonpoint Source Pollution (section 319) grant application to the state of NJ in hopes of securing a grant to assist with further analysis of Mountain Lake, but as mentioned in the presentation by Marty Kane grants were not awarded to any of the NJ lakes.

Weed management has been focused on weed harvesting and we seem to be moving more toward weed harvesting as a preferred approach to herbicide treatment.

In the fall of 2021, Porcupine cribs were installed in Mountain Lake to enhance fish habitat. We hope to collaborate with Warren County College to use their underwater drones to take photos of the cribs to see how they are functioning.

MLCA held several events over the year including the yard sale, litter clean up, find it bag it tag it program, and trunk or treat. More events will continue to be pursued in the coming months/years.

10. **Year Ahead:**

Water quality will remain our principal focus. Other areas of interest include investigating septic upgrades, a yard waste and leaf pick up program, and expansion of monitoring to include tributaries and storm drains.

Regarding aquatic plant management, we are interested in developing a plan to determine the best approach, which may include an updated analysis of the survey conducted several years ago by Solitude. That survey revealed the presence of several beneficial plant communities in the lake, including Illinois Pond Weed. Protecting the beneficial plants, while combating the invasive species such as milfoil, are both important.

We would like to start a blog or naturalist site where we can document the flora and fauna observed around the lake.

11. **Communications:** It was discussed that communication is challenging as many members are not linked via social media, and mail efforts are cumbersome and costly. Members of the audience indicated they are going to the MLCA website for information, they also noticed the new

sandwich boards placed around the lake for the meeting. They also noted that email was the most effective way to communicate. Going forward, MLCA will minimize the printed distribution of the newsletter to those in the immediate vicinity of the lake and look to post on the website as well as correspondence via email.

Other suggestions from the audience are to consider a QR code posted that links to a google form which can be added to the MLCA board, sending an email at a specific time each month so it is expected, programs like Constant Contact, informal in-person meetings, use of Treasure Hunt/ Daily Peach /Warren Reporter/Skylands Magazine, and text and hard copy on the board at town hall.

## **12. General Discussion/for the Good of the Order**

A question was asked if the cold winter contributed to the low algae and Bob advised that the thought is that it does contribute.

Art Addie mentioned a need for a place to take compost and leaves would be helpful. Many people have trucks, but nowhere to take it. Bob mentioned it would be investigated.

Amy Davis asked about the filamentous algae can we do anything about it. Bob indicated it is natural and is not harmful, but can be scooped up with a net

Gene Leddy asked how we know which are good weeds and which are bad. Bob advised we will provide a copy of the Solitude Aquatic Plant Survey report to Gene.

A question was raised on the fish populations in the lake. Ed Washuta advised that this can be requested from NJ Fish and Wildlife and his current knowledge is that the fish population is healthy. Indications are that both the bass and muskie can and are cohabitating. He also indicated that because of the water conditions – with the well oxygenated water at the surface being too warm and the colder water near the bottom being anoxic -- the trout that are stocked in the spring are not able to survive through the summer. We will add information on fish populations in the lake to the MLCA website for reference.

It was asked if there are any concerns that Lake Just It is contributing to the issues in Mountain Lake. Bob indicated this will be part of the tributary work we plan to undertake next year.

There was an indication that a resident identified bamboo on the north side of the lake which is a very invasive species and should be addressed immediately. It was advised we agree and will investigate the location to determine the property location to see if anything can be determined.

A question was asked about spawning of fish and it was indicated the porcupine cribs were introduced to provide safe habitat which is inclusive of this.

13. **Adjournment:** At 8:58 pm Bob Ballou moved to adjourn the meeting, which was approved unanimously.