

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order by Bob Ballou, President at 7:01pm. A warm welcome was extended to the approximately 20 attendees from the community. A special thanks was extended to our relationships with the Mountain Lake Firehouse, Ladies Auxiliary and Lake Sub Committee. The agenda for the meeting was distributed to everyone attending in person and posted on our website, at MLCAWAG.org

MEETING MINUTES: - The minutes from the April 20, 2023, Annual General Membership Meeting were distributed to those in attendance with a motion for any changes/additions seeing no additions a motion was made by Marie Emery to approve; seconded by Leslie Washuta. The notes were unanimously approved.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES: A motion was made to approve the current officers and trustees consisting of: Bob Ballou, President; Daniele Nevins, Vice President; Nancy O’Leary, Treasurer; Buffy Harrison, Secretary; Brad Russo, Trustee; BJ Johnston, Trustee; Patty Hofmann, Trustee

A motion was made by Marie Emery to approve and seconded by Gene Leddy. Officers and trustees were unanimously approved.

Announcements/Appointments

TREASURER REPORT:

Bob Ballou provided an overview of the Treasurer’s Report for 2023. The report shows a solid status for the account of approximately \$43K dispersed evenly between our checking and investment accounts. Expenses: To date funds were spent on two mailings, water monitoring equipment and analysis, PO box, insurance, donation to Mt. Lake Fire Company, zoom subscription, NJ State Treasurer annual report filing, memberships to local watershed environmental groups, the fishing derby/tournament, yard sale and patriotic contest.

Membership Update: To date membership is half of the final number in 2022, with a quarter of the year remaining it is expected for additional memberships to be received before year end. Thanks to all our members for your support, your engagement, and your commitment to keeping Mountain Lake clean and healthy now, and for generations to come.

Guest Speaker Peter Miller, Unmanned Systems Specialist/Flight Operations Manager Warren County Community College: Peter reviewed the mapping of Mountain Lake that started in September 2022, the full map was shown in the presentation, the framed image was also on display at the firehouse. He discussed that monthly flights were in progress with bi-weekly flights occurring in Spring and Summer. They will also be conducting under water monitoring which will consist of sonar detection of the 18 porcupine cribs the “Deep Trekker” to inspect the bottom of the lake. He explained that conditions for the studies to occur must be ideal meaning the visibility is 6 ft, and the sky is cloudy to avoid sun glare. All the equipment that will be used and owned by the community college is grant funded meaning no cost to the residents of Warren County. Before any of the studies are conducted, Peter will be in contact with Bob Ballou to determine the best time to take the images as well as taking samples of the silt. The drones fly very high and are barely visible, but also extremely quiet. However, we will be advised by Amanda from Warren County Community College who conducts the flights when the studies occur and MLCA will post on Facebook for those interested. Additionally, videos are expected to be

provided from the underwater studies and those will also be posted on the website. Those interested in the presentation can see the full Power Point presentation on MLCAWAG.org.

Guest Speaker Chris Mikolajczyk, CLM, Sr. Product Manager/Sr. Aquatic Ecologist from Princeton

Hydro: Chris discussed the new grant award for Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan for Mountain Lake. The grant is for \$80k towards the development of the watershed restoration and protection plan. Development of this plan includes various studies and surveys of the watershed, tributaries, historical assessments, etc. Chris reiterated the need to understand why the phosphorus levels are so high in Mt. Lake in addition to other notable factors. Planning will start in 2024 with the main studies to begin and potentially finalized in 2025. The full details and Power Point presentation can be found on MLCAWAG.org.

Ed Washuta asked Chris Mikolajczyk what the 2 sub water feeds mentioned in the study that will be conducted as part of the grant would be included. It was advised this had not been determined as they will need to run the models first.

Joe Raffa asked Chris Mikolajczyk if there would be any removal of soil as part of the grant and Chris advised this would not occur, but if dredging is deemed a viable option, it will be spelled out at the conclusion of the study.

Joe Raffa asked what the responsibility would be of property owners and Chris advised there is no responsibility on the part of the owners.

Joe Raff asked what the timeframe is for the water study that Princeton Hydro is conducting. Chris advised once the council types the proposal out a meeting would occur to approve it. Once cleared they can start in the fall or winter with desk work. Ultimately this time next year they should be able to write a plan for 2025.

Joe Raffa asked if the plan would show all the models, to which Chris said it would provide extensive plans along with simple tables and graphs.

Chris Mikolajczyk indicated he will advise Bob upon approval of the grant from council.

Year In Review:

MLCA focused on water quality, weed management, litter cleanup, events and activities, outreach and awareness, etc.

The following were the main events in 2023:

- Participation in the Annual Gene Leddy St. Patrick's Day Parade
- Spring General Membership Meeting (March/April)
- Removal of the dead Lilly root masses occurred in early spring.
- 1st Annual Trout Tournament
- Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program
- Town Wide Yard Sale in May
- Patriotic Contest in July

- Community Day participation
- Litter Clean up (looking for any volunteers)

For 2024 we will review the events above for continued participation in the coming year, including some new options. We will look to the community to offer any suggestions and for any voluntary assistance.

Ruth Ballou Award:

The Ruth Ballou award was granted to long time MLCA member Dave Rogers who has been an asset to the community in his efforts to secure additional grants including the infrastructure grant that would have an important impact the town beach and boat ramp on the west side of Mountain Lake.

GOALS FOR 2024:

Bob noted that goals are to continue to expand the in-lake monitoring program, using the 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.

MLCA will work with Princeton Hydro as part of the development and analysis for the lake/watershed plan and we will continue efforts to reduce nutrients with efforts to control known sources of pollution such as: geese, septic, weeds (i.e., dead biomass), muck removal, leaf pick-up program and reduction/elimination of fertilizer use.

MLCA will consider an update of the 2016 aquatic plant survey to see what has changed. Once we learn the cost of this study, we will present it to members to make sure they agree with the expenditure.

Muck removal will be discussed as well as an upgrade of the website, a reintroduction of the macroinvertebrate study, distribution of welcome bags to new homeowners, a business membership program, informal opportunities to meet with members, fall/spring leaf cleanup, cesspool ordinance, formal name change from MLCAWAG to MLCA, and a new Mountain Lake.org domain.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

- Ed Washuta asked about the results showing no algae bloom. Bob confirmed it was visually observed in several locations only. Ed mentioned he read an article on surface scum causing a centrifuge in certain areas. Chris Mikolajczyk indicated it is difficult to determine why this occurred, but felt the storms had a significant impact on the thermocline.

- Joe Thomas asked if the rush of cold water into the lake during the storm caused an issue and Bob agreed it had an impact.

- Joe Raffa mentioned he is interested in vegetation and muck removal as well as a place to dump it to make into compost. It was indicated that Princeton Hydro will do a sediment analysis to determine the

muck level and if the town could secure funding to have this removed from the beach. Joe also mentioned that he feels MLCA is doing a great job.

- Gene Leddy Asked if along with the grant has anyone asked the township for assistance on where to dispose of the waste. It was mentioned in the past that compostable materials such as weeds have been taken to Menegus farms in Hope. They have indicated they will take any compost removed from the lake.

Gene also asked if individual property owners feel they could assist but are worried about interfering. Bob explained the town and lake association handle public areas not individual lake fronts and it basically requires an effort from all parties to benefit the lake overall. Dave Rogers mentioned that the Princeton Hydro plan will help us determine the best approach for a unilateral approach.

- Joe Thomas mentioned he's seen more mussels and crayfish in the lake than in prior years and Bob indicated it is a sign of a healthy lake.

- Ken Lunden mentioned a plan from a few years ago to use the outfit from Lake Hopatcong and they removed 1K pounds of weeds and wondered why it was stopped. He also asked about where the testing for the algae bloom typically occurs. Bob reiterated the need for a plan to determine the best course of action and explained the testing is completed in the middle of the lake because results are more consistent than in prior years when it was done in several locations.

- Joe Raffa mentioned he wanted to put a dock up but was told he needed a permit from the state to remove the muck before he did anything. Bob mentioned he would investigate because he has heard mixed feedback.

- John Z mentioned every time it rains there is a large plume of mud and debris that washed into the lake from Mountain Lake Brook. Bob mentioned he has observed it as well. He also asked if we could investigate the machine from Lake Hopatcong and Bob indicated once we have a plan, we will review all pertinent options as outlined.

- Liza Thomas feels the word watershed should be included in the MLCA name to make sure it is inclusive of all areas, which the MLCA board indicated we will consider seeing what could be done as it should be recognized.

ADJOURNMENT: At 9:07 pm Bob Ballou moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Daniele Nevins. The motion was approved unanimously.