

BOROUGH OF MOUNTAIN LAKES, NJ
LAKES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Monthly Meeting Minutes – Quick Notes
Minutes for February 6, 2024 at 8:00 PM - Zoom

1. Call to Order

A monthly meeting of the Lakes Management Advisory Committee was held on February 6, 2024 on Zoom teleconference. It began at 8:00 PM and was presided over by chairperson Derek Jackson.

2. Attendees

Voting Members in attendance: Alpesh Amin, Debra Dewing, Lucien Foster, Derek Jackson, Nikki Riley, Wayne Roth, Mike Russo

Non-voting Members in attendance: Chris Richter (Borough Council Liaison), Cynthia Korman (Borough Council), Bob Schindler (Tigris Lake Management), Billy Barrett (Student Representative)

Members not in attendance: Andy Hilton, Jason Miner

Guests in attendance: Michael and Laila Russoniello, Vincent DiRicco, Amy Dages, Susan Ferguson, Alvaro Cantillo

3. Approval of Minutes

The review and formal approval of the January 2, 2024 minutes was postponed to the next meeting.

4. Borough Management Report

Report was presented by Mitchell Stern.

- Sunset Lake dam update - The project is continuing on schedule. We were having issues with fill material being too wet. This has been resolved by using a stone dust mixture. The new fill is not expected to add additional cost, and it is acceptable by our engineer and the NJDEP.
- Hydro-raking update
 - Two weeks of hydro-raking on Mountain Lake has been completed. All indications suggest that the amount of material removed was higher than what our previous vendor removed during a comparable duration of time.
 - Seventeen residents reached out for information on additional hydro-raking at the property owner's expense. Each inquiry was connected directly with the vendor.
 - Two weeks of hydro-raking was scheduled for Wildwood Lake when the work on Mountain Lake was completed. Unfortunately, the work on Wildwood Lake had to be postponed due to ice on the lake. The work will be completed in the spring of 2024.
 - The 2024 budget includes a request for four weeks of hydro-raking. This is pending budgetary approval. If approved, we would tentatively target the north end of Birchwood for two weeks, and the remaining two weeks to be

determined after consultation with our lakes management vendor and our lakes committee.

- 2023 Bathymetry study update - The report from the canal has shared with the committee. Open questions are with the vendor, pending a response.

5. Tigris Lake Management Report

Report was presented by Bob Schindler.

Bob has been involved with the Borough of Mountain Lakes since 2008. The 2023 calendar year was a year of transition for the Borough, as well as the Mid-Atlantic lake management business. Many boroughs, home owners and lake associations were left with a gap in service due to resource turnover at Solitude Lake Management. The Borough of Mountain Lakes experienced a gap in service from April through July.

The warm winter 2022-2023 encouraged an early season algae bloom in most lakes in the region. Mountain Lakes was no exception. In addition, higher atmospheric temperatures and frequent severe rain events increased runoff and made the environment more hospitable to algae growth.

Normally they do sampling of algae and lake composition in June, July, August and September. Obviously with the disruption in service, we do not have a comparable historical data set from 2023. While we did not have algae events with blue green algae, they levels were extremely low and nowhere near a level of risk.

In the summer, Mountain Lake clarity was poor but algae density levels were low and there was not as much plant growth as observed in recent history. Similar observations were made in Wildwood Lake. With that said, there were observations of a green/brown color which was a contrast to recent history. From a fisheries and food chain perspective, the 2023 state is probably healthier than what we had historically. While it is not a precise science, Bob believes we would probably want 4-5 feet of clarity versus the 2-3 feet in 2023 and the 8-10+ feet in prior years.

Q/A:

Wayne Roth: Wayne believes the fish are impacted by the treatments and do not bite. Can we not treat the lakes during the Spring (fish) spawn? Unfortunately, NJ DEP limits treatments to be after April 1 which creates this schedule and situation. However, Tigris clarified that the treatments, if applied correctly, do not hurt the fish. The treatments kill vegetation and algae which impacts the fish habitat. As such, the fish may move to a different location or be less active.

Chris Richter: Does anyone provide guidance on where we should treat for plant growth like bass weed to support recreation and let bass weed grow in other areas to support the fish habitat? There is some guidance provided, but the reality is that each resident has different priorities ideas of what is right, so you will get complaints.

Alvaro Cantillo: Alvaro lives on Reservoir Lake (Grunden's Pond). This winter there is already algae floating on the lake. Is this an indication of what is to come. Unfortunately, there is nothing we can do about it until April 1 or after September 30 due to the state regulations.

Cynthia Korman: Asked about plant growth in Mountain Lake. The growth in Mountain Lake that swimmers encounter is plant growth that grows from the bottom. Bob does not believe the

Susan Ferguson: Grunden's Pond has a low water due to the dam needing repair. Unfortunately, the repair is blocked by the DEP. We are waiting for updates.

Chris Richter: What can we do? More buffer zones around the lake to reduce run off and phosphorus levels. Ideally earlier season treatments would be helpful, if DEP would change their requirements.

Mountain Lakes is exploring joining the Highlands Council master plan. One thing that we get out of that is financial assistance. This may result in a consultant (Jessica Caldwell) that will support various committees in town.

6. Old Business

Review action items from prior meetings (kept separately from meeting minutes)

- 2023 Bathymetry Study updates and discussion – The canal study, along with some historic data, was distributed to the members of the committee. Discussion of the reports was tabled for a future meeting. There was concern about the vendor's slow turnaround time to respond to our questions.
- 2024 Borough Council presentation discussion – The presentation was originally scheduled for February 12. It has now been pushed to Monday February 26.

7. New Business

- New committee member Wayne Roth introduction

8. Announcements

Next meeting March 5, 2024

9. Adjournment

Debra Dewing moved that the meeting be adjourned. Derek Jackson seconded the motion. The motion passed at 9:35 PM.