

MINUTES
Highland Lake Leadership Team
May 31, 2023 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Windham Town Hall – Conference Room 1
Hybrid Meeting (In-Person and Virtual)

Attending:

- Dennis Brown, Chair and Highland Lake Association President
- Tom Verlee (virtual), HLLT Member
- Jeff Dennis (virtual), Maine DEP Watershed Management Unit
- Diann Wood (virtual), HLLT member
- Nancy Lightbody, HLLT member
- Theresa Galvin, Town of Falmouth Sustainability Coordinator
- Kevin McElearney, HLLT Member and HLA Vice President and Treasurer
- Heather Hunt, Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Gretchen Anderson, Town of Windham Environmental & Sustainability Coordinator
- Hope Cahan, Town of Falmouth Councilor

Item 1. Welcome/Introductions

Item 2. Public Comment - None

Item 3: Review 10/26/22 Minutes – Approved unanimously.

Item 4. Committee Updates

Education & Outreach (Nancy)

- Meets every other month, most recently met May 9.
- Currently updating the Education and Outreach Plan, which will be brought to the HLLT for final approval.
- Worked with CCSWCD to draft an online newsletter outline. Still needs to be finalized by HLA prior to dissemination.
- Provided signage and factsheets to local garden centers for shoreland buffer plantings.
- Currently scheduling to film 2 different shoreland zone properties for example BMPs.
- Propwash and wake boat information will be added to the 'Lake-Friendly Living' Handout created by the committee following potential passage of legislation to ensure accurate information.
- Legislative Tracking
 - [LD 379](#) - An Act to Responsibly Regulate Recreational Boats on Maine Lakes
 - Reported out of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as 'Ought to Pass' on May 26, 2023.
 - [LD 693](#) - An Act to Protect Inland Water Quality, Shorelines, Wildlife and Public Safety by Prohibiting Operation of a Wake Boat to Create an Enhanced Wake Close to Shore or in Shallow Water
 - 'Divided Report' vote from the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife on April 12, 2023.

Water Quality (Kevin and Dennis)

- Met last week, minutes are forthcoming.
- Dennis shared a graph of Total Phosphorus from 1974-2022.
 - From 2018-2022, phosphorus has reduced to 1990-1995 levels.
 - Drought may have impact on reduction levels, but all the work completed by this committee has sustained and improved water quality.

- Last bloom was observed in 2017 (sechhi disk levels were 2.5 meters; ‘bloom’ characterized as less than 2 meters) – no additional water quality testing above what is currently conducted by HLA will be utilized unless a bloom is identified.
- Cheryl Mann continues to work with HLA as a graduate student to study cyanobacteria and green algae.
 - Discovered cyanobacteria is *Rhexinema* (very rare – never seen in Maine before) using eDNA.
 - Hypothesized to be invasive taxa that was introduced to Highland Lake, which ultimately caused the bloom from 2015-2017, and the ecosystem may have adjusted, ultimately causing the bloom to not occur.
 - Unsure of the timing and relationship between the invasive green algae and Picocyanobacteria and alewives.
- Alewives
 - Run numbers peaked in 2018 at 64K, with 40k as an average. Only 8k in 2022.
 - Presumpscot Regional Land Trust confirmed sightings of 2023 run last week, with the run starting this week.
 - Discussion on alewife run numbers being less than previous years.
 - DMR has hypothesized that the removal of the Sacarappa Dam has adjusted the run tendencies (the alewives are deciding to move up the Presumpscot rather than ‘turn’ into Mill Brook.)

Ordinance Committee (Dennis)

- Met on May 9.
- Committee has decided to refine the nutrient management ordinance, with potential to include the following changes:
 - Create a set of performance standards to be incorporated into existing code rather than a standalone ordinance.
 - Potential limit between 5-10 animal units (au).
 - Outline key requirements in smaller au plans:
 - Divert any upstream drainage from manure storage.
 - Recommendations to keep manure pile covered/secure.
 - Requirement for disposal, removal, or ‘re-use’.
- Potential ordinance ideas that are in the discussion phase:
 - Short-term rental and septic systems
 - Potential requirements: rental accommodation listing must be based on septic design and post-1975 design.
 - Falmouth – currently has a short-term rental registration.
 - Windham – does not have ordinance/registration.
- Shoreland zone septic system inspections during change of ownership
 - Towns do not have a mechanism to ensure inspection is completed.
 - Ideal inspection would include scope video taken from the house to septic tank, from tank to leach field, and at least two soil samples dug in the leach field to see if there is a biomat.
- Phosphorus control point system rules to be met with change of ownership.
 - Towns only receive the registry of deeds and not bill of sale.
 - If implemented, residents may not realize current compliance in relation to the point system.
 - Potential requirements: Allow period of compliance with no ‘grandfather’ option. Require point system compliance regardless of permit issued (i.e., potentially require point system compliance in issuing building permits).

Watershed Management Committee (Heather)

- Met twice in March 2023
 - Reviewed Watershed Management Plan Action Items.
 - Did not have enough qualifying high priority sites to submit a successful 319 application.
 - HLA (Kevin) keeps NPS site tracker up to date.
 - Some sites may never be addressed – the committee has been reviewing all sites to determine if effort to address a given site is worth the benefit of the fix. Some sites are not.
 - ‘Chase Property’ development to occur this summer – Dennis is reaching out the new abutters to ensure the ‘moat’ that was dug around the property will be filled in.
 - Determined that most watershed sites are now in the maintenance phase.
 - The goal now is to keep the momentum going for lake protection when primarily only maintenance is needed – HLLT needs to ensure that sites are maintained and don’t revert to problem sites.
- The committee will meet at the end of the summer to determine if the watershed management plan needs to be updated and recommendations to be brought forward to HLLT.
- Determined that the road associations are the key to ensure maintenance is being completed.
 - Reaching out to road associations for interest in wholesale pricing for road product/equipment.
 - Coordinating with Towns to determine if this is possible.
- Need to get the word out to the public on Water Quality updates and accomplishments.
 - HLA presented to Falmouth Town Council this past winter.
 - A similar memo will be sent to Windham Town Council this summer/fall.
 - Would be good to provide an update at HLA’s annual meeting this summer.
- Added discussion during HLLT meeting:
 - Potential mooring crowding with new development.
 - Falmouth has a mooring ordinance, but it has coastal references – HLA and Falmouth Land Trust are interested in updating the ordinance, as there are large tracts of land with rights-of-way to Highland Lake that could greatly increase boat traffic on the lake.
 - Windham does not have a mooring ordinance.
 - Suggested to review [Winthrop mooring ordinance](#), the [recent revision suggestions](#), and related [public process](#) to inform HLLT discussion.

Item 5. Other

- **Lake Level**
 - Required minimum flows – dependent on the rain amounts.
 - HLA successful in reducing average August flow – modifications saved an additional 10 inches.
 - Attempted to work with the City of Westbrook to add an inflatable dam at the top of the permanent dam to regulate and narrow the section where the water outlets. City declined.
 - HLA attempted to buy the dam with stipulations – City declined.
 - HLA request to lower the lake in the winter – determined to not be viable by DMR.
- **HLA Annual Meeting (7/20)**
 - 6pm start time at Cornerstone Church on Cottage Road.
 - The goal is to have Code Enforcement Officers from Windham and Falmouth attend.

Item 6. Adjourn.