

Lamoka-Waneta Lakes Association – Public Forum

May 23, 2015

Welcome/Lakes Report: President Terry started the meeting with a big welcome to all in attendance then went on to introduce some of the topics we would be hearing about later on in the meeting. The big thing on everyone's mind was the recent problems with the dam and the length of time it took for NYSEG to get it rectified. Terry thanked everyone who called NYSEG and Senator O'Meara's office as the power of the people got action.

Treasurer/Membership Report: Kurt Bischoff gave a verbal report of the finances and said there were printed copies of the recent report available for anyone who wants one. Kurt said membership is stable, and he is willing to take checks today for people's annual dues and donations.

Lake level/Dam Chairperson: Terry Fisk gave a quick rundown on the water level gauge, its location and the fact that it records feet above sea level in tenths of a foot with hundredths estimated in between the tenth markings. Since 1 foot equals 12 inches, 0.1 foot equals 1.2 inches (not a convenient unit!). A change in level from 1098.5 to 1099.0 is ½ foot or 6 inches. Keep in mind that this doesn't directly tell you how deep the lake is or the channel, etc. but these can be inferred from the rise or fall in value. We were at 1098.5 for the weed treatment on May 27th, then closed the dam and installed both stop blocks in the notch setting up for overflow at 1099.0 "full pond" level. We can open the gates after the chemical drops below a specific "safe" concentration, or after 30 days have elapsed, or if rain brings in enough water to cause the dam to overflow. After the weed treatment period is done we will shoot for a summer level of about 1098.7. Because these lakes are natural bodies of water, not a swimming pool in your backyard, the level will fluctuate. Targets are all +/- 0.2 feet which means +/-2.4 inches for a total of approx. 5 inches variation expected. Because of shallow slopes at some areas around the lakes and channels a 2 inch decrease in water level can be seen as a 2 to 3 foot increase in beachfront along those areas; it's not really a 3-foot drop in lake level.

The right/east gate of the Bradford dam was plugged by a large log and stones while we had it wide open letting water out after the spring thaw. Even though we dropped below our target of 1098.5 NYSEG had to leave the other gate open to draw the water level down further for safety reasons before they could put a person into the water to work on the gate. The "man in the water" procedure was done with a safety harnesses and wet suits. They eventually got the gate cleared and determined there was no damage to the gate/mechanism. They got both gates closed and we proceeded to get two "crap loads of rain" within a week so we ended up overshooting our 1098.5 target by a few inches. NYSEG is working on a long-term plan to fix the gates. There are currently three plans being discussed. The one that sounds more likely is to install a second set of gates on the downstream side of the dam so that each sluice will have two gates. One as a backup for emergencies such as what we had this April.

Lakes Forum – Chairperson Jean Hubsch gave an introduction for the panel who would be speaking about various topics.

- **Darryl Sturgis – Schuyler County Watershed Protection Agency** – Presentation on water quality testing for individual wells, including cottages using lake water. They can test for a whole list of contaminants and bacteria but costs come out of the property owner's pocket. The more tests

you request the greater the cost. Darryl also spoke about the reasons for periodic pumping, inspection and repairs to septic systems.

- **Dennis Hayes – Weed raking** – Dennis talked about raking the lake and how to dispose of the weeds. Do not let the weeds float away because they will present a navigational hazard and will eventually find a place to take root and grow again. Raking is tedious work. Darryl has a drying rack/screen that he built to dry out the weeds. He says 300 pounds of fresh weeds reduces to about 30 pounds after being on the drying rack for a day or two. The “pancake” of dried weeds can then be handled much more easily and taken to the compost pile or burned.
- **Jay White – Water movement** – Jay has a submerged water pump with pipes that turns the water into a fountain providing water movement and aeration in front of his cottage at the North end of Waneta. The fountains were installed last year and they helped to keep the water clear of algae blooms. When the pump is running the effect can be seen at his waterfront and extends to the neighbors at each side. He will provide the association with information on pumps, etc.
- **Ron Morse – Lake mats** – Ron was a no-show. Terry Fisk offered to fill-in since he has used benthic barriers for several years. Weed mats can be expensive, or you can build your own and save a lot of money. The mats are heavy; even worse if zebra mussel colonies grow on them and/or after muck settles in on top of them. The DEC requires the mats be moved every 30 days, and they have to be taken out of the lake for the winter. Terry has three mats, each about 10 ft x 12 ft in size. Moving them around helps control the weed growth in a much larger area. Flip them over when you move them to dislodge the muck and zebra mussels.
- **Terry Fisk – Dredging** – Terry had his waterfront vacuum dredged in August 2013 by a 2-man team canvassing the area. It was expensive but it really did the trick. The cost varies depending on the area to be dredged and the extent of weed growth there. They took away the weeds, the muck and the zebra mussels leaving a rocky bottom. There’s a 5-year guarantee against weeds coming back but the dredgers seem to have vanished into thin air. One person in the audience said he had the same crew do his plus some of his neighbors’ waterfronts but the weeds came right back next year. So it looks like it’s hit or miss with this process.

There was some Q&A after each speaker. The LWLA board members and the forum speakers stayed after the meeting to talk with people and answer questions.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Fisk