



Watchic Lake Association Annual Member Meeting Minutes, July 6, 2024

President Stephanie Parker called the meeting to order at 9:05 am and acknowledged all of the board members for their service as well as all Committee members and volunteers. A quorum was established with 43 members present. The certificate of mailing has been filed with the meeting notice mailed on June 3rd, 2025.

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the 2024 annual meeting which was seconded and passed.

David Burnell gave a water quality update. We had a fairly wet spring that has contributed to reduced visibility and water clarity issues. We also continue to see an increasing loss of dissolved oxygen at the bottom of the lake.

Rick Wiggin asked if the readings at the buoy are representative of the entire lake. David responded that yes, it should be generally representative of the entire lake since the readings are taken above the thermocline even though they are taken at the deepest area.

Stephanie talked about the recent algae blooms and the likely contributors to them. Primarily elevated phosphorus from runoff and cycling from the bottom sediment of the lake. She also talked about the different types of blooms and their characteristics.

Stephanie talked specifically about cyanobacteria and the blooms we saw last year that were producing toxins and asked that people report any blooms to the board.

A question was asked why Watchic Lake was of interest for monitoring by the Maine Cyanobacteria Group. Our samples seem to differ from what they were expecting based on the genome of the cyanobacteria.

Stephanie gave an update on the Golden algae bloom that occurred this spring. A cool rainy spring followed by warm weather likely contributed.

A question was asked if the bloom is actually gone now. Stephanie responded that the algae still exist in the lake but the blooms have mostly dissipated.

Eileen Burnell spoke about how we are still greatly susceptible to future algae blooms. Vegetation around the lake is crucial for helping to protect the lake. Every property is the cause and solution to the problem and additional vegetation is one of the best solutions. The Wild Seed project produces seed packets of native species that can be used to help restore and improve our shorelines and reduce runoff. These are some of the most common native species and all contribute positively to the ecosystem. Seed packets were handed out to meeting participants.

The education committee plans to follow up and assist with proper information this fall to ensure that the seeds are optimally planted this fall. They will be hosting a workshop this fall to go over proper planting/sowing of the seeds.

Monica Mahoney spoke about joining Lakesmart, what it is, and passed a signup sheet for anyone who would like to learn more or evaluate their property. Lakesmart is one of the easiest things you can do to help the lake. It's a free, voluntary educational program run by the State of Maine and administered by the Lakes of Maine organization.

A video describing the program and how it works was shown (<https://vimeo.com/1052305986?p=0s>).

She talked further about the evaluation process and what LakeSmart looks for and the related possible improvements and things that homeowners can do.

There were discussions among the attendees regarding trees being taken down around the lake, as well as experiences dealing with the town and DEP on proper permitting and approvals for shoreline improvements and tree removal.

Stephanie discussed some of the recent runoff projects and our 2023 grant project for Phase I. We have applied for a Phase 2 grant to support runoff issues on Road 4, as well as eight residential projects around the lake.

She also discussed the 2011 Route 113 project and how it has needed improvements and renovations with more to come.

Stephanie discussed how invasive plants are one of our biggest threats to the lake and how we monitor for infestations and encouraged people to become trained monitors/paddlers. She talked about some of the more common invaders and to report any sightings of 'weird' or unusual plants.

Stephanie gave an update on loons. Two of the four chicks from 2024 survived. There are no chick sightings yet this year, but there are two pairs nesting that may have eggs. Boat strikes have recently taken over as the leading cause of death for loons, surpassing lead fishing tackle.

David Burnell gave an update about the condition of the dam as well as how it is managed and controls the level of the lake. There is a lot of poison ivy around the dam, so be careful if you need to visit.

Stephanie gave an update on membership and events. She talked about our new corporate donations and the clynk program.

Agnes gave an update on the operating account with Maine Community Bank. The revenue for this account is from dues and donations. This covers our operating expenses and we managed to have a surplus for 2024. We are projecting a balanced budget for this year.

Our strategic fund is held with Fidelity and this is based on donations and interest. This is used for supplementing the grants and remediation projects that we contribute to. We are projecting a surplus this year. Agnes also discussed the costs around possible infestations and the desire to grow the strategic fund to help mitigate a possible infestation.

A question was asked if a fund drive was planned to which the answer was yes, a fund drive is very likely in the near future.

A question was asked if we have a target amount that we would like to have in reserve. Rick Wiggin talked about amounts for some other local lakes that are managing infestations and their (significant) costs as examples.

Stephanie talked about the boater safety course that the WLA is sponsoring at the Kiwanis Clubhouse on August 2nd.

She also talked about the other upcoming events including the Family Fun Day, InvasiveInvasives Paddle, and Ice cream boat.

It was discussed if there was interest in having more social events and many attendees indicated that they would be interested in such events.

Rob Brisk spoke on how to join the board and this year's nominations.

Agnes Wiggin has termed off the board and as treasurer. We thank her for her service.

Ashley Baker and Rob Saklatvala were nominated as new board members.

Cathay Austin was nominated for her first term as Treasurer. Chris Martino was nominated for his second term as Secretary. Rob Brisk and Rick Wiggin were nominated and elected for their second terms as co-historians.

A motion to approve all nominations was made, seconded, and approved.

Stephanie honored Agnes with a gift for her 9 years of service on the WLA board and as Treasurer.

Stephanie then gave her closing remarks. She also asked everyone to encourage their neighbors to join, and to report any strange plants, algae blooms, or any other issues.

Following the presentation, Izzy Higgins brought up the July 22nd (at 6pm) workshop with the town council and the comprehensive planning committee. They are asking for input on the comprehensive plan for the town. Please read the plan and offer feedback both positive and negative.

The meeting concluded at 10:45am.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Martino (Secretary)