

From the Highland Lake Watershed Association - A Nonprofit Organization Dedicated to the Preservation and Protection of Highland Lake and Its Watershed

Spring

President's Message by Candy Perez



Welcome Spring and Summer 2023

I first want to take a moment to thank all the members of HLWA and encourage new memberships as well. Your contributions to support the health of the lake have mattered now as they have throughout the decades.

The Highland Lake Watershed Association is entering our 63rd season doing what we do best together - looking out for the long-term health of the lake and building our lake community. In this newsletter, you will find articles on both of these fronts.

Included in this newsletter is a calendar of lake community activities, including the return of Evening on

Highland Lake and our early summer social at the Little Red Barn Brewery. Then please join us at our Annual Meeting on July 8. And we will have our annual boat parade this summer - watch for the theme. We welcome any ideas for more activities from those of you with creative ideas.

Throughout the winter we receive reports from our partners at NEAR (Northeast Aquatic Research) to plan for the care and observation of the lake over the summer. With very little ice this past winter and a very warm summer in 2022, we will be monitoring the effects on weeds as more sunlight has reached them for longer. We are also planning for our yearly sampling for affected nutrient levels. Sampling of the water begins in April. We will continue our regular planned weed management program with permission from the State and in partnership with the Town of Winchester.

Highland Lake is fortunate to be a naturally wooded lake with trees filtering our water. Our spillways allow water to flow over and clean surface debris and help keep our water moving. But the lake needs our help because weeds are only one element of our lake's health. The wrong nitrogen and phosphorus levels can age a lake faster and can lead to less oxygen in the water columns. The wrong levels can lead to algae blooms and affect the fish populations.

One of the most important things every lake resident can do is to stop sediment, organic material such as grass clippings, and products with warnings of use around waterbodies from getting into the lake. This will help the lake stay at middle age, keep the water we swim in clean, and provide a healthy environment for our magnificent bald eagles and occasional moose. If you have a catch basin or straight pipe by your house, pitch in to keep trash away from it. Pump bilge water from your boat into a bucket and deposit on shore to filter it. Use rain gardens and swales to slow runoff. As the saying goes, if everyone does a little bit, no one will have to do a lot.

We are including excerpts from the Northeast Aquatic Research Report of 2021 and 2020 Water Quality Report & Long-Term Data Assessment on page 8. You can also find more in-depth reports on the health of Highland Lake on our website <u>www.hlwa.org</u> and on the Town's website on the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission page.

Check out our new advertisers on pages 11, 15, 17, 18 and 19 and all our other wonderful advertisers!

2023

Enjoy all of your summer activities with friends and family as "you can't make more time, but you can make more experiences in the time you have!"

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Missing the Ice!

by Betty Martin

As I'm writing this article during the last week of January, I'm hoping February will bring on the ice! The lake typically provides beauty and entertainment throughout the year. Our first winter on the lake included cross country skiing, ice skating, and even just walking on the ice and checking out the ice fishermen's activities. This year we prepared ahead of time and invested in new ice skates and even borrowed Nordic skates which are long thick blades that attach to the cross country ski boots. They're perfect for skating through rough ice. So far, we have been sadly disappointed with the lack of ice! I'm sure there are many who enjoy the milder temps, but I'm also sure there are many upset ice fishermen!

While doing some Highland Lake research at the Beardsley Library, I came across an article discussing milder winters causing different disappointments and hardships during a much different time in the lake's history. During the mid-1800s continuing into the 1900s, Highland Lake became a source of ice for preservation of food and dairy for much of Winsted residents and others as far as the city of Hartford and even New York State. Many lake owners built ice houses which were typically tall wooden buildings that had conveyor belts or pulleys outside that dragged the huge ice blocks into the buildings. February was harvesting month since the ice had to be at least 8 inches thick to last throughout the summer. Sawdust was packed around the ice to keep it from melting. The ice industry was a risky business and warm winters sometimes occurred at the worst times, such as during a recession in 1857-58 when people could least afford to have the food spoiled. Another documented warm winter occurred in 1890 which was reported in the Winsted Herald as having taken "all hope out of the ice men, and for that matter out of everybody, for everybody is solicitous lest there be an ice famine." Fortunately, households began to own electric refrigeration by the time the next really warm winter occurred between 1931-32 in the midst of the Great Depression.

Over the years, the importance of ice on the lake may have shifted from preserving some of life's necessities to more recreation, but it also provides a litmus test for understanding our climate and how climate change may be impacting the future of our beautiful lake. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) includes the National Snow and Ice Data Center which maintains a database with freeze and thaw observations from more than 850 lakes throughout the Northern Hemisphere. The study has shown North American lakes are generally freezing later than they did in the past at a rate of roughly half a day to one-and-a-half days per decade. Thaw dates show a trend toward earlier ice breakup in the spring by up to 24 days in the past 114 years. The EPA study discusses how ice formation and breakup dates are key indicators of climate change. The changes in ice cover can affect the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of a body of water. The changes, including increased evaporation and lower water levels as well as an increase in water temperature and sunlight penetration, can affect plant and animal life cycles and the availability of suitable habitat.

With all the potential changes due to climate change, it is important more than ever to have membership involvement in monitoring the health of our lake!



HLWA EVENTS Mark your calendar! SPRING CLEANUP MAY Resha Beach Meetup 21 9:30 a.m. MIX & MINGLE JUNE Little Red Barn Brewery 9 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. ANNUAL MEETING JULY St Joseph's Franciscan 8 9:00 a.m. BOAT PARADE JULY Boat Launch Meetup 22 7:00 p.m. (Rain Date 7/29) BOWLING NIGHT AUGUST Laurel Lanes 4 6:30-8:30 p.m. EVENING ON HIGHLAND LAKE AUGUST 199 E Lake Street 19 5:30-9:00 p.m. FALL CLEANUP OCTOBER Resha Beach Meetup 22 9:30 a.m.

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HIGHLAND LAKE NEWS

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Rainy Day on Highland Lake? Don't fret - here's a list of local, family-friendly establishments where you can spend a stormy day

by Amy Frankel

- Laurel Duckpin Bowling Lanes located on Main Street in Winsted, duckpin bowling is fun for all ages. Open Tuesday-Sunday. 860.379.5391
- American Mural Project Displaying a mural that is a tribute to the American worker, this project is a feast for the eyes and a must visit. The project has been created by more than 15,000 children and adults thus far and before its completion will include pieces from all 50 states. Located at 90 Whiting Street in Winsted, it is open Friday-Sunday with tours available. 860.379.3006
- Gilson Cinema & Café Also located on Main Street in Winsted, a movie is a great diversion on a rainy evening, and here you can even enjoy a meal with your movie. 860.379.5108
- 4. The American Museum of Tort Law For the law or history buffs in the family, this museum is designed to educate Americans about trial by jury and the benefits of tort law. Located at 654 Main Street in Winsted, the museum opens on April 1 for the season. Be sure to call ahead for exact hours. 860.379.0505
- Pinewoods Health & Racquet Club With pickleball and tennis courts, this facility is close to the lake and a great way to get your exercise in when the weather is not cooperating. Call ahead to reserve a court - located at 104 Pinewoods Road, Torrington, CT. 860.482.9424
- Pursue the Clues This escape room in Torrington, CT is reservation only. If you or your kids love Indiana Jones or Sherlock Holmes, you will flip over this fun, interactive, hands-on experience. Open Friday through Sunday at 733 East Main Street in Torrington. 860.618.5811
- KidsPlay Children's Museum This museum at 61 Main Street in Torrington, CT is open Wednesday-Monday. It's a fun place where children up to age 10 can learn from

CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY. STOP INVASIVES!

6 MPH LINIT from 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise, and

6 MPH LIMIT from 5 PM SUNDAY

to 1/2 hour before sunrise on Monday (Sun. before Memorial Day to Sun. preceding Labor Day)

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SLOW-NO-WAKE within 100 FEET

of shore, or dock, pier, float or anchored or moored vessel, unless taking off or landing a waterskier.

No person shall operate a PERSONAL WATERCRAFT at a speed in excess of

SLOW-NO-WAKE within 200 FEET

of shore, or dock, pier, float or anchored or moored vessel, unless taking off or landing a waterskier.

45 mph limit on Sats, Suns, and Holidays. BOATS GREATER THAN 22 FEET IN LENGTH AND PONTOON BOATS GREATER THAN 30 FEET IN LENGTH ARE PROHIBITED

No staging of personal watercraft, motorboat or water-skiing activities from town-owned beaches or park. Overnight mooring prohibited.

Information for the Town of Winchester Inland Wetland and Watercourses Commission

https://www.townofwinchester.org/entities/inland-wetlandsand-watercourses-6

hands-on, multi-sensory activities. It is also designed to promote developmental skills such as sharing, role-play, etc. 860.618.7700

- Old Newgate Prison & Copper Mine Located at 115 Newgate Road in East Granby, about a 30-minute drive from Winsted is this prison yard and mine that fascinates all ages. Only open in the summer, this seasonal venue is worth the drive and the mine tours are truly a unique experience. 860.653.3563
- The Carousel Museum At 95 Riverside Avenue in Bristol, CT, a 30-minute drive from the lake, this fun museum is open Wednesday - Sunday. More than 100 years of carousel art and history are on view at this museum with public tours Wednesday-Friday at noon and 2:00 p.m. 860.585.5411
- Arethusa Farm Dairy located at 822 Bantam Road in Bantam, CT, about 20 minutes from the lake, you will find arguably the best ice cream around. Open seven days a week, there is almost always a line out the door for this rich, fresh, creamy treat.
 860.361.6460

What to Plant, a Conversation with Erik Christensen, Local Ecological Landscaper by Jen Perga

Natives? Pollinators? Buffers? Wet areas? Screening between homes? We covered it all!

Erik, his wife, Caroline, and I spent over an hour viewing dozens of plant specimens in their spectacular Winsted yard. They had just returned from visiting friends who live on a lake in New Hampshire and have similar planting questions to those of us at Highland Lake.

Jen: As you know, homes at Highland Lake are pretty close together and the tall trees between homes have been falling with the strong storms we are experiencing. What's the best way to replace trees with plantings that are less of a liability?

Erik: I like to alternate evergreen with deciduous trees and shrubs, and to layer them too. This technique adds interest and beauty in all seasons. **Techny arborvitae** is an evergreen that will grow to about 20 feet tall, it's great between homes. There are many native beneficial shrubs that could be layered in front of the arborvitae. For example, **mountain laurel** - Winsted is the "Laurel City," **rhododendron maximum** (can grow to 12-15 feet) and **leucothoe** are all evergreens. Deciduous shrubs include **witch hazel, highbush blueberry** providing food for birds, and **buttonbush**, loved by pollinators.

Jen: What if someone still wants large trees? What do you recommend?

Erik: I recommend red maple, sugar maple, oaks and hickories, also white pine. All are native to our area. There are hybridized versions of these trees that are narrower. You might look for columnar or fastigiate (narrowing toward the top having upright usually clustered branches) versions.

Erik: There are also dwarf versions of many trees. These trees won't stop growing, but grow very slowly and are thus more manageable than larger trees. I have a dwarf **white pine** which is native, as well as dwarf **blue spruce**.

Jen: At the lake, many homeowners have small streams going through their properties, or low wet areas. Are there plants that thrive in these conditions?

Erik: Absolutely! The **highbush blueberry** loves wet soils, as do **pepperbush, alder,** and **red twig dogwood**. These plants are all excellent habitats for a variety of birds.

Jen: I've noticed many of the shrubs I have planted in the last few years are still small and don't seem to be growing much. What should I do?

Erik: Don't worry. It's helpful to remember that trees and shrubs are not dissimilar to people. The process of planting can be traumatic and may damage the root system. Your plants are getting used to their new surroundings, they're like "infants" right now growing new root systems and establishing themselves.



Leucothoe – a native, evergreen shrub, attractive to native bees.



Witch hazel - a deciduous small tree/large shrub with spectacular flowers in February.

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As "teenagers," they will have big growth spurts and eventually, as they mature their growth will begin to slow as "adults."

Jen: Good news, maybe I have a "green thumb" after all.

Jen: I'm pretty overwhelmed by our walk around your yard. We may have viewed 30-40 species of plants! Could someone call you for more detailed advice about their yard?

Erik: Sure, my goal is to provide a balance of beauty, benefits for wildlife, and recreational use of the yard. Practitioners like myself call our field Ecological and Sustainable Design. You may reach me at: Erik Christensen Horticultural Services, LLC at 860.921.7355.

Jen: Local nurseries carry many of these plants.



Erik and Caroline with dwarf White Pine

area.

Closure of West Wakefield Boulevard at Taylor Brook April 3 to June 15, 2023

Local traffic will be allowed on West Wakefield Boulevard from Mountain Road to the Culvert and from Forest Avenue to the Culvert. Through traffic will not be able to travel from Mountain Road to Forest Avenue. No pedestrian or bicycle traffic will be allowed through the construction



Layers of dense shrubs – 20-foot arborvitae behind, blue spruce and other evergreens in front



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HLWA Photo Competition

We are happy to announce the return of the HLWA Photo Contest. Get out your cameras and start snapping shots of Highland Lake - wildlife, water action shot, fishing, family fun, etc.!

To enter, email your digital photo to marketing@hlwa.org.

Please include your name and the title of your photo. No professional assistance or photo editing allowed.

The deadline for submissions is midnight on Saturday, August 12, 2023. Winners will be announced at the Evening on Highland Lake on Saturday, August 19, 2023. Gift certificates to a local store or restaurant will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners.

By submitting a photo you agree all photos may be featured on the HLWA website, Facebook page and other forms of communication. Here are the 2021 Winners.



1st Place - Peaceful Morning submitted by Shawn Meyer



3rd Place - Fishing Fun submitted by Clare & Joey Deptula



2nd Place - Cotton Candy Sky submitted by Brooke Crossman

Meet Your Neighbor and Hosts of an Evening on Highland Lake

by Annie Q Simard

Karen and Stew Jones Owner of Stew Jones Restoration

Which Bay do you live in 1st bay

How long have you lived on Highland Lake? Since 1976

Are you full time or seasonal? Full time

What is it about Highland Lake that drew you to live here? Commercial zoning

on a waterfront, and I had previously lived on Cameron Point in 3rd bay. Also, a passion for waterskiing and a chance for our children to grow up on the water

What do you do for work? Restore antique Jaguars

What do you do for play? Restore antique Jaguars

Favorite local restaurant? Mario's

Local "MUST DO" recommendation: Gilson Theatre

Audio or Turning the page? Audio

Salty or Sweet? Sweet

Bucket list item: Upgrades of our lake property

Best piece of advice you ever got: Follow your passion

Words to live by: Do it your way

To learn even more, check out this short Documentary Film on our neighbors and friends:

https://youtu.be/KxfTLC3EZQ0stewjones@jaguarv12etype.com



Lake Infrastructure Projects and Other News by Candy Perez

In 2022 the Town of Winchester Public Works Department installed 150 feet of 6" underdrain near 343 West Wakefield Boulevard. Part of the project were three new catch basins with one sump, including a headwall. Each year they vacuum all basins at the lake from March through April. In 2022, they swept around the lake nine times and cleaned all sediment vaults twice, spring and fall.

Other news: The Town of Winchester has received a \$14,952 Aquatic Invasive Species grant this year to help with the cost of the invasive weeds milfoil. These funds come from the \$5 fee we all pay in our boat registrations.

The budget of the Town of Winchester includes \$44,158 for water quality testing and invasive weed management. This money is used for water quality testing of nutrients and phytoplankton identification and enumeration. Funds are also used to conduct pre- and post-plant surveys and to treat the invasive plants. Over the years we have been able to create trendlines for phosphorus, nitrogen, dissolved oxygen and other things important to the health of the lake. You can find these reports on our website **hlwa.org** or at the Town of Winchester website under the Inland Wetland and Watercourses Commission page.



The infrastructure bond package that was just financed includes \$1,000,000 for Highland Lake drainage. We worked hard to make sure this funding was included. These funds will help to address the sediment in runoff. The 2020 Highland Lake Water Quality Report and Long Term Data Assessment identifies multiple areas in need.

https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/ winchester-ct/inland-wetlands-and-watercourses/resources/ files/1055/5-highland lake 2020 water quality report longterm_data_assessment.pdf



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Excerpts from NEAR Water Quality Report

We encourage you to take a moment to read the information from our lake limnologist Northeast Aquatic Research. "This summary letter presents the results of 2021 Highland Lake water quality monitoring, including water clarity, dissolved oxygen profiles, and water temperature profiles. Data was collected from three stations, North Bay, Center Bay, and South Bay. Also presented are the laboratory results from total phosphorus and total nitrogen testing, and phytoplankton enumeration." We have been working with NEAR since the 1980s and have longitudinal data that has helped us keep up the water quality we enjoy at Highland Lake. However, we need to remain highly vigilant as much is changing and your help is needed.

 Table 1. 2021 Secchi disk depths and the long-term average for each station. Green highlighted cells depict months when the 2021

 Secchi depth was deeper than the long-term mean.

		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
North Dav	2021	3.6	2.8	4.8	4.3	3.4	4.2	3.5	3.8
North Bay	Average	3.6	3.4	4.0	4.2	3.7	4.1	3.7	3.7
Conton Dour	2021	3.6	3.1	5.3	4.4	3.7	4.7	4.3	4.0
Center Bay	Average	3.6	3.6	4.1	4.6	4.3	4.6	4.2	3.5
Courth Dour	2021	3.5	3.1	5.3	4.3	3.6	4.8	4.3	2.6
South Bay	Average	3.6	3.6	4.2	4.6	4.5	4.5	3.8	3.1

Dissolved Oxygen and Water Temperature

The lake was already stratified during the first sampling event in mid-April. All three stations experienced a Metalimnetic oxygen maximum (MOMax) from April through July, which is indicative of increased quantities of phytoplankton at that depth. A Metalimnetic oxygen minimum (MOMin) occurred in Center Bay from July through September and, to a lesser extent, in South Bay in July. In these instances, the water is undersaturated relative to water temperature and is typically related to water density and/or zooplankton presence. The bottom water at all three sampling stations was anoxic by mid-June and the anoxic water rose in the water column (and thus expanded in volume) as the summer progressed (**Table 2**). Oxygen returned the bottom water of North Bay by early October, while the bottom water of Center Bay and South Bay remained anoxic through the last sampling event of the season in early November.

As detailed in the Highland Lake 2020 Water Quality Report & Long-Term Data Assessment, dissolved oxygen below 1 mg/L (termed "anoxic" should not occur above **4 meters** below surface at North Bay, **9 meters** below surface at Center Bay, and **8 meters** below the surface at South Bay.

Anoxic water did not rise above 1m from the bottom at North Bay. However, in Center Bay anoxic water reached 7.9 meters below the surface, and 6.8 meters below the surface at South Bay.

Additionally, the anoxic boundary was higher in the water column at all three stations on most dates compared to the long-term mean. The anoxic boundary was deeper than the long-term mean on only two occurrences – in North Bay in May, and in Center Bay in July. Because the anoxic boundaries in the three bays rose higher than average in 2021, this caused a greater portion of the lake bottom to be covered by anoxic water, leading to increased nutrient release from the bottom sediments via internal loading.

		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
North Bay	2021	none	none	7.4	none	5.9	none	none	none
	Target 4m	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	2021	none	none	14.4	13.4	11.4	10.2	7.9	10.0
Center Bay	Target 9m	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
	2021	none	none	11.5	9.4	7.2	6.8	none	11.6
South Bay	Target 8m	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y

Table 2. 2021 anoxic boundary depths in meters below the surface*.

*Blue cells show instances when the anoxic boundary was deeper than the long-term mean. Red cells show instances when the anoxic boundary was deeper than the long-term mean.

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The Continuing Legacy of Highland Lake by Willie Platt

Woodland Park - An Opportunity Lost?

In 1926 Gaetano Lentini built bathhouses with lockers, a park with a pavilion and a beach at the west entrance to Wakefield Boulevard, and Woodland Park was formed. There were picnic tables and refreshments. Dances and roller skating could be enjoyed. It was a place where the community went for lake activities such as boating and swimming.

There was a diving board off the end of the peninsula between the beach and boat launch. There was roller skating, dancing, and in the 60s a lot of amateur rock and roll bands played music there.

Then Woodland Park seemed like it was falling onto hard times. Winsted even leased the property for a year in 1963. The lease had an inventory of what was there, which included 50 sets of roller skates!

In 1965 there was a proposal put forth by the Winsted Recreation Committee to the Town to purchase all the land from the spillways over to and including Woodland Park and Holland Beach. There was great discussion among the selectmen about using federal funds and the repercussions to provide a massive waterfront park/ recreation area. There was a study performed, but then they discovered the owners of the three houses located between the spillways and the beach didn't want to sell. Subsequently it seemed like the board of selectmen lost interest in the project.

In 1966 the park was sold to Ameche Land Corporation. They kept it for less than a year before selling it to the State of Connecticut in 1967. The State tore down the buildings and filled in some of the shoreline to make it more boater friendly. So, the Town's opportunity to own what was Woodland Park had passed, and we now have the State of Connecticut boat launch.

Free Cryotherapy

by John Devanney

As a high school athlete I am always looking for better ways to best take care of my body. As I've gotten older, my training for basketball has increased. With increased training I've found myself becoming more sore and vulnerable to injury. I've tried many different methods of recovery but none have shown to be as efficient as cold water exposure. Immediately after my first time trying this, I was hooked on the results. I did research and found that cold temperature constricts blood vessels, which in turn helps reduce swelling and inflammation. Aside from the physical benefits of cold plunging, there are many other benefits such as increasing dopamine production and increased mental alertness.



Pretty quickly these ice baths became a standard practice of my daily routine. I felt myself craving the cold water exposure after having gone without it for an extended period of time. I knew it was going to be tough to convince my friends to join along with me, but I wanted them to be able to feel the same great benefits as I was, so I shared with them my new recovery method. My friends and teammates, Adam Biraga, Corey Schmidt and Greyson Ursone joined me in early March.





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	Annual Membership Application	
The Highland Lake Watershed A preservation and protection of Hi	Association is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) ighland Lake and its watershed. Yo the important work of protecting ou	our membership (and additional
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For additional information or inquiries please contact the pro shop (860) 379-8302

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Email: hlwa@hlwa.org Website: www.hlwa.org Facebook: Highland Lake Watershed Association Instagram: hlwainsta

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OF TONIC VALLEY ASSOCIATION CFI FBRA OUR WATERSHED W Celebrate our Watershed with HVA! This fun, free event celebrates the Housatonic River Valley and helps protect our

waterways and lands from Memorial Day through July 4th.

Registration opens early April, learn more at hvatoday.org!

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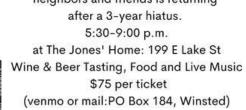


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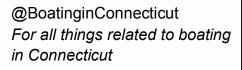
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