



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

Summer

2025

President's Message *by Candy Perez*



As we head into the beautiful late summer and early autumn months, I want to reflect on our shared responsibility to this incredible lake we call home. Thank you, as always, for being a member of the Highland Lake Watershed Association and for your dedication to protecting our community's greatest asset.

We've heard people remark on the clarity of the water this summer, which is a testament to our collective efforts, especially during this period of little rain. This observation, however, also serves as a crucial reminder of why we must continue to be vigilant.

The lack of rainfall has made it clear that a significant factor in the lake's water quality is the runoff from our roads and properties. When it does rain, all that water - and whatever it carries - rushes into the lake. This is why we need to continue our focus on keeping runoff slow and clean. Rain gardens and berms are especially helpful, both environmentally and for protecting your property investments. We are also continually working in partnership with the Town's Department of Public Works (DPW) to improve drainage systems around the lake.

At our recent annual meeting, we had representatives from the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) speak to us about cyanobacteria. They were very complimentary of our association, praising the work we're doing to try and prevent harmful algal blooms. This is a huge compliment, as they travel to many lakes, and it's a credit to all of you who help in this important endeavor.

This year, we continued our twenty-year battle against invasive milfoil. We had divers perform a removal process for the few identified plants. While we didn't apply herbicides to nuisance plants due to statewide concerns regarding Diquat, we will continue to carefully weigh our treatment options. Twenty years ago we had as many as 44 acres of milfoil, so we understand the importance of a balanced approach to keeping it under control. We will continue to discuss this over the winter as we observe the impact of our deep drawdown.

Outside of our water quality work, the Board of Directors organized a Mix and Mingle, the Annual Meeting, the annual Boat Parade, and the first-ever Movie Night. All were well attended, and we hope these events provide some fun throughout our lake community, as you may see in some of the pictures.

Again, please know we appreciate all of you as HLWA members.

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To see all pages in full color, visit our website - hlwa.org.

An Intro to Water Quality Testing

by Carol Josefek

Jay Champagne and Lynn Carter have been doing water quality testing on Highland Lake for six years. A bright and early morning on Tuesday, August 5, they graciously hosted four of us who wanted to learn more about what they do: Rick Josefek, who joined them the last two times, Carol Josefek, who joined them the last time, and Scott Ekstrom and Alan Needham who were there for the first time.

Water quality testing happens once a month for six months, starting in May and finishing in October. In the spring, Lynn orders the supplies that are needed for the year, including the specific plastic bottles that are used to collect water samples.

We started in 3rd bay because this bay tends to become the windiest and busiest as the day goes on. We then migrate to 2nd bay and lastly 1st bay. A GPS is used to locate the exact longitude and latitude in each bay, as measurements need to be from the same spots. In each bay, the same process is followed.



The first step is to take measurements at one-meter increments. One person places the two sensors on the surface of the water. One sensor records the Conductivity. The other sensor records Dissolved Oxygen, Temperature and Oxygen Saturation. Another person

reads this information from the multiparameter water quality meter and transfers the data to a tracking sheet. The sensors are then moved down another meter to record the data at that depth. This process continues until the sheet is complete. Additional observations are manually noted on the tracking sheet, such as air temperature, cloud cover, light conditions, precipitation, wind conditions and water surface conditions.



The next step uses a Secchi disk and a scope to measure water clarity. This is again a two-person job. One person holds the Secchi disk and begins to lower it into the water. Another person looks through the scope and lets the Secchi disk "dropper" know when to stop because they don't see the disk any longer. A measurement is taken of this distance. Then the Secchi disk "dropper" slowly raises the disk until the "scope holder" sees it. A measurement is

taken of this distance. If the distance is less than three meters, another process needs to be performed for each bay with reduced clarity: an algae straw measurement. All three bays were more than three meters, so this did not need to be performed.

The final step is retrieving water samples. A LaMotte water sampler is lowered to a specific depth and water is retrieved from that depth. The water is put into one of the previously purchased plastic water bottles and it is labeled with the Bay Number, Depth, HLWA, Date and Lake Name. The LaMotte water sampler is then lowered to the next depth and water is retrieved from that depth. This process is



continued for three different depths in each of the three bays for a total of nine sample bottles. These are boxed and mailed to Northeast Aquatic Research (NEAR), who will preserve the samples until they can be processed. The results for this year's testing will be available in the spring of next year.

Some years, another process requires additional samples to measure zooplankton. This was not done this year as according to NEAR, the alewives (a small fish) have eaten all of the microscopic organisms, so it's not necessary. There are also budgetary considerations, as cost would increase for more testing.

We all thought it was a very interesting process and we certainly learned a lot about what goes into testing Highland Lake water. It would cost about \$2,000 for NEAR to come out and do this work each month. The testing done by Jay and Lynn has saved the Association a lot of money over the six years they've done it (yes, that's \$72,000!!).

Unfortunately, this is the last year Jay and Lynn are able to continue with the water quality testing. Be sure to say a big "Thank You!" to Jay and Lynn when you see them around!



If you are interested in helping with water quality testing, or would just like to come one time to become more aware of the process, please contact rickjosefek@gmail.com - it would be great to have more of you involved and trained!

Water Level Gauge

The Highland Lake Watershed Association presented a new water level gauge to the Winchester Town Manager. Betty Martin, Annie Simard and Mary Ann Marino attended a board of selectmen meeting in June to give the gauge to the Town.

The water level gauge is used by the Public Works Department to keep the water level steady in the summer as well as to use it each fall to get it to the draw level for each year. This gauge replaces an older one once used and will go in the same spot on the wall by the gate house



Winchester Police Marine Patrol Unit: Safeguarding Highland Lake

by Sergeant Justin DeVaul



In 2025, the Winchester Police Department's Marine Patrol Unit has more than doubled in size and is now fourteen members strong. We are dedicated to ensuring safe, courteous, and law-abiding boating on Highland Lake. Our team of officers conducts lake patrols each week from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Our public approach includes safety equipment checks, towing assistance during emergencies, and friendly engagement with boaters to keep them informed of the laws and regulations.

The Marine Patrol's role extends beyond enforcement - it's rooted in community outreach. Officers frequently communicate with residents and visitors, educate about "wake responsibility" (e.g., stay 200 feet from docks or shore, minimize repetitive passes), and support quality-of-life efforts fostered by the Highland Lake Watershed Association. The Winchester Police Marine Patrol Unit's mission is to ensure Highland Lake remains a safe, peaceful, and enjoyable summer destination for residents and visitors alike.

The team is supervised by Sergeant Justin DeVaul (jdevaul@townofwinchester.org) and the assistant team leader is Sergeant Gerry Hanson (ghanson@townofwinchester.org). If you have feedback, concerns, or partnership ideas related to our Marine Patrol, we'd love to hear from you.

A Message from the Town Manager: Protecting and Celebrating Highland Lake

by Paul Harrington, Town Manager, Winsted

With summer in full swing and the lake alive with activity, I've been thinking about how lucky we are to have Highland Lake at the heart of our community. There's something about the morning mist on the water or the sound of laughter from a backyard barbecue that makes it clear why so many of us chose to call Winsted home.

As your Town Manager, I want to share where things stand, what we're working on, and how everyone can help keep Highland Lake such a special place.

Water Quality: It Starts With Us

The beauty and health of Highland Lake go hand in hand - and neither is guaranteed. We've all heard about other lakes dealing with algae blooms and cloudy water. That's not just a far-off problem; it's a real risk if we're not careful.

The good news? Our partnership with the Highland Lake Watershed Association is strong. With the recent budget approval, we're able to increase lake maintenance funding by more than \$15,000 this year. That gives us room to build on our efforts and test new ways to keep the lake vibrant.

But maintaining the lake is something everyone plays a part in. *Please pay attention to fertilizer use, and remember runoff from your property ends up in the lake. Even simple choices, like planting native plants along the shoreline, help keep the water clean.*

Infrastructure and Environmental Investment

Some of the pipes and drains around Highland Lake have been here for decades. We haven't moved as quickly as we hoped, but I'm happy to report things are ramping up this summer, with work expected to begin soon.

We're also developing a long-term plan to address road runoff and shoreline erosion. These issues might not make headlines, but they matter if we want future generations to swim, fish, and boat here. It takes steady, thoughtful effort to make lasting progress.

Recreation, Safety, and Respect

Summer brings more boaters, swimmers, and visitors - which is something to celebrate. It also means more responsibility for all of us. The police department has increased patrols on the lake, with more than half the team certified for boat duty. Their goal: to keep everyone safe, make sure the rules are followed, and ensure the fun doesn't get out of hand.

If you have visitors, please help spread the word that safety and respect for the lake go together. We all need to look out for one another.

Community Spirit: What Makes Highland Lake Shine

What sets Winsted apart - and Highland Lake especially - is how people show up for each other. Whether it's neighbors organizing to pull invasive weeds, swapping tips on sustainable lawn care, or gathering for the annual boat parade, the sense of community is real.

Thank you to everyone involved with the Highland Lake Watershed Association. Your advocacy, volunteer work, and constant collaboration with the Town make a huge difference. If you haven't joined a cleanup or gone to a workshop yet, I encourage you to do so - they're welcoming, informative, and a great way to meet neighbors.

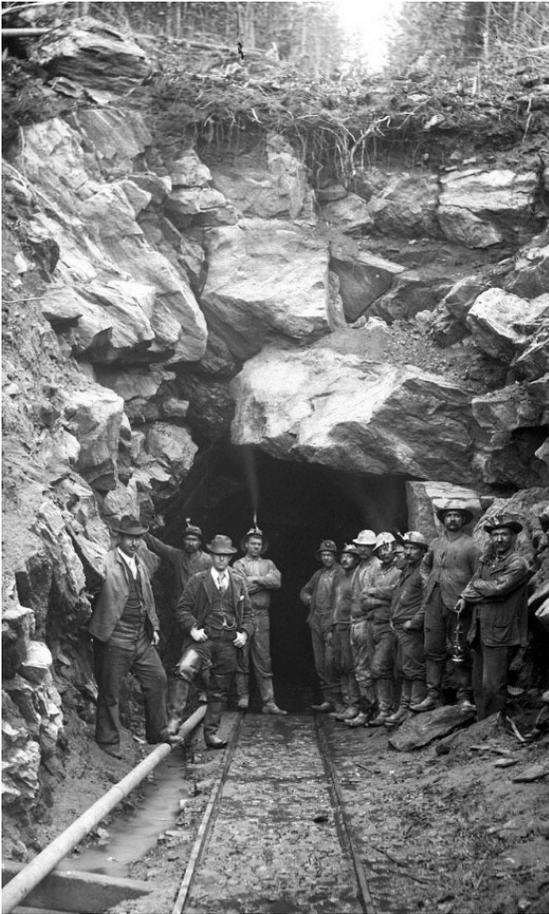
Let's Keep the Conversation Going

If you have ideas, concerns, or just want to talk about the lake, my door is always open. Stop by Town Hall or say hello if you see me by the water. This is your community, and your voice matters.

Here's to a safe, joyful, and memorable summer on Highland Lake. See you on the shoreline!

Do You Know Where Your Drinking Water Comes From?

by Chris Chinnock



*Figure 1: Building the Gilbert Tunnel
(Source: Connecticut Museum of Culture
and History)*

To make the plan happen, the town and manufacturers needed the support of William L. Gilbert, a wealthy clockmaker from Winsted. He apparently donated the majority funding to undertake the project on his deathbed. As a result, construction began around 1890 and was completed six years later. It is now called the Gilbert Tunnel.

In addition, new larger cast-iron pipes and valves were laid from Crystal Lake to Main Street, replacing the original wooden one, to handle the additional water pressure. This water system became the envy of the area and a major draw in its day.

I didn't know where my drinking water came from but became intrigued after seeing a large photo in the storefront window of the Ace True Value hardware store in town. The photo on the left shows the proud workers at one end of a tunnel that connects the Rugg Brook reservoir to the Crystal Lake reservoir, our source of drinking water and more. To learn more about the history of this project and the water supply in general, I spoke with Town Waterworks head Jim Rollins.

Jim explained that in the mid 1800s the town was using hydropower to run the many factories that had been set up on the Still and Mad rivers. Around 1860, the town thought it best to provide some fire protection, so the existing dam on Highland Lake was raised to allow more water storage and improve the ability to control the water flow powering the manufacturing operations and provide a source for fighting fires.

By around 1890, there was a need for more hydropower to drive expanding manufacturing operations. Led by the local manufacturers, they devised a plan to increase reservoir capacity enough for the plants, but also to enable drinking water into homes and buildings in town.

The plan involved creating a diversionary dam off the Mad River (located on Danbury Quarter Road off Route 44) along with a hand-dug canal to pour water into Rugg Brook Reservoir. Rugg Brook at the time was mostly a swampy area, so three dams were built to contain the water. But not far off was the natural Crystal Lake. This lake overflows through Sucker Brook into Highland Lake and then back into the Mad River.

Now, the need for the tunnel became clear. By carefully constructing the dams on Rugg Brook and the one on Crystal Lake, the engineers were able to make the water level at Rugg Brook slightly higher than Crystal Lake so a tunnel connecting the two would enable easy water flow, thus creating a large, interconnected reservoir system.



Figure 2: Building the Gilbert Tunnel (Source: Connecticut Museum of Culture and History)

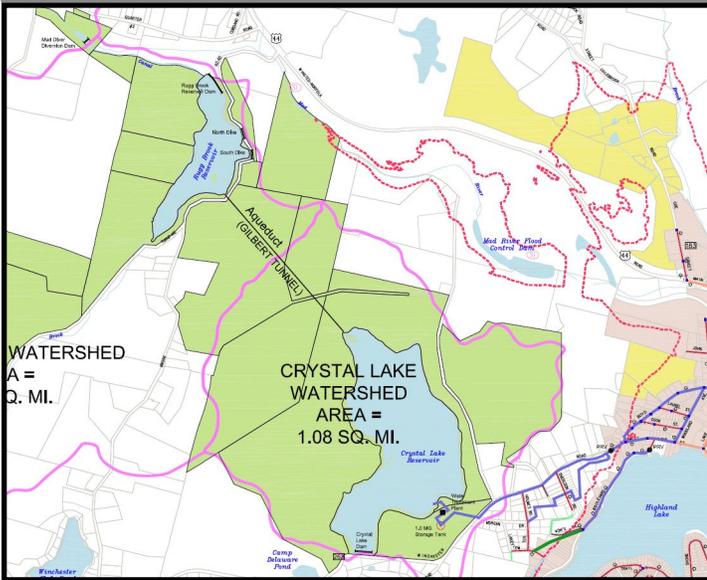


Figure 3: Water Supply, Distribution, and Service Area Map
(Source: Winsted Water Department)

Since then, a new water treatment plant has been built at Crystal Lake and a new pipe carries the water directly to town, bypassing Highland Lake. Today, domestic water is widely distributed in town, but some 100+-year-old pipes are occasionally found during replacement cycles. The original cast-iron pipe is still in use and serving some houses on the west side.

And now you know the history of the domestic water supply in Winsted.

Invasive Alert: Protecting Our Lake from Japanese Knotweed

Japanese knotweed, a highly invasive plant, poses a significant threat to our lake's ecosystem and shoreline. Its aggressive growth can quickly outcompete native plants, leading to a loss of biodiversity and destabilizing the soil, which can increase erosion and negatively impact water quality. Recognizing and controlling this plant is crucial for maintaining the health of our lake.



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Identifying and Understanding Japanese Knotweed

Japanese knotweed has several key features that make it easy to identify. It has bamboo-like stems that are hollow and green with reddish-purple speckles, and it can grow up to 10 feet tall. The leaves are broad and heart-shaped, and the plant produces small, creamy-white flowers in late summer. Its root system, known as a rhizome, is extensive and can spread over 20 feet horizontally and 10 feet deep, making it incredibly difficult to remove.

Control Methods: A Multi-Year Effort

Controlling Japanese knotweed requires persistence and a multi-year strategy. While it's tempting to simply cut it down, this often stimulates growth and can even spread the plant further if the cuttings are not properly disposed of.

- Herbicide Application:** This is the most effective method for controlling knotweed. A professional should apply a systemic herbicide directly to the leaves or inject it into the stems. This is typically done in late summer or early fall when the plant is directing nutrients to its roots, ensuring the herbicide is transported to the entire root system.
- Digging and Removal:** For small infestations, digging up the entire plant, including every piece of the rhizome, is an option. This is a labor-intensive process, and any fragments left behind can regenerate. All plant material must be carefully bagged and disposed of as yard waste, not composted.
- Professional Help:** For larger or well-established patches, it is highly recommended to contact a professional invasive species removal company. They have the expertise and equipment to ensure the plant is eradicated without causing further spread. Please contact the Northwest Conservation District for more resources and help if you think you have Japanese knotweed on your property. Or contact Christian Allyn, founder of Invasive Plant Solutions (860.824.7900) or The Town of Winchester Conservation Commission <https://www.townofwinchester.org/entities/conservation-commission-4>.

By working together to control the spread of Japanese knotweed, we can protect our lake's natural beauty and ensure a healthy environment for future generations.

Own Your Own Wake

The fastest way to make the wrong kinds of waves is to literally throw a big, obtrusive wave at another boat, swimmer, angler or shoreline owner. This is much more than being a nuisance or disrupting others' experience on the water. It's dangerous to those unable to tolerate a large wake.

Boats throwing a big wake should stay in the middle of the lake and don't keep going back and forth in the same area.

Learn more about responsible wakes at <https://wakeresponsibly.com/>.



Lake Inspired

by Gail Hoxie

The Gift of the Lake

Sapphire in the sun

*Blue haven for fish and ducks and blue heron
Gliding on top of you on a warm September day
My dreams have come true
The yellow pontoon goes around the perimeter
And nothing can compare to this
My infinite immersion in my
ultimate Christmas gift to me
Love, Gail Hoxie Christmas, 2024*

"Ed, she's still not sleeping so I guess we have to take her for a ride around the lake."

"OK kiddo. Wrap her up in a blanket, though - it's chilly and my heater is not working that well in the truck." Agnes checked on young Ed who was 12 and Joan who was 10 and left a note that they were taking Gail for a ride to help her get to sleep.

Not far into the elliptical journey around Highland Lake, little Gail began to get drowsy and snuggled up with her mom and fell fast asleep,

That was back in 1944 when Gail was born. In the years that followed, Ed and Agnes used to go around the lake for pure recreation. Dad would say, "Hey kiddos, wanna go for a ride around the lake?" Gail would be the first one to jump into the kitchen and say "I do, I do."

In the name of transparency, I need to confess that I am Gail and it's 80 years later since that ride beginning in 1944 which continues every Sunday now in 2025, thanks to my daughter, Kris, and granddaughter, Shannon, who graciously chariot me around my beautiful Highland Lake every Sunday. It changes so much day to day, month to month, season to season, and always it is in the center of my existence.

I love my Highland Lake. I have written poetry to it and about it, and I will share more of that in a bit.

My brother and sister were 12 years older and 10 years older respectively than I and already had begun to swim and congregate and gather with their friends at Highland Lake when I arrived. I benefitted from their swimming expertise. My sister, Joan, took me faithfully to what is now Holland Beach and taught me how to swim. I have a picture of me in the little cove with my arm outstretched. Of course, I really didn't know how to swim at age four, but I was showing off for her. I learned how to swim and have loved Highland Lake so much in every regard. I have skied on it. I have operated a boat on it. I have my boating license thanks to Northwestern CT Community College and, in general, I have a focal point in my yard. I live across from Stew Jones' Jaguar garage and I get to see my beautiful lake every single day and marvel at the beauty of it. The thrill of it has never left me. And in my poetry which I referenced - I will share with you this love letter to the lake. You'll see how deeply Highland Lake has touched me and how much I love it.

I used to roller skate at Woodland Park, which I now believe has been converted to the boat launch. There was a tall diving board there. I don't know how I did it now as I look back on it, but I did jump from that skyscraper diving board, but I never dove from it. I witnessed some beautiful divers and some beautiful dives off of that huge board.

So many years passed and, as I recall, not a single week went by without some immersion in the lake or around the lake.

And last year, for my 80th birthday, my family and I rented one of the big yellow pontoon boats from Winsted Marina and my son-in-law Don piloted the boat in a rental tour. We went around the lake maybe twice because it's a good way around.

It was a beautiful, beautiful September day as only some September days can be - the sky was brilliant, cerulean blue, and the lake matched it perfectly. Our day was spectacular and the water was gentle and lapped around the comfortable pontoon boat. We saw the blue heron and ducks. They tolerated us and even celebrated my 80th birthday. I will share now more of the poetry that I've been promising and I hope you enjoy it. I know it has been a great joy for me all of these years to be a part of my Highland Lake.

Back in the mid-1990s a musical group from the Andes performed at Northwestern CT Community College. Pan flutes and beautiful guitars played wonderful music just downtown from the lake. I was so thrilled with the music I bought a cassette, "Andes Manta," and played it near Resha beach

And the Waters Danced

I gave the lake a gift

After all the ones she's given me

Parked against the barrier

I rolled the windows down

And turned full up the volume

While the cassette slowly unwound

Ancient wooden flutes and drums

Played by Indians of the South

Black-haired calm ones

With true wisdom in their souls

Atlantis in the Andes with

Compassion for the chaos in the world

Sweet, chilling flute trills and a rain stick

Rippled out across the water

Shivers of joy fled across the surface as the ancient songs united with the water

And the waters danced in such a way

That I knew my gift was welcome

The wind carried sound waves

Through the water waves

And wind smoothed fleeting patches

Drew the birds around in circles

And my heart danced not only to the music but to the joy I brought the lake

like hearing church bells ring when the sky is full of rainbows

And in final tribute to the lake, I give you:

The Sun-Kissed Bride

*From a plane it looks like melted silver
The sun upon the lake. From here across the street
it looks like a mirror with no blue.*

*The sun changes all one way or another for good or for bad,
in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, til death they part
and probably not even then.*

*The sun and the lake are wed
maybe not blissfully but certainly beautifully
the lake is the sun-kissed bride
And we are all invited to the wedding
whenever the radiant sun shines and merges with
our glorious lake.*

New Board Members

Chris Chinnock

Chris and his wife, Linda, have been on the lake since 2019. With an engineering background, Chris first worked in aerospace before founding his consulting company in 1998 with a focus on advanced display technology. Along the way, he helped co-found and manage two nonprofit trade organizations, managed conferences and training events, published newsletters and market reports, plus custom consulting. In addition to the HLWA Board of Directors, he volunteers with the marketing group for the display industry's major technical organization.

Carol Josefek: From French Literature to Tech Leadership to HLWA Treasurer

Carol and her husband, Rick Josefek, found their perfect home on Highland Lake in 2019. Initially a seasonal retreat, the house was purchased to be a central meeting place for their four adult children and nine grandchildren. In 2022, the couple retired to focus on renovating the property into a year-round residence. The arrival of their youngest grandchild that March also motivated Carol to be more available for babysitting. By 2023, they had made the permanent move to Winsted, Connecticut, from their former home in Monson, Massachusetts.

Carol's career path is a testament to her adaptability and lifelong learning. After graduating from Mount Holyoke College in 1985 with a BA in French Literature, she immediately began a 37-year career in technology at MassMutual. While her degrees might seem like they are from contrasting fields, Carol found a strong parallel between mastering spoken and written languages and learning coding languages. Over her career, she advanced through numerous Information Technology departments, lending her expertise to areas such as Information Security, Human Resources, and Financial Services. While working, she continued her education, earning an MBA from Western New England College in 1996. In 2021, Empower acquired MassMutual's Retirement Services, and Carol worked on the technology transition for Investments. Her career journey began with punch cards and concluded with Amazon Web Services, showcasing her ability to evolve with the ever-changing technological landscape.

Today, Carol finds joy in hosting family and friends on the lake, creating cherished memories similar to the ones she has of her

own family gatherings on Congamond Lake in Southwick, Massachusetts. She enjoys a variety of hobbies, including knitting, sewing, and using her Cricut machine for new projects. She also loves to cook, trying out new recipes while also preserving familiar family favorites. Carol and Rick share a passion for travel and geocaching, and they look forward to placing new geocaches in their new hometown of Winsted.

HLWA Spring Cleanup, May 3



Mix and Mingle, June 6



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The background of this section is a dark, industrial setting with several large, vertical metal brewing tanks. The logo for Little Red Barn Brewers is centered in the upper half, featuring a barn icon above the text. Below the logo, a white rectangular box contains the text 'YOUR COMMUNITY BREWERY'. At the bottom, the address and website are listed.

Annual Meeting, July 12



Movie Night, August 9



Boat Parade, July 26



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Annual Membership Application

The Highland Lake Watershed Association is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of Highland Lake and its watershed. Your membership (and additional donation) supports the important work of protecting our beautiful lake.

Annual Membership Dues:	\$ <u>50</u>	Jan 1 – Dec 31
Additional Donations:		
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150
<input type="checkbox"/> \$200	\$ _____	Surprise us!
	\$ _____	Total enclosed
<input type="checkbox"/> My employer will match my gift		

(Dues and donations to HLWA qualify for IRS consideration as a contribution to a charitable organization and may be tax deductible)

Please make checks payable to: Highland Lake Watershed Association (HLWA) or
Venmo us: @HighlandLakeWatershedAssociation

Mail application to: HLWA, P.O. Box 1022, Winsted, CT 06098-1022



Membership Information

Name(s): _____

Lake Address:

Mailing address has changed

Mailing Address: _____

Do you want the summer newsletter mailed to your lake address? Yes No

Preferred Phone: (____) _____

Email: _____

Volunteers are the backbone of HLWA. We need you!

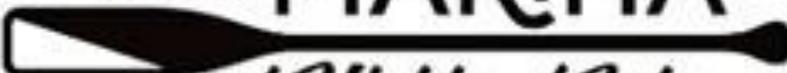
Yes I want to volunteer. <input type="checkbox"/> Please have someone contact me (check all that apply)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Become an HLWA Director	<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome new residents	<input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup campaigns
<input type="checkbox"/> Steward HLWA-owned land	<input type="checkbox"/> Write a newsletter article	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan social activities
(Application is also available on our website www.hlwa.org)		

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Contact – Mark Twiss – 860-778-3297

CT PLM #0287140-J3 – DWBT.204822



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Nancy Reardon

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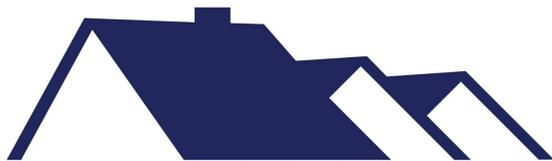
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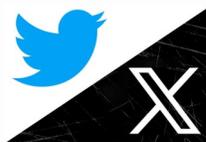
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