



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

Spring/Summer

2026

President's Message *by Candy Perez*



First and foremost, thank you for your membership and your continued care for Highland Lake.

I am writing to you as spring finally begins to emerge from an incredibly stubborn winter. To ensure our entire community is informed and engaged, we are sending this spring newsletter to every resident on the lake and throughout the surrounding neighborhood.

As a recent Hartford Courant article highlighted, our lake is truly a gem. Throughout the year, our Board of Directors remains active behind the scenes - attending conferences on water quality and invasive aquatic plants to stay ahead of emerging challenges. Our volunteers dedicate countless hours to water testing, collaborating with professional limnologists, organizing community events, and advocating for our lake with town and state officials.

This work is fueled by your support. Because we are all impacted by the health and clarity of the water, as water has no boundaries, we hope you will join us in keeping Highland Lake one of the best lakes. You can make a difference today by renewing your membership and through your continued personal stewardship of our shoreline. Please attend our annual meeting on July 11 at 9:00 a.m. at the Franciscan Center, 32 Oak Street, and our Mix & Mingle at Little Red Barn June 5, 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Our mission has always been to protect the water that defines our community. Our lake's narrow geography makes it a special place, but it also means our shoreline is more sensitive. We've seen the struggles of neighboring lakes like Bantam with persistent blue-green algae, and we must work together to avoid that same fate. Beyond the beauty of our shoreline, consider the value of your home. Protecting our water quality is the most important thing we can do to protect your financial investment and our way of life. We have been fortunate all these years with our water quality, but we see the lake changing. We see it in the eroding shorelines and the "hardened" waterfronts necessitated by rising wakes. We see it when leaves and grass clippings and picking up after your dog - simple things - are intentionally or without thought entering into the water, fueling algae and more plants. We spend a tremendous amount of time and money testing, treating, and learning to protect the waters while a few are negating it for everyone - we'd much rather be celebrating it. With just a few small, mindful actions by everyone, we can ensure the lake remains as vibrant for the next generation as it is for us.

Among our pressing issues is the rise of large boats capable of throwing "ocean-like" waves while surfing or touring. We know our neighbors hold passionate views on both sides of this issue. While the state legislature has not taken formal action, we are imploring our boating community to follow these essential guidelines:

Stay in the Middle of the Bays: It takes over 900 feet for a large wake to dissipate to the size of a standard boat wake. **Avoid Shallow Coves:** Research shows that large wakes in shallow areas stir up bottom sediment, releasing nutrients into the water column - literally "feeding" the cyanobacteria and plants we want to avoid. **Adjust Your Trim:** If you are simply touring the lake, please adjust your trim to create a shallower, less disruptive wake.

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

President's Message (cont.)

Please respect that boats over 22 feet (30 feet for pontoons) are prohibited to prevent excessive wake damage and safety of other recreation activities such as kayaking, floating with friends, paddleboarding, fishing, etc. When near the shore, docks, or anchored boats, please maintain Slow-No-Wake speeds (100 feet for motorboats; 200 feet for PWCs). To keep our Sunday evenings peaceful, the 6 MPH limit begins at 5:00 p.m., and a weekend/holiday cap of 45 MPH remains in effect. These aren't just rules; they are the "good neighbor" policy that keeps our community thriving.

We must find a way to balance our waterfronts and recreational activities we love with the conservation efforts the lake desperately needs. One action by itself may seem small but strung together they have an impact. If all of us don't help, a new headline a few years from today could easily read: "What Happened to Highland Lake?"

We wish everyone a great summer with perfect weather, good friends, and kids screaming in delight!

Laurel Ridge Update

The Winchester Land Trust and its team of volunteers continue to mark out property boundaries (see pictures) and plan out a trail network throughout the property, primarily along existing forest roads. Stayed tuned for upcoming volunteer opportunities for trail development! The Land Trust has two hikes planned for CT Trail Days on June 6. Find out more at this link for two great chances to explore the property: <https://trailsday.org/?city=winchester>

There is still time to support the Laurel Ridge project. By donating today, you play a vital role in stewarding our land and maintaining our trails for years to come. To join our circle of founding donors, please email us at hlwa@hlwa.org, and a member of our team will reach out to discuss your gift.



Check out the Updated Property Owners Guide!

by Denise Pratt and Carol Josefek

We have worked hard this winter to update the Highland Lake Property Owners Guide. We are pleased to announce the new guide is available! This guide is provided to all new members of HLWA as a part of their welcome packet. Some of the information the guide contains:



- Our mission and what we do
- Interesting facts about Highland Lake
- Lake-friendly tips
- Local contact information
- Boating and PWC regulations and safety

The Property Owners Guide can be found on our website (www.hlwa.org) homepage under "Important Links." Help us preserve Highland Lake while having a *fun and safe summer!*

We are actively seeking someone interested in helping manage our newsletter and advertiser relations. If you have a passion for communication and community and are interested in being a board member, please email us at hlwa@hlwa.org.

A Note from the Inlands Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

by Mary Ann Marino

The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (IWWC) is an important resource for Winchester. It is comprised of nine members who ensure the IWWC regulations are met by residents when doing work in the watershed review areas. The IWWC meets the third Thursday of each month in the Hicks Room on the second floor of Town Hall.

Watershed areas are those areas that drain water to a specific waterbody. While all dry land is a watershed area, certain watersheds are more sensitive than others. Generally speaking, watersheds adjacent to lakes and ponds are an important component to the makeup of the water that enters those lakes and ponds and good stewardship of those areas is important to protecting the water quality. The Connecticut Clean Water Act was established in 1967 in an effort to protect and preserve all waterbodies and watercourses, including their tributaries and wetlands.

The IWWC oversees all work within and directly adjacent to wetland areas in order to ensure best practices are being employed for the health of the wetlands and waterbodies. This Commission is charged with carrying out the requirements within the Clean Water Act. In addition to work within a watercourse, waterbody, or wetland, the IWWC also has oversight and requires permits for work done within the Upland Review Area. An Upland Review Area is a defined area outside of and adjacent to wetlands and watercourses designed to assist the agency to better protect the wetland or watercourse. The intention is to ensure best management practices are used during construction projects so silt, sediments, nutrients, and other debris are kept from entering these natural resources.

If your property lies within an Upland Review Area, you will need to apply for a wetland permit for activities on your property which require soil excavation or installing an impervious surface on the property. There are no specific exclusions from what you can do on your property, but the IWWC will ensure you are using the best possible techniques during construction to protect the health of our wetlands, watercourses, the lake and surrounding property values. In Winchester, the Upland Review area is currently defined as 100 feet from a watercourse or waterbody and 75 feet from a wetland.

Furthermore, in Winchester, the Planning and Zoning Commission has established the "Highland Lake Zone" which is made up of properties directly fronting and surrounding Highland Lake. If your property is near Highland Lake, it likely lies within the Highland Lake Zone and is subject to extra protections intended to protect the water quality of the lake, and therefore your property values.

If you plan to do any work within 100 feet of Winchester's waterbodies or waterways, or 75 feet from any wetland areas, or areas you suspect may be wetlands, please reach out to the Land Use Office so we can guide you in the permitting process.

How to reach out to the Land Use Office:

In Person: 338 Main Street Winsted, CT 06098 - 2nd floor

By Phone: 860.379.3818

By Email: Inlandwetlands@townofwinchester.org

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

Stephen Molinelli (Chair), Russell Davenport (Vice Chair), Jeffrey Lippincott (Secretary)

Commissioners: Gary Paganelli, Mary Ann Marino, Matt Closson, Kevin Burgio, Jamie Coligan, Frank Oliveri

Selectman Liaison: William Hester

Taylor Brook Thermal Refuge Fishing Closure

by Willie Platt

Starting July 1, 2026, a new fishing regulation takes effect in Connecticut specifically to protect native brook trout populations during the hottest months of the year.



- **Regulation Summary:** Taylor Brook Thermal Refuge
- **Location:** The mouth of Taylor Brook (where it meets Highland Lake).
- **Restriction:** No fishing allowed.
- **Closure Dates:** July 1 through October 15 (annually).

Purpose: To provide a sanctuary for trout. During the summer, Highland Lake's surface water becomes too warm for trout survival. Cold-water tributaries like Taylor Brook create "plumes" of cool water that trout congregate in to survive the heat. Closing these areas to fishing prevents "thermal stress" and overharvesting of fish that are already struggling to breathe and stay cool.

Why was this added?

This is part of a broader 2026 initiative by the Connecticut DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) to combat a 37% decline in native brook trout. *Other related changes in the 2026 guide include a 9-inch minimum length - a new statewide minimum length for trout (unless otherwise posted).*

Other Thermal Refuges in CT

While the Taylor Brook closure is new for 2026, similar refuges exist elsewhere, most notably on the Housatonic River at the mouths of Kent Falls Brook and Macedonia Brook. (Note: These specific Housatonic refuges typically close earlier, from June 15 to September 15).

If you are planning to fish Highland Lake this summer, be sure to stay clear of the posted signs at the Taylor Brook confluence to avoid a fine.

Twin Lakes' Struggle With Hydrilla and Lessons to be Learned

by Betty Martin

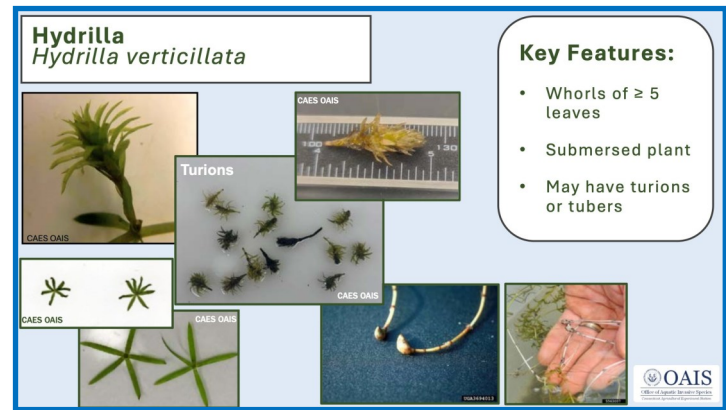
Twin Lakes is located in Salisbury, CT and is an 846-acre lake system. It has an association (TLA) whose mission is similar to ours: to preserve and enhance the general welfare, natural resources, environment, attractions, quality and ecology of the lake and its watershed and to promote the civic, social, and recreational activities of the community. This past January the Connecticut Federation of Lakes (CFL) hosted a webinar to share TLA's multi-year battle against the Connecticut river strain of hydrilla, which is an aggressive invasive plant threatening recreation, ecology, and local budgets. The session aimed to share practical lessons learned, highlight successes and setbacks, and outline a path forward for other lake associations facing similar risks. Speakers included TLA leadership, limnologists, and environmental engineers who collectively emphasized early detection, rapid response, and coalition-based management.

Hydrilla was first detected in Twin Lakes in June 2023, confirmed genetically soon after, and treated late in the season due to permitting delays and endangered-species constraints. Initial efforts focused on a small marina area but failed to contain the plant's spread. In 2024, managers attempted repeated spot treatments using fluridone (SONAR), but hydrodynamics and dilution prevented maintaining effective herbicide concentrations. New hydrilla discoveries including deeper and offshore beds revealed hydrilla had likely been present for several years before detection. By the end of 2024, TLA concluded spot treatments were insufficient and a whole-bay strategy was needed.

In 2025, TLA shifted to a sustained, whole-bay fluridone program ("Sentinel" approach). The goal was to maintain 3–5 ppb fluridone for 90–120 days, achieved through five applications from May to August. Intensive monitoring involved 171 samples across 14 events and confirmed concentrations remained within the target range for most of the season. Field surveys showed dramatically reduced hydrilla presence, and by late October, no hydrilla could be found anywhere in the lake. Despite this success, experts stressed hydrilla's detectability is imperfect and long-term vigilance is essential.

The review highlighted the complexity of Connecticut's permitting process, especially when endangered species, wells, or state-owned land are involved. Although hydrilla permits are often expedited, applicants must prepare ownership lists, Natural Diversity Database reviews, and water-supply documentation in advance. Financially, the shift from routine lake management to hydrilla suppression was dramatic. Annual costs rose from roughly \$52,500 pre-infestation to about \$340,000 in 2025. TLA, a volunteer-run nonprofit, relied on donations, town support, and grants to sustain the effort. TLA's costs since identifying hydrilla skyrocketed to almost \$1,000,000 in the 3 years since detection.

The key takeaways for HLWA and other lake associations include the importance of prevention, the need for professional monitoring, and the reality that early strategies may need to evolve as new information emerges. Large infestations require long-duration, area-wide herbicide exposure rather than piecemeal treatments. Public engagement is essential



for both funding and acceptance of management tools. Looking ahead, TLA plans to continue low-dose SONAR treatments in East Bay, maintain intensive monitoring, and gradually scale back treatment if suppression holds. CFL encouraged other lake associations to strengthen surveillance, build partnerships, and prepare permitting materials proactively. As members of HLWA, **we all need to be actively involved and do all we can to educate boaters on the huge risk of Hydrilla and other invasive species which may be spread from fishing and recreational boats.**

Why Lead Sinkers Hurt Hawks and Eagles

by Greg Kyrtschenko

Lead fishing sinkers may seem small, but they can cause serious harm to wildlife. When a sinker breaks off or is left behind in the water, birds can accidentally ingest it. Fish-eating birds and scavengers like hawks and eagles are especially vulnerable because they may eat fish that already contain lead tackle or feed on contaminated prey. Lead is a powerful toxin, and even a tiny amount can cause illness, weakness, or death in birds.



The danger is not just direct ingestion. Lead can move up the food chain when a bird eats a fish or animal that has swallowed lead tackle. In raptors, lead poisoning can damage the nervous system, reduce hunting ability, and make birds more likely to die of starvation, injury, or predation. Wildlife groups warn that a single small lead sinker can be enough to kill a bird

Better Alternatives

The good news is safer alternatives are easy to find. Anglers can switch to sinkers made from tin, steel, bismuth, ceramic, or tungsten alloys instead of lead. Tungsten is popular because it is dense and compact, while steel and tin are often cheaper options. If your local shop does not carry lead-free tackle, ask for it - consumer demand helps expand availability

Simple Takeaway

If you fish, choosing lead-free sinkers is one of the easiest ways to help protect hawks, eagles, loons, and other wildlife. A small change in tackle can prevent a big problem for birds that depend on clean waterways.

Let's do our part to help protect the lake!

The Flood of '55: The Night that Changed Winsted – Part 2

by Benjamin Cruson, MLIS; Local History & Genealogy Librarian at the Beardsley & Memorial Library

As the flood waters began to recede, the true extent of the damage to Winsted became apparent. Main Street looked like a war zone. The street itself was gone; covered with broken slabs of concrete, jagged splinters of wood, and crumpled balls of metal that had once been cars. Of the buildings that once enclosed both sides of the street, the ones that stood on the north side contained hollowed out shells where they once had restaurants and storefronts. The ones on the south side were either precariously perched on half-vanished foundations or were washed away all together. One building on the corner of Bridge Street and Main had been picked up, rotated 45 degrees, and then dropped back down on its foundation.

As residents and shop owners returned to Main Street to see what remained of their lives and livelihoods, they were watched by National Guardsmen patrolling the ruined city with loaded rifles - authorized to shoot anybody they saw trying to loot what remained. The National Guard had been on site since the height of the flood performing rescues of stranded residents. With helicopters and amphibious vehicles, they were essential to rescuing people who were still trapped in half-submerged homes. They set up relief stations at Highland Lake and at Central School (now Pearson School) where food, water and shelter were available for any who needed it. Typhoid shots were also made available in the hope they might save residents from one of several diseases they might contract from the sewage-soaked ruins of Main Street.

Main Street was not the only site of destruction. Winsted had effectively been cut in half by the flooding of both the Mad and Still Rivers. Up on North Main Street, the office building for the Gilbert Clock Company had an entire corner of the three-story brick building knocked off by the debris-riddled flood waters. Up near the Fairchild Company, the Noel family watched their house - and the foundation underneath it - get swept away by the Still River.

But as disastrous as the flood had been along the rivers, many who lived only a block or two away had no idea anything had happened. Like many, Manny LeShay, who owned the cigar store (now Winsted News Co.) down on Main Street, woke up in his home on Wallens Hill on the morning of the 19th and prepared to go to work like any other day. Leaving his house in the dim light of the early morning, he could see the bridge across the Still River was covered with water, but he assumed the bridge was intact underneath and he decided to drive across it. What he did not realize was the bridge was completely gone. He drove right into the river, where his car was swept away and he was drowned inside it.

Other victims of the flood included Concettina Zappula, who was killed when the flood washed away the house she refused

to leave on South Main Street, and Mary Marchione, who drowned when the boat rescuing her hit a bridge and capsized. William Samele, age 56, was killed when he went into a building near the bottom of Chestnut Street to help an elderly neighbor. Shortly after he entered the building, it collapsed. Sinclair Meggison was staying at the Hotel Clifton near the bottom of Bridge Street and took it upon himself early in the night to urge everyone in the hotel to evacuate before the flood got too bad. He succeeded but inexplicably went back to bed himself on the fourth floor. His remains - and the remains of the building - were found a couple days later on Rowley Field.

Perhaps the most tragic was John Gould. He was a 28-year-old trucker who put his truck to good use by driving it through the flood waters to rescue those trapped on Main Street. Using the hill on Bridge Street as a drop-off point, he made several trips in and out of danger, but on his last trip to seek out more refugees, the Bridge Street bridge gave way underneath his vehicle. He and his truck were swept away. He was credited with rescuing more than twenty people that day. He left behind a wife and four young children.

Lives and families were not the only things irreparably changed by the flood. The disaster presented the State of Connecticut with an opportunity to solve the longstanding traffic problems that plagued Winsted's narrow Main Street. With the buildings on the south side of the street almost universally destroyed or catastrophically compromised, the state decided to kill two birds with one stone. They offered to purchase all the land between Main Street and the Mad River, providing financial relief to the people most impacted and giving the state the opportunity to widen Main Street to cover the now vacant lots. The result was Main Street as we see it today with buildings on only one side and with eastbound traffic rolling over land that once held homes and businesses.

It took years for Main Street to recover. Three years later, with Main Street still unpaved and wooden boardwalks lining the streets where the sidewalks were still missing, causing many to say Winsted looked like a frontier town. This inspired "Frontier Days" – a western-themed day of entertaining events designed to turn the ongoing unpleasantness of the flood's aftermath into a fun and relaxing diversion. It worked, but it was only temporary. After the festivities had ended, the work continued of rebuilding and getting used to a new Winsted that would never quite thrive again as it once had.

Although much of Connecticut was hit by flooding, Winsted had garnered particular attention. The scale of destruction was on a level seldom seen in this part of the country, and efforts to ensure it would never happen again began immediately. Within the next couple decades, dry dams were built on the Mad River and Sucker Brook to control overflow into the Mad River and Highland Lake, respectively. These projects made sure the flood would not be repeated, but for many across the state, the name of Winsted will forever be connected with the Flood of 1955.



A view of Main Street after demolition of the ruined buildings and before the street was widened



Main Street looking past the end of Elm Street toward St. Joseph Church.



The washed-out remains of the bridge at the bottom of Lake Street



The destruction along the Mad River as seen from around Bridge Street looking toward St. Joseph's Church

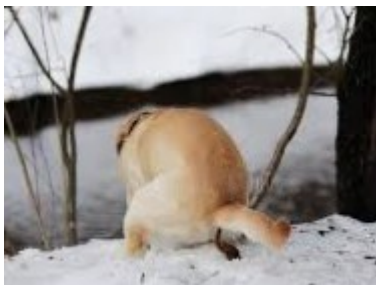
It's Your Doo-ty to Pick It Up

by Denise Pratt

Here are a few good reasons why you should pick up your dog waste.

- **Toxic** - It is not "natural" fertilizer. Dog waste is toxic to soil and local water.
- **Contamination** - A single gram of dog waste can contain 23 million bacteria.
- **Algae Blooms** - dog waste is high in nitrogen and phosphorus. These excess nutrients fuel toxic algae growth, which depletes oxygen in the water. Loss of oxygen can lead to fish kills.
- **Runoff** - Most people don't realize that waste left in the woods or on the streets can make its way into our lake via rain storms and drains.

Please help us keep the lake clean by placing dog waste in a trash can.



HLWA received a donation from United Way of Salt Lake City, Utah. Unfortunately, the organization was unable to let us know whom the donation was from.

If this was from you, please let us know by sending an email to treasurer@hlwa.org so we can properly thank you!

Protecting Our Waters: CFL and OAIS Join Forces to Tackle Invasive Species

by Candy Perez

Connecticut's lakes are more than just scenic landscapes; they are delicate ecosystems currently facing a "revolving door" of ecological threats. To address these challenges, the **Connecticut Federation of Lakes (CFL)** recently teamed up with the **Office of Aquatic Invasive Species (OAIS)** - a division of the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) - for a vital informational session titled, "**Know Your Waterbodies' Native Plants!**"

The meeting served as a powerful collaborative hub for lake associations across the state to voice shared concerns and brainstorm-actionable solutions.

A Comprehensive Strategy for Lake Health

The discussion moved quickly from plant identification to the logistical hurdles of lake management. Key topics on the table included:

- **Innovative Monitoring:** Utilizing boat launch camera data and painting "Clean, Drain, Dry" stencils at all state ramps to reinforce boater responsibility.
- **Funding & Policy:** Exploring whether fishing tournament permits or AIS stamp fees could be better leveraged to support boat inspection programs.
- **Physical Deterrents:** Marking hydrilla populations with buoys or flags to help boaters avoid infested zones, and the potential for more boat wash/decontamination stations.
- **Support & Logistics:** Navigating the hurdles of hiring AIS inspectors, liability insurance for associations, and exploring ways for local groups to reimburse CT DEEP for state seasonal inspectors.

Direct Dialogue with CT DEEP

Following this session, a follow-up meeting was coordinated with three **CT DEEP** staff members. This gave lake advocates a rare opportunity to voice concerns directly to state officials.

While organizations like the CFL, OAIS, and the Highland Lake Watershed Association (HLWA) have become experts at identifying and managing invasive crops, a significant gap remains: **monitoring and enforcement**. Without consistent oversight at both public and private launches, our lakes remain vulnerable to "hitchhiking" species. As the saying goes, "*it only takes one*" to trigger an infestation that can cost thousands of dollars and years of labor to manage.

How You Can Help

We all have a role to play in keeping our waters pristine. If you are a boat owner who enjoys visiting different lakes, your diligence is our best line of defense.

- **Practice "Clean, Drain, Dry":** Ensure your boat, trailer, and gear are completely free of debris and moisture before coming on to Highland Lake.
- **Be a Watchdog:** If you spot what you believe to be hydrilla or any other invasive plant, please report it immediately.
- **Report Sightings:** Contact us at hlwa@hlwa.org with a description and location of the suspected invasive species.

Together, we can close the door on invasive species and ensure our native plants - and our lakes - continue to thrive.



Winchester Police Marine Patrol will hold a Boating Safety Day on May 9



The purpose of this event is to provide guidance on inland boating laws, boating safety practices, and regulatory requirements for watercraft operating on Connecticut waterways.

Throughout the event, our officers will be available to answer questions, distribute informational literature, and conduct courtesy "pull-through" safety inspections for boaters in preparation for the upcoming peak boating season. In addition, the Winchester Police Marine Patrol will offer brief ride-alongs, demonstrations, and guidance on safe navigation of Highland Lake.

We also have confirmation a representative from the State of Connecticut State Environmental Conservation Police "DEEP," will be attending.

Event Details

Date: Saturday, May 9, 2026

Rain Date: Saturday, May 16, 2026

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Connecticut State Boat Launch and parking area at Highland Lake, Winchester, Connecticut.

May 30 Inaugural 50/50 Poker Run

by Carol & Rick Josefek

The Highland Lake Watershed Association (HLWA) offers an afternoon of fun on the lake with our inaugural 50/50 Poker Run on Saturday, May 30, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m..

Before moving to Highland Lake, Rick and I were seasonal residents at Lake Manchaug in Douglas, MA for many years. Our favorite activity sponsored by the Manchaug Pond Foundation was the 50/50 Poker Run. A Poker Run is a game of chance where you form a five-card poker hand by visiting five different dock locations on the lake via boat. We would gather six to eight of our friends into our pontoon boat and have a great time participating.

How It Works

Buy Your Scorecards: To join the fun, you will need to purchase official scorecards for \$20 each. Each card features a grid with 13 rows (2 through Ace) and four columns (one for each suit). Most participants choose to play one or two cards to increase their odds!

POKER RUN SCORE CARD				
	♥	♠	♦	♣
A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Navigate the Lake:** There are five designated dock locations along the shores of the lake. You can visit them in any order, with the exception of the first stop which will be the dock at 104 Shore Drive, near Resha beach. Look for the red and black balloons at each dock stop!
- Draw Your Cards:** At each dock, you'll pick one playing card. A volunteer will record your draw on your purchased scorecard and on a master sheet the dock location will maintain. If you pick a duplicate (one you've already drawn at a previous stop), you will draw again.
- Complete the Hand:** Once you've visited all five locations, you'll have a full five-card poker hand.

After all boats have completed docking for the final time, we'll tally the results. The three highest hands split 50% of the pot (1st = 25%, 2nd = 15%, 3rd = 10%). Winners will be notified by phone that evening.

So gather your favorite people onto your boat for an afternoon of fun on the water! All are welcome to participate. Anyone interested in volunteering to help out that day, please contact us at hlwa@hlwa.org.



Plant Management Update

We are currently awaiting our permits and treatment plans for the upcoming season. Following the long winter drawdown, our partners will conduct an early-season survey to assess the lake's needs in June. Based on what is discovered after the long winter drawdown will guide treatment plans if needed. We will inform our members through email when we know more.

We understand the concerns regarding herbicides; please be assured that our limnologist partners are extremely conservative in their recommendations to the Town. We only recommend what is absolutely necessary to maintain the health of the ecosystem.

(Please see our Winter 2025 newsletter for a more detailed article on plant management.)



Our Back 40

Our own back 40 - our luscious lake - our solace

Our private boundary defining heaven and earth

Immersed in summer waters -

Swimming with our friends

We are part of the beautiful gem

It changes and so do we

but the visual technicolor feasts remain

and we are more than grateful

The back 40 is after all, a part of us

Written by Gail Hoxie

The “Buffer Bill”: What You Need to Know

by Denise Pratt

What Is Going On?

Legislation was passed on June 24, 2025, to establish and protect riparian buffers in Connecticut - it's called HB 7174 An Act Concerning Riparian Buffers and Associated Environmental Provisions. Riparian buffers are vegetated zones of trees, shrubs, and grasses along waterways that act as natural filters and stabilizers.

What Does HB 7174 Do?

Among its key provisions, HB 7174 incorporates the protection of riparian buffers into Connecticut's laws. Connecticut is the last New England state without explicit protections for riparian buffers.

Why Is this Important?

Riparian buffers are the simplest, most efficient tool to achieve goals of protecting landowners and communities from extreme weather and improving water quality.

What Can I Do?

Keep reading to learn what riparian buffers are and why they are important. Introduce native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. Check out University of Connecticut's *Connecticut Native Perennial, Tree & Shrub Availability List*.



Benefits of Buffers

1. **Provide Shade and Habitat** - Buffers and the woody debris they produce provide food and shelter for birds, mammals and amphibians. Buffers help keep waters cool.
2. **Prevent Erosion** - The roots of riparian plants, especially trees and shrubs, hold soil in place, preventing erosion. Buffers are an effective and relatively low-cost way for riparian landowners to slow their property loss due to erosion.
3. **Protect Water Quality** - Buffers protect water quality by trapping and filtering out pollutants in stormwater runoff before they reach our waterways.



Do You Know How To Be Bear Smart?

What is being *Bear Smart*? Since we live with bears in our backyards, we need to understand what we can do to help keep them safe and wild and let them know that we respect them and are working hard to co-exist. What can we do to live safely with Black Bears?

Respect the Bears and Help Keep Them Wild!

- 🐾 Respect bears, give them distance
- 🐾 Take down bird feeders in early Spring
- 🐾 Store garbage where bears can't get to it (if bears are near, mask it with ammonia)
- 🐾 On trash day, put garbage out in the morning
- 🐾 Clean off your barbecue grill grease and drip pans after cooking out
- 🐾 Put coins in a coffee can and shake it when wild animals are in your yard.
- 🐾 Don't feed your pets outdoors (bears can smell an empty dish a mile away)
- 🐾 If a bear comes through your yard, stay inside and enjoy it from a distance
- 🐾 If you are outside and a bear appears, quietly back up and go indoors
- 🐾 Never feed a bear, even if you think it looks hungry—Connecticut has plenty of natural foods for bears, birds and other wildlife
- 🐾 Drive slowly on the roads so you don't hit a bear or any other animal
- 🐾 Consider buying a bear-proof garbage can.
- 🐾 Show us how you can be *Bear Smart*!

Classic Strawberry Shortcake Recipe

by Mary Ann Marino

My birthday is in July and I can hardly remember a celebration that wasn't at Highland Lake. When I was ten years old, I started to request strawberry shortcake for my birthday cake. My Mom started out using an angel food cake layered with strawberries and whipped cream so it would serve all at the party. As I grew a bit older and took an interest in baking, I began to explore various shortbread and shortcake recipes myself. This is the one I have landed on which is my absolute favorite. Strawberry season is short (and delicious) - I hope you all make the most of it!

Yield: 4 generous servings

Ingredients:

- 2 pints ripe, well-rinsed strawberries
- ½ cup sugar, or more to taste
- 4 cups flour
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 5 teaspoons baking powder
- 1¼ cups butter
- 3 cups whipping cream
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

Step 1 Pick over and hull strawberries. Cut in half or slice, depending on size. Gently crush about a quarter of the berries with a fork to release their juices. Mix with remaining berries and the ½ cup of sugar, adding more sugar if necessary. Set aside, covered, for about half an hour to develop flavor.

Step 2

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Step 3

Into a large mixing bowl, sift together flour, 3 tablespoons sugar, salt and baking powder. Add ¾ cup of softened butter, and work into dry ingredients as for pastry. Add 1¼ cups cream, and mix to a **soft** dough. Knead the dough for **one minute** (*Very important: don't overknead or your shortcakes get dense and not fluffy!*) on a lightly floured surface, then roll it out to about ½-inch thickness. Cut an even number of rounds (2 rounds per serving) using a 3-inch biscuit cutter, or simply cut by hand using a 3-inch diameter inverted coffee cup to mark the size.



My 10th birthday, Highland Lake, 3rd Bay, Bristol Cove

Step 4

Use a little of the butter to grease a baking sheet. Place half the rounds on it. Melt remaining butter and brush a little on the rounds; place remaining rounds on top. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes, or until golden brown.

Step 5 Remove from the oven, and pull shortcakes apart. Brush the insides with some of the remaining melted butter. Let the shortcakes cool.

Step 6 Beat remaining cream until it thickens. Add vanilla. Beat again just until thick.

Step 7 Place a bottom half of a shortcake on each plate. Top with a generous spoonful of cream and berries. Cover with a top half, add a few more berries, and top with whipped cream. Serve immediately.

TIP

Extra shortcakes can be frozen and then thawed and warmed before using. They are also good toasted for breakfast or tea with jam or marmalade.

Protecting Our Night Sky

by Terry Platt

Unshielded, upward-pointing, or overly bright exterior lights create a phenomenon known as light pollution. This "sky glow" harms wildlife in several ways:

Disorienting Migratory Birds: Millions of birds migrate at night, navigating by the stars and moon. Bright, upward-facing lights from cities, homes, and skyscrapers can distract them, drawing them off-course and leading to fatal collisions with buildings.

Silencing Fireflies: Fireflies rely on their bioluminescent, glowing abdomens to communicate and attract mates. Bright artificial light drowns out these signals, significantly reducing their ability to reproduce and causing population declines.

How Downward Lights Act as a Solution

Changing how we light our homes can bring the night sky back. "Downward-facing" or shielded lights ensure that light is directed only onto the ground, not up into the atmosphere.

Creating Safe Passage for Birds

By using fully shielded fixtures, homeowners and cities can minimize light pollution, allowing migratory birds to navigate by celestial cues. Studies have shown that when bright, upward-pointing lights are turned off or shielded, bird collisions decrease, and birds are less likely to be trapped and exhausted by city lights.

Supporting Firefly Mating Rituals

Because fireflies spend much of their lives near the ground, pointing lamps downward minimizes the glare that inhibits their blinking, allowing them to see their mates' signals. **Motion sensors are also ideal**, as they allow areas to remain dark when not in use, creating a "firefly-friendly" environment.

Simple Ways to Protect Our Night Sky

Protecting birds and fireflies does not mean living in total darkness. Simple changes can make a significant difference:

➔ **Shield It:** Use fixtures that direct light down, ensuring the bulb is not visible from the side or sky.

➔ **Dim It:** Install motion sensors or timers so lights are only on when necessary.

➔ **Warm It:** Switch to warm-colored LEDs (3000 Kelvin or lower), which are less disorienting to wildlife than harsh, blue-white light.

➔ **Turn It Off:** Turning off non-essential outdoor lights between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., particularly during spring and fall migration, provides the most protection.



By adopting these small changes, we can save energy, save money, and ensure that our night skies remain a sanctuary for both migratory birds and the fireflies that spark wonder in our own backyards.



67th

Highland Lake
Watershed Association

ANNUAL
MEETING

July 11 9:00 am

31 Oak St Franciscan Center

CONTACT US
hlwa@hlwa.org


Spinach Frittata - Philomena's recipe (my mom)

by Gaetana Layton

There's something about recipes passed down from our mothers that makes them more than just food - they become part of the rhythm of home. This spinach frittata, lovingly shared by Philomena and now by Gaetana, is one of those dishes. Simple, hearty, and full of flavor, it's the kind of recipe that shows up at family tables, holiday mornings, or anytime you need something comforting and reliable.

What makes this frittata special isn't just the ingredients - it's the little touches and traditions behind it. A splash of milk "because my mom did," the insistence on real butter (no shortcuts), and the flexibility to make it your own with or without onions or additions. It's rustic, unfussy, and always a crowd-pleaser.

Whether you're enjoying it warm out of the oven or pulling leftovers from the fridge the next day, this dish carries that unmistakable feeling of being made with love - and is meant to be shared.

Ingredients:

- 2 or 3 boxes chopped frozen spinach, defrosted and all water drained out until dry. (I use 3 boxes.)
 - 6 eggs
 - 1 cup seasoned Italian breadcrumbs
 - 1/2 cup Parmesan Romano cheese
 - Black pepper (1/2 to 1 teaspoon)
 - 1 stick butter cut into even slices. (Also, additional butter to grease bottom and sides of pan. No spray oils please.)
 - 3 tbs. milk (Why? Because my mom did. Lol.)
 - 1/2 vidalia onion chopped small, cooked in olive oil and then drained well.
 - About half a bag whole milk mozzarella
1. Mix spinach, eggs, bread crumbs, grated cheese, black pepper and milk all together. Mix very well.
 2. Add onions now as well if you are adding them.
 3. Make sure pan is greased with butter. This frittata does very well in a 9 x13 glass dish. Not sure about metal pan.
 4. Smooth out mixture and place butter slices in the mixture evenly spread out.
 5. Place on 2nd shelf of oven in a 350° preheated oven. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes. It usually takes longer but you must check it with a toothpick to make sure it is completely cooked.
 6. 5 minutes prior to taking it out, place mozzarella all over the top, as much as you like. Watch so the cheese does not burn.
 7. Store in refrigerator.

Note - if you see the sides are golden, it is more than likely done.

Also, some people dip this in their favorite dip too. Some people add cubed meat that is already cooked (we



Lake Cleanup

We will be hosting the Annual Spring Lake Cleanup on May 2 at 9:30 a.m. at the Resha Beach Parking Lot. We will distribute trash bags and assign specific areas before heading out to begin the cleanup. To volunteer, email Greg Kyrtschenko @ gnkyryt@gmail.com.



Mix & Mingle

Friday, June 5
5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Rain or Shine

Please join us at Little Red Barn Brewers for the annual Mix & Mingle. We'll be outside on the rear patio weather permitting; otherwise, indoors. Servers will be available for those who wish to purchase food and/or beverages. This relaxed social event is a great time to reconnect with old friends and to meet new neighbors. We received a lot of positive feedback from this event last year. We hope you can join us!



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Save the Date

Categories to be
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Winter Social 2026



On March 1, Highland Lake residents visited the American Museum of Tort Law and viewed the interesting exhibits. We then proceeded to Mario's Tuscany Grill where delicious snacks were provided. Everyone enjoyed themselves!



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!
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<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



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

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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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Website: www.hlwa.org

Facebook: Highland Lake
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6 MPH LIMIT from 5 PM SUNDAY

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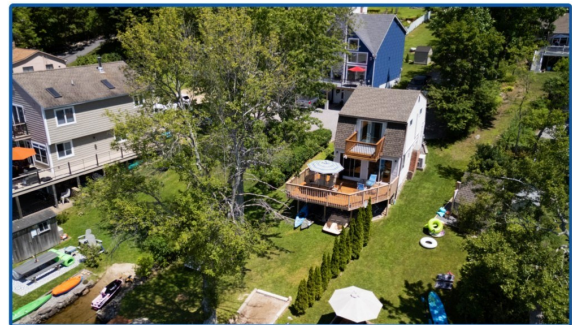
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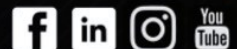
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