



PHOTO BY PEARY STAFFORD

## Lake Waramaug Task Force, Inc.

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The Lake Waramaug Task Force is a non-profit scientific and educational organization dedicated to maintaining and preserving the ecology and water quality of Lake Waramaug and its watershed.

Spring 2023

Dear Friends of Lake Waramaug,

Spring is here and like many of you I am looking forward to another wonderful season on Lake Waramaug. As the trees bloom and families return to the lake, I can't help but think how lucky we were to find a little cottage for sale on Arrow Point twenty-two years ago. Owing property on lake Waramaug has been one of the best decisions my wife and I have ever made.

But here is a question: "Who owns Lake Waramaug?"

Ownership of the lake actually falls under the concept of the Public Trust Doctrine which states that natural resources be preserved in perpetuity for public use and enjoyment. Over the last 50 years, the state strengthened its "clean water culture" and created laws and regulations to protect and improve lakes. But the reality is that the state can only do so much to see that lake water is protected and water quality improves. The bulk of the job of preserving Lake Waramaug falls on our local community.

The Task Force is strongly committed to its mission to protect the lake and we are able to do so because of the wonderful people involved in the stewardship of the lake and the generosity of its many patrons. It is because of these donors, especially those who made or renewed a 3-year pledge, the Task Force has been able to create a multi-year strategic plan to limit negative effects on our lake from the ever-changing environment.

To improve water quality at the lake, the Task Force, in partnership with the Mullen family, has recently contracted with New England Aquatic Services to dredge a new channel out of the delta at the mouth of Sucker Brook. This will allow cold water to flow to the lake even when water levels drop over the summer. Cold, oxygenated water is the life blood of a healthy lake. Currently, the size of the delta prevents this vital exchange.

The Task Force has also begun the process to remediate one of the largest sediment-producing erosion sites in Sucker Brook along the Rte. 45 corridor. Once permits are issued, the Task Force, with the guidance of engineers and consultants and with the permission of the adjacent landowners, will put into place a remediation structure to prevent further erosion. The completion of this effort, along with the repair work promised by the State to a Sucker Brook erosion site under Rte. 45, should greatly reduce sediment flows to the delta for years to come. The work of securing additional erosion sites along Sucker Brook will continue, but this current work is a big step in the right direction.

On behalf of the Task Force Board and the many partners and volunteers who assist us each year. I would like to **thank you, the caretakers of the lake**, for being active stewards and for helping us make many of these improvement initiatives possible. Your continued support is vital to our efforts.

**Mike Guadagno**  
Chair, Lake Waramaug Task Force



## THE COLLECTIVE WE



"We were loving the lake to death." With this seemingly idiomatic expression, Sean Hayden, our Executive Director, introduced his Spring 2022 Gunn Historical Museum lecture, *How The Lake Waramaug Task Force brought the Lake Back from the Brink*. Yet the words he used were literal. Prior to organizing the LWTF, the Lake was a holding pond for then-industrial New Preston, a source of power for as many as 21 mills in the Village of New Preston. Later it became a destination place where travelers came to enjoy the cool waters in the dead of summer, as well as a mecca for New Yorkers looking to breathe easier on the weekends. These identities developed prior to any strict health codes, prior to a Silent Spring, prior to the greater environmental movement.

That "loving" led to a lake in an advanced state of eutrophication. Waramaug was literally dying, its once healthy waters choking in pea soup green algae, largely due to the adverse effects of over development. As a community, the collective - not royal - "we" took notice and decided to act in the Public Trust.

The concept of "in the Public Trust" first documented during the Roman Empire. Roman Law proclaimed that nature was to be held in common for all, including air, fresh water and the seas. In the centuries following, this concept became known as the Public Trust Doctrine mandating that certain natural resources be preserved in perpetuity for public use and enjoyment.

The Connecticut Assembly first promulgated the Public Trust Doctrine in 1972. It declared "there is a public trust in the air, water and other natural resources of the

state of Connecticut and that each person is entitled to the protection, preservation and enhancement of the same" and empowers residents to protect their resources from degradation. While our state's Public Trust Doctrine can be complicated from a legal perspective, Connecticut has truly embraced the public trust of its natural resources by weaving its principles firmly into our laws, regulations and the clean-water-culture.

Therefore, the response to the question, "Who owns Lake Waramaug?" is: no one person owns the lake.

The Public Trust Doctrine confirms that we all do, and that includes future generations. To underscore the importance of responsible stewardship, ancient Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) philosophy documented and immortalized the Seventh Generation Principle. That principle declares that decisions made today should result in a sustainable world seven generations in the future. (Make no mistake about it. The dish soap company used the name as a marketing ploy to promote their plant-based phosphorus-free products.)

The Seventh Generation Philosophy and its delivery system, The Haudenosaunee Sixth Confederacy, are said to be a greater contributing influence on the American Constitution, as Benjamin Franklin drew more inspiration from the lighter touch of native culture than he did from principles of European governments. So in essence, the collective We the People are the Public Trust.

Thanks to the prescience of the Lake Waramaug Community in the 1970s, the Collective We began to love the lake to life, rather than death. Continuing to preserve Lake Waramaug will take the Collective We to achieve. The Task Force acts as a guide, consulting a talented and knowledgeable team of experts, funding and implementing the technology they recommend and communicating their message to the Collective We. This stewardship requires ALL who love Lake Waramaug to do their part in order to maintain the health of the Lake's ecology and the quality of its water, including its 9,000 acre watershed.

## PROPOSED ORDINANCE REGULATING WAKE BOAT OPERATION ON LAKE WARAMAUG

The LWTF was recently made aware of a proposed Washington Town Ordinance regulating wake boat operations on Lake Waramaug. The Task Force neither authored this proposed regulation nor provided input to its drafters.

The Task Force is a science-based organization that strives to protect the water quality of Lake Waramaug to the greatest extent possible, while recognizing the desire of residents and visitors to engage in fun and safe recreational boat activities. It is up to the towns of Washington, Warren, and Kent, as well as the state of Connecticut, to strike a balance between these objectives.

- 1** Scientific research indicates that large boat wakes can cause shoreline erosion and lake bed disturbance that can be harmful to lake water quality and aquatic habitats.
- 2** At a minimum, the Task Force believes it is advisable to encourage boats producing large wakes to stay as far from shore and in as deep water as possible. A map of suggested boat operation zones, as well as scientific research performed in other states, is available on our website [www.lakewaramaug.org/wake-boat-meeting](http://www.lakewaramaug.org/wake-boat-meeting).
- 3** The Task Force will continue to marshal scientific evidence regarding the impact of large wakes on Lake Waramaug, and to make this information available to the three towns and the state for their consideration.

## HOW TO BE A GOOD STEWARD TO LAKE WARAMAUG:



**Use Low Impact Development practices when embarking on a building project on the shores of Lake Waramaug and in its watershed.**



**Maintain buffer planting to minimize erosion of the banks of Lake Waramaug and its feeding streams.**



**Never use fertilizer or household cleaners that contain phosphorus.**



**Be a responsible motor boat owner and user. Check your hulls for invasive weeds before launching and stay in the deep water zone when operating.**

**DONATE**



**DONATE to the Lake Waramaug Task Force.**



## IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness to report that Joan Larned, who served on the Lake Waramaug Task Force Board of Directors for many years, died on March 10, 2023 at the age of 96. She was highly principled and was not afraid of reminding others when they veered away from those principles she held dear, but was above all, welcoming and generous with her time and her talents. With shared sorrow and gratitude for her tremendous contribution to the Lake and our greater community, we offer condolences to all who knew and loved Joan.

## KEEP IN-THE-KNOW IT'S EASY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LWTF ACTIVITIES:

- Visit our website at [www.lakewaramaug.org](http://www.lakewaramaug.org)
- Join our mailing list on our website or email us at [info@lakewaramaug.org](mailto:info@lakewaramaug.org)
- Follow us on Facebook (LakeWaramaugTaskForce) or Instagram (lwtaskforce)



## CLEAN WATER CORNER

### THANK YOU FOR PROPELLING US INTO A CLEAN WATER FUTURE



Because of your generous donations from this year's Give Local Litchfield Hills Fundraising Campaign, we are able to pay for the cost of converting our research boat's loud, stinky and heavy gas motor to a clean, quiet electric motor that is touted as being more energy efficient and easier to operate and maintain. Because of your support, the Task Force research boat will be able to collect all the valuable science needed to keep the lake clean, clear and swimmable in a manner that reflects our mission. We are always focused on how we can do better for the lake, and now we will have another tool that supports our efforts. Thank you again and see you around the lake!

Thank you to everyone who supported us last year during our 2022 Give Local Campaign to raise funds for our water quality protection work that was needed in the lake's watershed. Because of your support we were able to study, survey, design and engineer, and permit a stream bank stabilization plan to repair a severe erosion site about one mile from the Lake. We have sent out a bid proposal for the construction work to begin during dry weather conditions. You all made this possible.

