

SEBASTICOOK LAKE ASSOCIATION

123 Maplewood Road
Newport, Maine 04953



SEBASTICOOK LAKE ASSOCIATION MINUTES

July 6, 2024

The meeting was held at the American Legion Hall in Newport, Maine on Saturday at 10:00 a.m.

There were 88 people in attendance.

President's Report - Muffy Pare - Muffy called the meeting to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

New members - Charlie Morris of 32 Noah's Landing and Julie Ferrell of 22 Loon Drive. Julie is Debbie Ferrell's daughter.

Secretary's Report - Darcy Parlee - Darcy was not able to attend the meeting this year so Heidi Hutchins took the minutes. Muffy Pare made a motion to accept the 2023 minutes. It was accepted and approved.

Treasurer's Report - Andre Cushing - A copy of the report was handed out to everyone along with a list of four motions. He briefly explained them and mentioned that they would be brought up again during the new business. A motion was made to accept the 2023 treasurer's report and it was approved. Andre mentioned that two Sebasticook Lake trays were given as gifts to donors

who gave more than \$2,000 for the fireworks show. He brought one in to show everyone. He also thanked Rick Berry for all of his help.

Membership Committee - Allan Fernald - Allan made the point that many people don't understand what the dues are for. There were 326 paying members in years past and it's down to 289. Members with multiple properties are only paying for one. Dues are only \$10 and we have received dues from 179 members so far this year totalling \$1790. The areas with the least amount of paying members are Maplewood, Durham Bridge Rd., and Camp Benson Rd. The areas with the most paying members are Kitchen Hill Rd. and Grove St.

Water Quality Testing - Allen Whitaker & Donnie Gross - Allen and Donnie spoke about the recent secchi disk readings. Recent readings were at 4.6 meters and current at 3.4 meters. They have to get re-certified every year to participate and are planning a trip to Millinocket to do that. Muffy made a motion for funds to cover the gas expense, lunch, and postage to send in samples. The motion was accepted and approved. A member asked about green stuff floating in their area and another member asked if it's safe to swim in the lake. Donnie showed a sample of green stuff from the east end and Jen Jespersen identified it as filamentous algae which is not harmful. Jen said that there is no cyanobacteria algae bloom going on. She said if you can't see your feet it's not safe to swim. She also said that the lakestewardsofmaine.org website is a good place to go for information. Another member asked about an area off Camp Benson that looks like an oil slick. Jen explained the difference between oil and organic material. It was also reported that there is no milfoil at this time. Donnie made a motion for the SLA to allocate up to \$500 for the analysis and report of the samples brought forth. The motion was accepted and approved.

Newsletter Committee - Rick Perlmutter & Debbie Ferrell - Rick and Debbie talked about the importance of having the correct addresses (summer & winter) for members as well as their correct emails. The Association website has the newsletters on it. Debbie mentioned that the cost to send the newsletters via snail mail is \$1000 annually. They will have the water quality results on the fall newsletter. Rick mentioned that people liked to read the "how we got here" article and people haven't been contributing to it.

Cookout Committee - Heidi Hutchins - Heidi thanked everyone for attending and asked for a round of applause for all of the volunteers who make the BBQ

possible. She invited everyone to the BBQ after the meeting. At the BBQ she drew the two names for the giveaways. Joyce Shippee won the lake basket and Rocky Freeman won the Hamlin's Marine tote that was donated.

Old Business - None to report

New Business

Muffy introduced Dan Higgins from Hamlin's Marine and Scott Huntley from Maine Shore Solutions. Muffy said she has total faith in these businesses and wants to put worries to rest. They are very supportive of SLA. Scott welcomed the community to check out their place and mentioned that their current hours are 8-5 Wednesday - Sunday. The gate is left open and there are security cameras on the property. He spoke about educating on water safety, the importance of marking rocks, partnering with SLA and the Sea Plane Association, and gave a brief history of the company. Dan spoke about the history of the building, what had to be done for updates, and future plans. He talked about boat storage and a plan for a brew pub restaurant.

Members made comments about having no wake signs on the lake in certain areas and the need for markers near Loon Island. The new law for boaters born after 1999 was discussed and a few members thought it should apply to everyone. One member voiced her concerns about too much growth on the lake and finding a balance. Another member asked about the boat rentals and safety. Scott answered that they ask if the renter needs instruction. They are not checking coolers for alcohol at this time. He mentioned that they forecast for 6 boat rentals. There are currently 26 slips and 4 are used for demo boats. There are 20 slips being rented out to the public. Another member asked about selling fuel at the marina. They are talking with the town and the state about it. It's for convenience to boaters and not a big money maker. They want it to be affordable and properly managed.

Andre Cushing asked everyone to look at the four motions on the handout. They are as follows:

1) Motion to apply for grants - A motion was made to apply for grants to study and improve public access as well as develop a plan to address point source pollution. The motion was accepted and approved. There was further discussion about the public meeting scheduled for 8/15/24.

2) Motion on expending funds to promote SLA's annual meeting and fireworks -

A motion was made for SLA to authorize the board to approve a plan for promoting the annual meeting and community fireworks show. Amount not to exceed \$500. A few members made a motion to give up the fireworks show because it's harmful to the lake and animals on the lake. They would rather have a light show. That motion was tabled for further discussion another time. The motion for the funds to promote the annual meeting and fireworks was accepted and approved.

3) Motion to approve developing and printing information about the SLA and its work to protect and preserve Sebasticook Lake -

A motion was made to authorize the SLA board of directors for development of flyers and educational materials for the public. They would give a history of the lake and importance of protecting the watershed. Cost not to exceed \$2500 during the coming year. The motion was accepted and approved.

4) Motion to approve moving SLA funds to a lending institution to get a better interest rate on funds in our accounts and segregate the fireworks account from general funds -

The motion was accepted and approved.

Miscellaneous

After the motions were approved a member asked about the need for the drawdown. Muffy responded that the scientists are recommending to still do it and there is a drawdown meeting scheduled in August.

Another member asked about doing an ice out raffle which opened up discussion about when is the actual ice out. Some areas on the lake don't have ice out as early as the larger part of the lake.

A member asked about increasing the dues amount from \$10 to \$20. Debbie Ferrell mentioned that it should be \$25 and that other lake associations charge more. Andre Cushing brought up the possibility of a lifetime membership. It was decided to table a motion made for an increase so that the board can do research on it.

Guest Speakers - Jen Jespersen from Echo Instincts & Matt Scott, a Retired State Biologist

Jen Jespersen presented an excellent slide show presentation. Data has been collected over the past 2 years and there is a 10 year management plan for the lake. The lake quality has improved over the last 40 years from 1972 to present. The slide show detailed the types of pollution as being legacy pollutants, soil erosion, bad septic systems, runoff from agriculture sites, and runoff from roadways. There are currently 172 road locations on the lake and there is soil erosion at 50% of the sites. There are 371 developed lots with septic systems on the lake and 61 of those do not have permits on file. Only 24% of property owners responded to the septic survey that went out. Jen recommended pumping septic tanks regularly and possibly replacing systems installed prior to 1995. She is hoping for some funds to help with that. An agricultural survey was done and there are 181 farms in the watershed.

Jen went over the current water quality readings. She said there is less oxygen in the summer and the numbers are double for what they want to see. Looking at 1980 vs. 2023, the phosphorous levels have been reduced. Phytoplankton was down in 2023 which is good. Most of the phosphorous in the lake is located way down in the deep hole. Temperature change and warmer water will likely cause more issues with it. Eighty-two percent of the phosphorous is coming from the watershed and 13% is coming from internal loading. Much of the watershed is undeveloped land with low phosphorous. The developed and agricultural areas are where the levels are higher. Jen spoke about the drawdown and why it's important to continue it. Right now we are in a maintenance mode. There is a summer flush and another one in the fall during the mixing. There is a technical advisor committee overseeing the drawdowns. She also mentioned that an alum treatment would cost millions of dollars and last approximately 3-5 years.

Jen concluded that we still have a lot of work to do on this lake and hopes to see everyone at the meeting on 8/15/24. There will be discussion about the next 10 years and what our goals are for the lake.

Matt Scott gave a great presentation about the history of Sebasticook Lake and the watershed. He mentioned the clean up of the Eastland Woolen Mill and that it was the most expensive recovery (\$5.5 million) ever. He said that Maine lakes are the crown jewels and we need to take care of them. He was extensively involved with the past lake studies and efforts to improve water quality. In 1988 it was decided to continue with the drawdown as it was making a difference. He

emphasized that warmer temperatures, more rainfall which means higher water levels, and high winds will continue to impact our waterways. Matt also said that population growth and tourism are having a major effect on our environment. He would like to see a focus on fish management as well.

Next year's meeting will be on Saturday, July 5th at 10:00 am at the American Legion.

Motion to adjourn at 12:40 pm