

**Seymour Lake Association**  
**Annual Meeting Minutes July 22, 2023 - Community Meeting House**

Officers: Rhonda Shippee, President; Bonnie McWain, Vice President; Jean McKenny, Treasurer; Linda Buzzell, Secretary

Board of Directors: Bruce Barter, Bill Bilowus, Bruce Remick (not present), Tim Buzzell, Sean Selby, Erik Lessing (left early), Denis Fortin, Tom Adams, Charles (Woody) Woods

1. **Rhonda Shippee** - call to order 9:01 a.m. Fifty members were present and signed in. She thanked the Board and committees for all the work they have done this year. Please join or renew your SLA membership here today if you have not already! She mentioned the SLA clothing set up through Lands' End by David Bullock and Candy Moot that is on display for people to see. She mentioned maps available for sale at a discount cost of \$20, the Circle of Friends Quilt raffle ticket available, and the Community Building renovation project which is looking for input on the future uses of the building. She said that Orleans County was not yet designated a disaster in the recent flood so does not currently qualify for FEMA assistance. If you have damage, please report it by calling 211 or VT211.org so that the county can be added to the designation.
  
2. **Secretary's Report - Linda Buzzell** - A Motion was made by Woody Woods and seconded by Sean Selby to accept the July 23, 2022 annual meeting minutes, approved. Linda talked about our scholarship fund for the Green Mountain Conservation Camp. This year we are sponsored Tristan Blindow and Drew McKenny. If you know of any boys or girls interested, please let Linda or any Board Member know, and we will give them a sponsorship form which must be attached to their application.
  
3. **Treasurer's Report - Jean McKenny** - Income for 2022 was \$28,500 which includes \$9,660 in memberships and \$17,450 in donations. Expenses were approximately \$20,000 including approximately \$11,000 for the greeter program at the access, \$4,000 for the newsletter, \$1,500 insurances. The 2022 profit was \$8,500 and there is a fund balance of approximately \$158,000. It was noted that at the request of a member at last year's annual meeting the Board again reviewed our investment policy for the fund balance funds. It was decided to continue to only invest in FDIC insured CDs, preferably from a local bank. Fortunately rates have increased on these investments and we anticipate approximately \$6,500 in interest earnings in 2023. The Treasurer's year-end report is available in hard copy with the Secretary's files and is not posted on the website for security reasons. Any member may direct questions to Jean at any time. A motion to accept the report was made by Bruce Barter, seconded by Woody Woods, approved.
  
4. **Elections - Tim Buzzell, Bonnie McWain, Sean Selby** - Terms expiring are Tim Buzzell, Tom Adams, and Bill Bilowus and they have agreed to stay on. Erik Lessing is retiring after 17 years, 15 years as Chair for the newsletter. Candy Moot, Chair of the On-line and social media committee, will seek his spot. Bruce Barter moves to close the nominations and accept the slate, seconded by Woody Woods, approved. The officers - Rhonda Shippee, Bonnie McWain,

Jean McKenny and Linda Buzzell agreed to stay on. A motion was made by Tom Adams and seconded by Jim McWain to accept the slate of officers for one year, approved

**5. Seymour/Echo Lake Watershed Action Plan - Bevin Barber-Campbell, Community Engagement & Lake Shoreland Coordinator, Orleans County Natural Resources and Conservation District (OCNRCD)** – The Lake Watershed Action Plan (LWAP) which the district has been selected to complete for the Echo-Seymour watershed is a planning and assessment tool for identifying projects that will correct the greatest threats to water quality in the watershed. The process evaluates shoreland, town owned roads, and tributaries. OCNRCD will identify the top 10 projects and then the community selects the top 3 projects, and a 30% design will be completed for those projects. The district will help find grant \$ to complete final design and construction. Factors to consider in selecting the top three projects will be phosphorous reduction, sedimentation, cost to complete a project (they prefer less than \$100,000) and landowner support. Examples of potential projects include those with CO2 benefits, rain gardens, maintenance issues, budget to accomplish the project, stabilizing streambeds, and wetlands stabilizations. There have been two meetings to explore needed projects to include in the LWAP. Community outreach and education are key and if anyone knows of a problem area, please contact the district so it can be evaluated.

Bevin also mentioned that the state Fish and Wildlife Department recently purchased Farrow Farm on Valley Road and projects already underway there will help to reduce silt and sediment coming from Sucker Brook into the lake. The district had worked with the farm for several years on improving their farm methods for water quality improvements and when the farm discontinued operation they recommended the state consider purchasing and preserving it.

## **6. Committee Reports**

**Activities** - Bonnie McWain - next week is our annual SLA social hosted by the Kolars at Camp Winape, 6-8 pm. Please carpool, adults only and guests, bring an appetizer to share plus BYOB. Please share your email address if possible as much of SLA's communication regarding activities is now via email blasts.

### **Boating** - Tim Buzzell

- **Boat Parade** - the 13th annual boat parade in the rain was a success with 20 boats and 146 camps who joined us on their docks.
- **Public Boat Access** – We are again trying to address the problem of sediment and shallow water at the state public boat launch. We have talked to the state 4-5 times and they have refused to consider dredging. A committee was formed to come up with a plan. Committee members include Tim (Chair), Tom Adams, Bill Bilowus, Candy Moot, Sean Selby, Chuck Nichols, and Denis Fortin. They met and came up with a plan to develop a petition to be presented to the state requesting the state address the problem. Please consider signing the petition which is here today. Some discussion about whether a better launch will bring in more boats. The fear is private accesses are being used as an alternative and boats are not inspected at those for invasive species. There

are also potential safety issues at the public launch as boats cannot get off the lake quickly in an emergency. Much discussion.

- High Water - Sean Selby, VT State Police Marine Auxiliary Officer - Since the recent storm, the high water is extremely dangerous right now, lots of debris, docks under water etc. Not safe for boats, tubing, skiing. Please use common sense and stay below wake speed. Some discussion regarding potential improper use of jet skis this year. Sean noted jet skis must follow boating rules and stay 200' from other boats and the shoreline. Very difficult to enforce but you can call the State Police **802-334-8881** if you can identify regular violators and they will send someone out to inspect. Much discussion. Rhonda suggested someone volunteer to do Pilot Program with buoys set and marked at 200' so people get a sense of what 200' look like. Several VT lakes have tried this (Iroquois and Dunmore) and believe it has been helpful. She took an informal vote and only 18 out of 50 people were interested in it.
- Update on the State Wake Boat Regulation - Candy Moot  
On Monday, June 12, 2023, the wake boat rule was presented to Vermont's Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules (ICAR) by Lakes and Ponds Manager Oliver Pierson. Approximately 10 other rules came before this Committee (regarding education, public utilities, transportation, etc.) and the wake boat rule was the only one where no edits or changes were recommended.

Recap of the rule;

- 1.) A lake must have a minimum of 50 contiguous acres;
- 2.) A wake boat would have to stay 500' from shore ("shoreline offset");
- 3.) A lake must be at least 20' deep;
- 4.) The "home lake rule" originally proposed by SLA members will be incorporated (so a wake boat will be able to operate only on one lake per season, so that invasive species aren't transported from one lake to another in the ballast of the wake boat ... which, importantly, can not be emptied fully).

Next Steps;

While there has been considerable lobbying done by the original petitioners (RWVL ... Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes) to change the shoreline offset from 500' to 1,000' (which would change the number of lakes who must host wake boats to 15 out of 800 lakes and ponds in Vermont, down from 31 out of 800), Oliver stuck with the 500' offset with ICAR because it's scientifically based. It is our belief that ANR will stick with the 500' shoreline offset.

However, there will be two more public hearings (August 1 in person only in Richmond or a zoom hearing on August 3.) There also be a chance to submit comments in writing. SLA will notify our members via email blast about these chances to testify or comment.

After more public input, this rule will go to the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules. If it passes this hurdle, Oliver said he expects to have an effective date for this rule of May 2024, and they will use the fall months to educate the public.

**Fishing/Smelt Project** - Bill Bilowus - we started the smelt restoration project to introduce smelt back into Seymour 4 years ago. PERSISTENCE was the key! State of Maine was a huge help & has a successful program which we have followed - egg transfers on burlaps. Maine has 3 smelt biologists for each county where Vermont has one part-time. The State of Vermont gave

us 4 years and we transferred 20 bags per year with a committee surveying the brooks and burlaps through May. Rain this year was a big problem, washing out some of the burlaps. Fishermen are seeing smelt this year. Lakers seem to be getting bigger. We are asking for one more year in the experimental project. It was also noted that there does not seem to be any more Perch in the lake.

**Loons** - **Woody Woods** - Recently completed the loon count with Denis Fortin - Woody counted 9 and Denis, 8. We seem to have 6 resident loons consistently on our lake. He surmises that we have "visiting" loons who stop in every day and then move on. 6 is probably at a balance caring capacity. We have not had a successful chick hatch in over 10 years. Nesting threats are possibly boats, fireworks, avian flu, and other loons harassing the pairs.

**Maps** - 911 information - Chuck Nichols - our website has a list of updated owners. The Derby Fire Dept. has a form you can fill out and send them to receive a reflective house number to place on a pole or tree so that emergency vehicles can find addresses more easily.

**Membership** - Tom Adams - Looking for volunteers to help visit neighbors on your road who may not have joined SLA. Bruce Barter has retired from the membership committee and we don't have anyone with his wealth of information. His son, Andy, has volunteered to help with the data base. Regarding on line membership payment, only 20% used PayPal, so we encourage people to use it as it is a great help to us.

**Aquatic Invasive Species Inspection Program** - Beth Torpey - Our greeters are doing a great job this year. Fortunately the alarm about a potential invasive plant found WAS NOT a water chestnut. This year we have our new office trailer and 13 greeters. She thanked all the volunteers. She has flyers that camp owners can give to renters about invasive species and boat inspection. If you ask, she will come to your property and inspect if necessary. Getting the \$500,000 added to the State budget for AIS inspection programs was huge for us.

**Volunteer Invasive Patrollers (VIPs)** - David Wielselmann - 17 volunteers around the lake this year, two are snorkelers, keeping tabs on the shoreline for any invasive species. Training a new member this week. We never have enough eyes.

**Water Quality** - Peggy Barter - Your water quality committee has had a busy season, though we have not met yet this summer. Very little has gone according to plan, but much is happening concerning water quality.

- **Lake Shore Permitting** – Lakeshore owners who plan building or landscaping projects should first check with VTDEC's Lake Shore Permitting Specialist for our area, Laura Woods at [802-490-6100](tel:802-490-6100) or [laura.woods@vermont.gov](mailto:laura.woods@vermont.gov) Trish Clark is preparing to take on an increasing role in following up on active permits for lake shore work as well as to monitor that new projects have permits as needed. The plan is support lake shore owners involved in this process.

- Echo-Seymour Lake Watershed Action Plan – SLA’s participation is well underway with Orleans County Conservation District managing the work. To learn about the process, please read “What the Heck is a LWAP?” at <https://seymourlake.org/what-is-a-lwap/> Two public organizational meetings have been held. The LWAP is an assessment and planning tool that identifies the greatest threats to a lake’s ecosystem. The end result is a list of projects to improve water quality. The watershed’s roads, streams and lake shore will be surveyed to search for opportunities to implement improvements which could result in less phosphorus and sediment entering the lake, especially given we are experiencing more heavy rain storms.
- Lay Monitoring - Tom Emery continues to do a fine job of sampling the lake water for clarity, phosphorus and nitrogen. See results in the spring 2023 edition of SLA’s newsletter at [seymourlake.org](https://seymourlake.org)
- A – 1 Lake Reclassification – The process for lakes applying for reclassification is on hold until Vermont’s Legislature completes updating the septic limitation to reflect modern technology. Rhonda Shippee and Candy Moot have worked with the Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds (FOVLAP) to help accomplish this goal in the Senate and will work in the next session to gain needed additional approvals.  
***Rhonda’s Report: “The state has announced that while last fall they had pledged to proceed this summer with public hearings on the applications filed for reclassification. Echo Lake is among the lakes which has made an application to reclassify Echo’s watershed which includes Seymour’s watershed. However at this time the state has decided to further delay action on petitions until Vermont’s Legislature completes the “septic fix”. The change needed will eliminate the restriction on septic systems with a capacity greater than 1,000 gpd in A1 Watersheds. The changes were approved by the key Committee in the Senate, but still need approval in a key House Committee and ultimately the full legislature. SLA’s Board of Directors is pleased that at least for now the state has made the decision to delay action until the septic issue is resolved because SLA hopes to support Echo Lake’s petition, but cannot without the septic rule change.”***
- Rain garden Maintenance – Andy, Riley and Cooper Barter installed educational signs. Mary Lou Steenrod, Rhonda Shippee and Tracey Becken did the spring weeding. Riley Barter trimmed the grass growing within the fences.
- Phragmites at Public Beach – Tracey Becken and Bill Drake continue to work to eradicate this patch.
- Shoreland Protection Act Assistance and Enforcement Program – The committee has ongoing concerns regarding blatant disregard for Shoreland Protection Act regulations by a very few lake shore owners. This law defines how lake shore development may take place with the goal of minimizing pollution (including sediment and phosphorus) entering the lake. Seymour Lake’s highly developed lake shore is a constant threat to preserving high water quality which does not support cyano-bacteria blooms. Actions which disregard the law increase the possibility that our lake could experience toxic algae blooms. We welcome suggestions from Association members as to possible actions our lake community might take to prevent these few lake shore owners from extreme lake pollution actions.

- Lake Wise – SLA has a new Lake Wise Leader, Tracey Becken, who has been busy. She designed and is using a door knob hanger to publicize the program. Tracey worked with six lake shore owners to arrange a site for a workshop which had to be cancelled due to a death in the presenter's family. Tracey currently has 10 lake shore property owners signed up for assessments. Others have signed up for best management practices projects they wish to have implemented. She has also contacted owners of awarded properties to offer a second sign for the roadside of their properties.
- Concerns of lake shore owners – Three topics which have been brought to our attention are (1) disregard for the Shoreland Protection Act (2) the possibility of sea planes transporting AIS into the lake. Aquatic Invasive species (AIS) can be transported by sea planes. One solution is to raise the awareness of the sea plane owner regarding this possibility and request they take precautions to prevent this from happening. Kit Walker is researching additional information. (3) Unsafe and illegal operation of watercraft sometimes by underage children; **this is a safety issue, NOT a water quality issue**. However, we are all interested in maintaining a safe lake for all who recreate here. If you observe unsafe or illegal operation of watercraft, a good first step is to provide the responsible parties of the regulations. The Greeter station has copies of the state's safe boating brochure. We recommend contacting Director Sean Selby who has been helpful in diplomatically addressing this sort of issue among neighbors.
- **Help is needed:**
  - To yearly weed and mulch the demonstration rain gardens at Seymour's Fish & Wildlife Public Access area.
  - To generate a process to avoid violations of the Shoreland Protection Act.
  - To help Committee members coordinate Lake Wise Assessments and Best Management Practices (BMP) projects.
  - To regularly verify links on SLA's web site under the Water Quality subheading
  - To provide new ideas and share the workload.

**Newsletter** - Denis Fortin - He asked that you send any interesting pictures and/or ideas for articles for the newsletter.

A Motion was made by Sean Selby and seconded by Woody Woods to adjourn at 11:35 a.m.  
Approved.