

Lake Waramaug Association

August 2015



End-of-Summer Community Gathering and Meeting Sunday, September 20th, 2015 1:00 PM Lake Waramaug Country Club

Please plan to attend our end-of-summer community gathering and meeting. This is our ninth annual meeting held jointly with the Lake Waramaug Task Force, to enable the Task Force to discuss its programs and achievements directly with the members of the Association. *(Note changed date and time).*

Please join us at 1 PM to enjoy a drink, as well as conversation with other members of the Lake community in our common interests: the preservation and protection of our beloved Lake. Bring your friends and neighbors and strengthen our dedicated group by contributing to the conversation.

At the meeting, to be held at 1:30, Tom McGowan, Executive Director of the Lake Waramaug Task Force, will lead an expanded "State of the Lake" discussion concerning current lake conditions and the results of Lake testing for the summer, the status of the Sucker Brook Erosion Control Project, continuing experimentation to improve the effectiveness of the in-lake LayerAir Restoration Systems including the new aeration apparatus installed at Arrow Point, an update on the status of efforts to remove and control the wider Curly leaf Pondweed outbreak, and other important Waramaug related topics.

We will also welcome Anne Block, the latest member to join our Board of Directors.

Please join us and take advantage of this opportunity to learn about important matters affecting the protection and preservation of Lake Waramaug.



LWA June Meeting

Dues Reminder

If you received a dues payment envelope with this mailing, our records indicate that your 2015 dues remain unpaid. Please send your payment today. Your contribution supports our efforts to protect and preserve Lake Waramaug.

If you are new to the Lake community, please consider joining us! And we look forward to welcoming you at the September 20th meeting.

INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS SO THAT WE MAY CONTACT YOU PROMPTLY WITH LAKE NEWS AS THE NEED ARISES.



www.waramaugassoc.org

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Independence Day Fireworks

Once again, our community celebrated the Fourth of July with pageantry. Serendipity and good fortune cleared the rain from the skies over Waramaug at 4 PM, allowing for a blaze of sunset, always breathtaking over our waters, followed by a well-apportioned rimming of flares and the spectacular fireworks. Many thanks to David Shapiro and Abby Pogrebin for hosting the event, as well as to Rudy Montgelas of the Association for handling the details of its planning. The fireworks display is sponsored by the Association as a reminder to the lake community of the efforts of the Association and the Task Force to preserve and protect Lake Waramaug. The Association appreciates all our neighbors who contributed to the event.



Beavers, Sometimes Unwelcome Guests

A number of beavers have been spotted along the West Shore of our lake, and evidence of them have been discovered on Lake Road (Route 45). Although the habitation of beavers in our area is nothing new, they certainly have had a checkered past. Valued by native peoples, beavers were valuable as a source of food, medicine and pelts for clothing. As colonization became more extensive, the European demand for its pelts drove the trapping and fur trade to a virtual frenzy. By the mid-1800s, due to high demand and no restriction



on the trade, the beaver was extirpated entirely from the State of Connecticut. 1914 marked the first effort to reintroduce the beaver in the town of Union, which was regarded as successful; by the 1950s, the population was noted by the State as thriving in some areas, and by the 1960s, were said to be a nuisance by many. Encroachment on their natural habitat seems to have exacerbated the problem, as complaints filed with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) continue to rise, year after year.

Around Waramaug, the beaver problem seems to be centered mostly around the destruction of ornamental shrubs and trees. The Connecticut DEEP suggests that “the most effective way to protect trees and shrubs from being cut by beavers is to place heavy-gauge fencing with a mesh opening of no more than 2-inch x 4-inch around the base of the plant, six inches away from the trunk and extending to a height of four feet. (Chicken wire will not deter the powerful chewing of beavers.)”

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Also, please note that there are strict regulations regarding the trapping of beavers. If you are experiencing a problem with a beaver outside of the regulated trapping season (April 1 - November 30), please contact the DEEP Wildlife division at (860) 424-3011.

For more information, please Google “beavers in Connecticut.”

Points to Consider Regarding Land Use Around the Lake

The State of Connecticut has designated Lake Waramaug as a *Heritage Lake* in order to support, among other purposes, the preservation of the Lake’s historic, cultural, scenic, and environmental features. The town plans and zoning regulations of Washington, Warren, and Kent also emphasize the preservation of **rural character** and the **natural setting** here.

Connecticut state law and our towns’ land use processes promote this mandate through the Zoning and Inland Wetlands regulations and enforcement. Nevertheless, regulation is always imperfect, and it can seem like a burdensome process all around.

In recent years there has been increasing tension between conservation values and the growing tendency toward transformational site work, hardscaping, and large-scale construction. The preservation and enjoyment of our natural setting here depends just as much on the awareness, sensitivity, and restraint each of us brings to bear on our decisions concerning the construction, maintenance, and use of our properties.

With that in mind, here are a few points to consider regarding land use and construction: *continued on page 3*

Points to Consider Regarding Land Use Around the Lake (cont.)

Don't rely on your designer, builder or landscaper to tell you what's environmentally appropriate. They are working to realize the objectives that you request. Rarely will they suggest that you fundamentally redirect your program.

Always consider whether you could enjoy your desired use with less disturbance of the rural character, ecology, and natural setting. Discuss with your designer's contractors whether your needs can be met with smaller-scale design and construction. Take time to consider the distinction between even the most beautifully built park-like or suburban design and the natural rural landscape and ecology.

Lake views go two ways. If you clear cut for a view, you give everyone else a clear view into your personal space. Not every room needs to have the same wide-angle view, and if we all clear a full-on view of the Lake, we will also be staring at dozens of other similarly exposed houses, lawns, and driveways.

Most of the properties around the Lake pre-date the current zoning regulations. As a result, most lot sizes are smaller than the current more protective regulation allows — half or less the currently permitted size. This means that many of the building placements and uses we are accustomed to seeing around the Lake are permitted only as preexisting nonconformities, but not for new construction. Do not assume that any new project can match these preexisting uses, and do not anticipate that you will be granted a wetlands permit or a zoning exception for your project. State law mandates that variances be granted only for property-specific hardships and not for difficulties (e.g. a road between your house and the Lake) that are typical of many properties in the area. Every property is unique, and the decisions of the commissions do not establish precedents for future applications relating to other properties.

The Lake is designated for preservation as a natural area. When you or your family or guests are here, what will be more rewarding — to discover the variety and complexity of this natural setting and deepen your curiosity about its geology, flora, and fauna, or to admire the work of your designer, landscaper, or maintenance crew? There's room for both. Each must be given careful consideration if we are to preserve what we love about the Lake.

Links to local land use regulations can be found on the LWA website, www.waramaugassoc.org/regs.

Sections dealing specifically with Lake Waramaug matters include Section 6 of Washington's regulations, Section 11.4 of Warren's and Section 10 of Kent's regulations.

For example, regulations limit the height of fences (including "natural" fences such as closely planted trees and shrubs) on the water side of Lake roads to preserve the view of the Lake for neighbors and visitors to the area. Your compliance with these restrictions will keep the enjoyment of Lake views accessible to all.

Then and Now

The Aspetuck Falls, a twenty-foot high waterfall on the East Aspetuck River which flows from Waramaug, welcomed industry in the early 19th Century to what was once known as New Purchase. Edward Cogswell, an early settler to the shores of Waramaug, renamed it New Preston in honor of his former home on the Connecticut shoreline. According to *Connecticut Waterfalls: A Guide*, by Russell Dunn and Christy Butler, the town became "a viable industrial center, using the power of the East Aspetuck River to run a total of 21 mills, including a tannery, forge, twine and cotton factory, cider/brandy distillery and carpentry shop" in the Village.

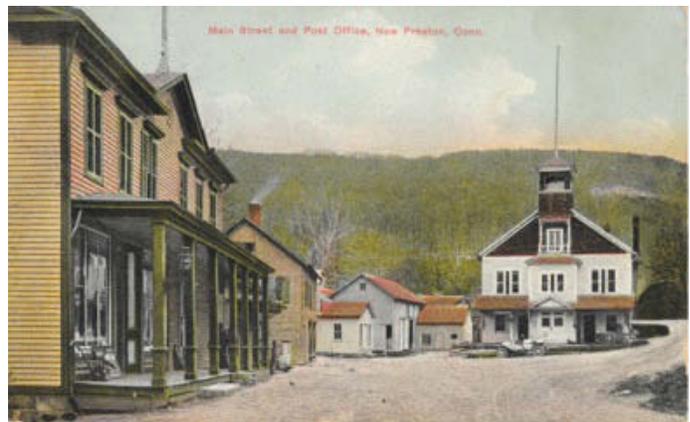
Contractors presently renovating the former cider mill at the Falls, which has since housed an antique store, book shop and (most recently) a private home, have discovered for themselves the existence of stone foundations on the East bank of the river, as previously noted by Dunn and Butler as the ruins of an old sawmill once used to cut stone for monuments.

In her 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs writes about the importance of old buildings in the success of small businesses: "As for really new ideas of any kind — no matter how ultimately profitable or otherwise successful some of them might prove to be — there is no leeway for such chancy trial, error, and experimentation in the high-overhead economy of new construction," she wrote. "Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings."

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New Preston Village Today, Photo Credit: Lizzie Beckett



New Preston Circa 1910, J.I. West Publishing, Washington, CT

Then and Now (cont.)

Bookstores, antique stores, and small restaurants can thrive in old buildings, Jacobs argued, but for more emotional reasons than practical ones. Warm, wide-board pine planked floors, the charm of a crooked doorway, the superb quality of vintage building material evokes a response from within our hearts rather than our heads.

New Preston Village exemplifies this notion. Although our hamlet may not be used as an example for urban development, it most assuredly can be heralded as a success in the thoughtful repurposing of the historically rich buildings of a small town, catering to a new present while nodding with reverence to an interesting past. Today, our Village has become a fashionable mecca for tourists and a destination for shoppers of home furnishings, antiques, clothing, and locally-grown produce, much to the delight of long-term New Prestonites, new residents and visitors.

Today, the Aspetuck Falls provide a scenic backdrop visible from many of its businesses, most of which are housed in original structures. Whereas the buildings have evolved with the thoughtful care and expense of present business owners to cater to a new audience, they have retained their original features, preserving a charm so appreciated by residents and tourists alike.

The Communications Committee of the Association is seeking information about these structures in connection with a larger project about our picturesque, historically rich town. Please contact us if you are interested in contributing to this piece at cadamsbeckett@me.com.

Celebrate Fall at Lake Town Events

WARREN:

Welcome the Autumnal Equinox and support the Warren Volunteer Fire Company at the Warren Fall Festival, Warren Woods Town Park, 255 Brick School Road, on October 10 & 11, 2015. Enjoy fresh baked goods while enjoying a classic antique tractor pull competition, and learn more about WAMOGO's agricultural education programs and timber team. Petting zoos, fire truck rides, pumpkin cannons, magic shows, live music and more will be offered as diversions for you and your family. For more information, please see www.warrenfirecompany.org

WASHINGTON:

Enjoy the 2015 Washington Connecticut Antiques and Design Show on October 9, 10 & 11, 2015 at the Washington Primary School. This event is one of the core annual fundraisers for Washington's Gunn Memorial Library and Historical Museum. For details, please visit www.gunnlibrary.org/antiques

Through October 31, the photography of Nell Dorr, a retrospective exhibit commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Horace Mann School's John Dorr Nature Laboratory in Washington and the 75th anniversary of the Dorr Foundation. The exhibit will be on display on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m, and on Sundays from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m, through Saturday, October 31, 2015 at the Gunn Memorial Library and Museum, 5 Wykeham Road, Washington. For more information, call 860.868.7756, e-mail gunnmuseum@sbcglobal.net or visit www.gunnlibrary.org

KENT:

Register now for the 2015 Kent Pumpkin Run, to be held on October 25, 2015. The festivities begin at 11:15 a.m. with a one mile fun run for the children (costumes welcomed!) followed by a 5 mile course at noon. Awards to be presented for speed demons, as well as creative costume-clad participants! Proceeds will benefit the Kent Food Bank.

To register, please visit www.kentpumpkinrun.com