

# Lake Waramaug Association

May 2019



## 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 2:00 PM Lake Waramaug Country Club

The Lake Waramaug Association will hold its 102nd Annual Membership Meeting to discuss our initiatives, as well as hear from John Santoleri, Board Member of the Steep Rock Association concerning exciting plans for the Macricostas Preserve, which include parts of the Pinnacle Valley in Washington and Warren. Please join us at 2:00 to share a drink with our neighbors just prior to the call to order.

### Washington History Exhibit @ The Gunn

The permanent installation of the Gunn Historical Museum's Washington History exhibit, which will include a small section on Lake Waramaug and her history, will open late summer, 2019. Keep your eyes peeled on social media and your e-mail inboxes, where we will provide updated information about the opening.

### Save the date: The Annual Fourth of July Fireworks Spectacular

The Annual Fourth of July Fireworks Spectacular will be held on Friday, July 5th with a rain date of Saturday, July 6th. Special thanks to Cynthia and Lee Vance for generously offering their property as the launching spot again this year! We also hope more of our neighbors will participate in the annual celebration by rimming the lake with flares, which will be available for purchase at Nine Main, Washington Supply, The Hopkins Inn, The Lake Waramaug Country Club beach and County Wine and Spirits.

Over the last couple of years, our donations have not covered the cost of our display. If you care to contribute to this year's spectacle, you may make a tax-deductible contribution by visiting us at [www.waramaugassoc.org](http://www.waramaugassoc.org) where you will find a "Fund Fireworks" button. You may also send a check to: Lake Waramaug Association, PO Box 2272, New Preston, CT 06777. Please note that if you are not already a member of the Lake Waramaug Association, \$50 of your contribution will be allocated to your family membership, which we hope you will renew annually.



[www.waramaugassoc.org](http://www.waramaugassoc.org)

P.O. Box 2272  
New Preston, CT 06777

### Dues Reminder

If you have not yet paid your dues or wish to make a contribution to the Lake Waramaug Association, please do so via the enclosed envelope or online at [www.waramaugassoc.org](http://www.waramaugassoc.org). Please note that if you make a contribution towards our Fireworks Spectacular, \$50 of your donation will be allocated towards your family membership. We thank you for your continued support!



## Update on Completed Repair Work at the Lake Waramaug Dam

Mark Lyons, First Selectman of Washington, reports that the dam repair at the foot of the Lake has been successfully completed on time and under budget, thanks to a \$20,000 contribution from the town of Warren. The replacement is working well and the Town of Washington will coordinate with the Lake Waramaug Task Force to measure the flow of the East Aspetuck, ensuring that river and lake levels are properly maintained. This newly-acquired ability to make accurate adjustments will take a lot of guess work out of controlling the dam. The Town is also working with Lenard Engineering to complete State-mandated inspections, and to implement an Emergency Action Plan should they plot flood levels or the dam is breached.



Before Construction - Photo Credit: Christine Adams



During Construction - Photo Credit: Christine Adams

### Board of Directors

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## Air Quality Concerns and Cricket Valley

The Cricket Valley Energy Center in Dover Plains, New York is currently under construction, and plans to generate electricity for one million customers in neighboring towns by converting “clean-burning natural gas into electricity.” The Center is situated in an industrially-zoned site off of Route 22, and directly West of Lake Waramaug, which has raised concern amongst our residents and local environmental organizations. Although marketing materials produced by Cricket Valley suggest that the byproducts are of little concern to neighbors, the reality is that how clean-burning the process will be is largely unknown. Many have already taken measures to ensure that airborne byproducts, which are bound to travel efficiently on prevailing westerly breezes, are not harmful to our people, our environment, or our water quality.

The project was approved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in 2012; construction began in 2017 and the plant is expected to be fully operational by 2020. According to the Danbury News Times, “DEEP officials have said Connecticut and New York have the same permitting process and are among the most stringent requirements because the Northeast’s air quality is harmed by plants west of the region. Connecticut and New York are also co-plaintiffs in several lawsuits advocating for clean air and restrictions on plants in other states.”

Coupled with the topography of the area, opponents of the plan are concerned about inevitable emissions, which include nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds. Advocates for Cricket Valley argue that renewable sources of power, namely solar and wind, are inaccessible in this area and natural gas is much cleaner burning than coal.

In partnership with the Western Connecticut Clean Air Action group, entities of our community have already taken preventative measures to ensure that levels of toxins in our atmosphere remain at healthy levels. Air Quality Measurement Stations (AQY1s) have already been installed at Kent School and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (at Mohawk Mountain). Additional Stations are scheduled to be installed by the Towns of Cornwall, Sherman and Washington, as well as the High Watch Recovery Center. Others are under consideration in Sharon, New Milford and Warren. The Lake Waramaug Association is also in discussions with other not-for-profit organizations in our area to explore the possibility of installing one near the Lake area.

As plans develop at Cricket Valley, we will keep our membership informed via e-mail and social media posts.

For more information about Cricket Valley, please see: <https://www.cricketvalley.com/about-us/>. A helpful review of the project and the concerns raised by it has been provided by Katrina Koerting of the News Times, and can be found here: <https://www.newstimes.com/local/article/FAQ-What-you-need-to-know-about-Cricket-Valley-13538814.php>.

### “Waramaugers”

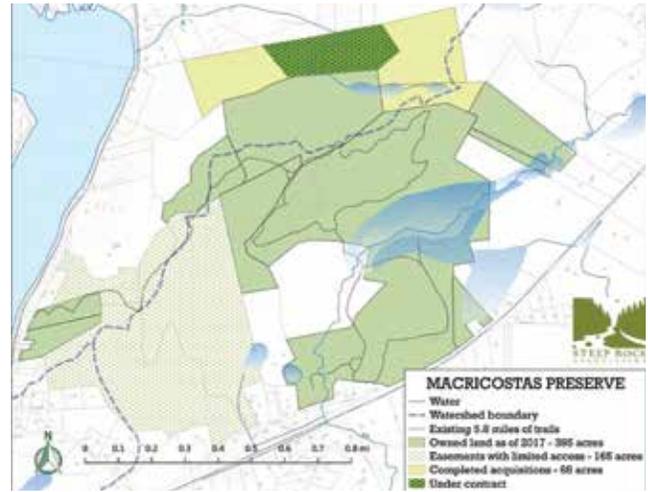
Do you have a special talent, passion, expertise that you would enjoy expressing as part of your love of Lake Waramaug and its environs? We are eager to meet you and get you involved in protecting and preserving our beautiful lake. It is an opportunity to socialize, meet some fellow “Waramaugers” and have fun while making a difference. Areas include: communications, publicity, events, organizational development, land use and preservation, low impact development, and any others of interest to you. If so, please contact: Mary Jo Keating (Keating.maryjo@gmail.com)

## The Macricostas Expansion Project: Ensuring a Majestic Future for the Pinnacle Valley

by Christine Adams

As part of our Centennial Celebration, The Lake Waramaug Association formed an initiative to save 100 acres within our watershed, as well as plant 100 trees, in keeping with our mission to promote land use practices that protect and preserve Lake Waramaug. The use of environmentally-friendly approaches in storm-water management is critically important. When these same sensitive areas are preserved and trees remain, an unimpaired natural hydrology keeps run-off to the lake clean and the lake swimmable. Erosion is slowed, and our Lake is saved.

Although our Centennial year is now in the history books, our land conservation goals remain active. The Association considers it a priority to garner support for other local not-for-profit organizations whose goals are in harmony with Lake Waramaug's protection. Water quality begins with thoughtful land use; and preservation acts as an ounce of prevention: keep the waters that fill the lake clean before damaging runoff is deposited there. The conservation work currently being done by the Steep Rock Association, namely the Macricostas Expansion Project, has an immediate positive effect on our goals.

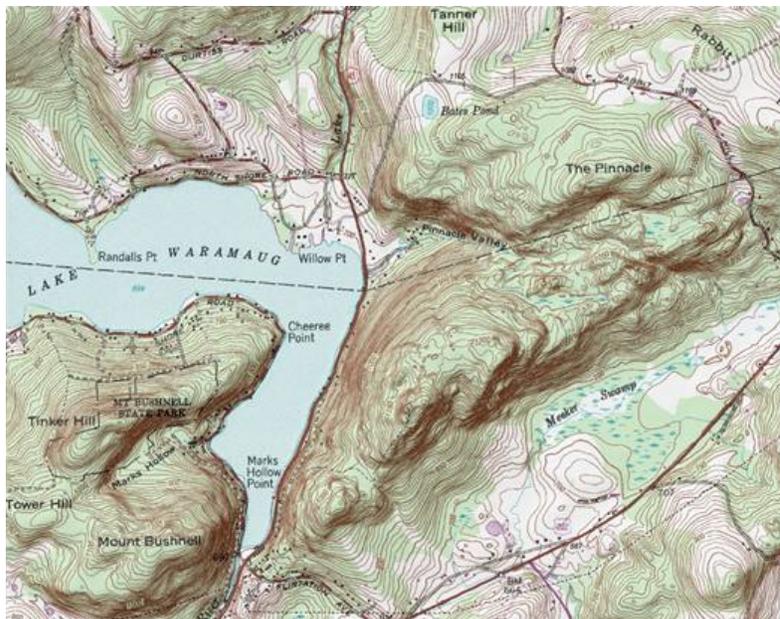


The Macricostas Preserve, nestled between the East side of Pinnacle Mountain and the West of Christian Street in Washington, is currently made up of 463 acres of Steep Rock-owned land, forever protected, as well as 165 acres of easements - largely acquired through the Steep Rock Association - with limited public access. Thoughtful stewardship of this acreage ensures that this once vulnerable property, all of which is in our watershed or that of Meeker Swamp, will be conserved for public use. As well, management of invasive flora, habitat protection of countless fauna and most importantly, protecting the waters that spill directly into our Lake, must be accomplished. Run-off from developed properties, often lacking in the natural filtration that mature trees and other vegetation provide, contributes to the pollution and eutrophication (death) of lakes.

An ounce of proverbial prevention is worth a pound of the reciprocal cure; that which the Lake Waramaug Task Force works so diligently to clean after the damage has been done by careless development practices, can be better avoided by conservation. Harmful effects of development, such as erosion and the removal of natural vegetation that acts as a filtration system for run-off, bring sediment and nutrient-rich water into the lake from the surrounding landscape. Instead, the Pinnacle Valley delivers water to our Lake as originally intended: clean, via seasonal streams that have been siphoned through forest lands. An added and immeasurable benefit of these conservation measures: the breathtaking views that frame the Pinnacle Valley will remain pristine and intact.

Constantine "Deno" Macricostas may not be a household name for most of our members, but it should be. Anyone who has hiked to the Pinnacle to take in the view of our splendid Lake from Waramaug's Rock has him to thank for ensuring access for us all. He is a Greek-born, award-winning entrepreneur who has held private business in Brookfield since 1960, before which he attended University in Hartford and served in the US Army. He is no stranger to philanthropy, and has given generously to Western Connecticut State University, The American School of Classical Studies in Athens, and of course, to the Steep Rock Association. On April 26, 2000, in a bargain-sale to the Steep Rock Association, Mr. Macricostas placed 214 Christian Street into preserved status, which included an 1860 2,821 square-foot, 6-bedroom farmhouse and its accompanying 280 acres, giving hikers direct access to the Pinnacle via trails that meander through Meeker Swamp and adjacent farmlands.

At one time, 214 Christian Street was slated for subdivision, destined to hold hundreds of private homes. In a 1978 development project known as The Washington Glen, investors envisioned an adult community of 265 one to three bedroom homes, 190 acres of shared recreational space and a community waste treatment plant. Thanks to the Macricostas Family, we instead have hundreds of acres of publicly-accessed hiking trails, unspoiled views, a protected watershed, quieter bucolic neighborhoods, and even the community Judea Garden that produces tens of thousands of pounds of organically-grown produce for our neighbors in need.



Prior to the Macricostas transaction, the Pinnacle was accessed mainly by an easement off of June Road, which was given to Steep Rock in 2005, or via the former Boulders Inn property (now a private home) on a trail designated for houseguests. In fact, the location of the Pinnacle, also known as Waramaug's Rock, is also technically situated on privately held land, open to us all thanks to that generous easement by a private family who wishes to remain anonymous. Most of the acreage covered in order to reach the summit is done so courtesy of this easement, which was made via formal agreement with Steep Rock in 2005.

The history of the land is long. The hills that dramatically embrace our lake were formed after the last Ice Age, about 20,000 years ago, and nomadic tribes of indigenous people were likely the first to reach the lake, following the footsteps of migratory animals, many of which may make up the same trails we follow in the Preserve today. The Weantinoge people used Lake Waramaug as a summer residence, evidenced by archaeological data unearthed behind the Hopkins Inn, by about 2,700 B.C.E. The Pinnacle Valley was a natural migration point for the Weantinoge, and Waramaug's rock, a convenient prospecting point. *Continued on page 4*

## The Macricostas Expansion Project: *Continued*



*From the Collection of the Gunn Historical Museum, Washington, CT*

Local historians believe that the Pinnacle served as a key point in a tribal communications network made up of high points all along the East Coast, including the Berkshires and her Foothills, as well as other high points all along the Housatonic Valley. From these mountaintops, native peoples used a signaling system - fires by night and smoke by day - to communicate with neighboring tribespeople. The system generally used pre-arranged signals, but generally, one puff meant "Attention", two puffs, "All's Well," and three meant "Danger" or "Help."

During the Colonial era, the pinnacle was well utilized, too. There has been much speculation about the Hebrew carvings etched in the rock at the Pinnacle: Adam, Isaac, Moses and Abram, first noted by Dr. Ezra Stiles, President of Yale College, who in 1789 hypothesized "that the source of the carvings had been a group of Jewish miners, circa 1780, prospecting for minerals or potential mines in the Cornwall, Kent and New Milford area. And the inscriptions were said to have been a memorial to their companions who had died during the course of their expedition." (The History of Lake Waramaug, by Mary Harwood for the Lake Waramaug Association, 1996.) Alas, thanks to Ms. Harwood's meticulous research, we now know that the engraver was

actually Ebenezer Beeman, an eccentric who happened to be in possession of a Hebrew dictionary, a chisel and some free time in 1774.

Tertius Reynolds, a 19th century Warren-born clergyman, wrote verse inspired by the majestic 360-degree views offered by the Pinnacle: "Yonder, where lies that crooked winding lake, Which thy wild fancy liken'd to a snake, there lies a deep, a bottomless abyss, Where sunk the waters as their fury ceas'd; The tumult ceasing left this peak so high, Like ancient Babel towering to the sky." Victorian holiday goers footed their way up the well-worn trails. In the 1960s and '70s, young people camped overnight as a rite-of-passage (which is not permitted under current Steep Rock regulations).

Today, there are countless articles, hiking enthusiasts' blog posts and Instagram photos highlighting the breathtaking views that the Pinnacle provides. Thanks to easements made possible from a private family, as well as the efforts of the Steep Rock Association, the Pinnacle is permanently saved from development and open for all to enjoy. Plans to expand the Macricostas Preserve will only further protect the Lake's waters and unspoiled views of the Pinnacle Valley. As of March of this year, Steep Rock has added 100 acres to the Preserve, with hopes to acquire 700 more, for which a capital campaign is well underway, with a goal of \$800,000; the time is now to act, as there are currently several neighboring parcels on the market, all of which have a high conservation value. These parcels also contain many land features that are desirable to hikers and environmental conservationists: water features, another 1100 foot high peak, and a complex and varied ecosystem of plants and animals.

The Association looks forward to working together with Steep Rock in reaching our shared goals of conservation and preservation of precious lands within the Lake's watershed. For more information about the Macricostas Expansion Project, please see <https://steeprockassoc.org/pinnacle/>

### Save the date: It's official...!

Our picnic has become an annual affair. Join us for a bring-your-own picnic on Saturday, July 27th, at 6:00 PM for an evening of dancing, merriment and a few surprises. We'll look forward to seeing you there!

*Sara Bowman - View From Tanner Hill, 2018  
Oil on Canvas, 14 x 18 - Private Collection*



**The Lake  
Waramaug Association  
is social media savvy!**

Please "like" us on Facebook or follow us on Instagram for up-to-date Association news.



*From the Collection of the Gunn Historical Museum*

