

Moosic spring 2008 Lakes

A seasonal newsletter about management, conservation

and recreational happenings of the Moosic Lakes community

news

WORDS INTO ACTION: Environmental Studies Forum



What studies were conducted on our Lakes last year, and what did they reveal? In March, the Board hosted our first ever "Environmental Information Forum", where specialists gathered at the Community Center to present their findings related to lake habitat, vegetation, and water quality. These specialists have been involved with our Community for many years. John Menichello and former MLC President, Barbara Giovagnoli coordinated the event. Over 20 residents attended, learning both what the findings mean to our Community and what roles each can play toward maintaining the quality of our environment. Below are brief summaries of each presenter's key points.



Lake Habitat Analysis (Fishery Study) *Joseph Gallagher, Ecological Solutions, Inc.*

Joe's work involved studying the types of fish in our lakes, determining their health, and providing suggestions related to any stocking.

Walleye, black crappie, and large- and small-mouth bass are the preferred fish species in our lakes. However, yellow perch and pumpkin seed ("sun fish") are the most dominant. We also have a small but healthy population of trout.

At present, the biggest challenge inhibiting the natural growth of our fish population is the lack of suitable habitat. For instance, the Big Lake contains almost no vegetation and therefore, provides little shelter for younger fish to hide from predators. Furthermore, lack of prey eliminates an abundance of predator species.

All dues-paying residents should have opportunity to utilize the lakes for their enjoyment, whether that is for swimming, boating, or fishing. But great swimming and great fishing do not mix. For example, the Big Lake is actually "too clean" to allow a natural growth of the fish population. Conversely, this high water quality and clarity creates an ideal condition for swimming.

If the community is interested in growing the fish population, Joe recommends the use of "pallets" to create an artificial structure in water 6' to 8' deep. If a preferred method of increasing the population is via stocking, he recommends a diversity of habitat, supplementing the natural prey base with fat-head minnows, and initiating a management program to both control the desired habitat and limit the amount of harvest. Our lakes are best suited for large-mouth bass, but trout should also be stocked. For the Big Lake, Joe suggests small-mouth bass (6" to 8"), trout, and relocating some juvenile perch from the Little Lake (note: Joe confirmed that this poses no problems for the Big Lake as long as proper transfer procedures, which include a thorough cleaning of the fish, are followed). For the Little Lake, he suggests larger bass.

We anticipate availability of Joe's comprehensive report and, following receipt, intend to post the report on our web site.



Aquatic Plant Management & Lake Vegetation *William Kirkpatrick, Aquatic Environmental Consultants*

Aquatic plants are a very important part of our ecosystem, providing oxygen, food for wild life, shelter for fish, and reducing sediment movement in our waters. To develop an aquatic management program, Bill states that it is necessary to first gather data on plant species and locations, water body uses (the ideal percentage of vegetation depends on usage of water body), watershed activity, and water quality. Then, it is important to learn how communities with similar lakes manage their aquatic plant life. Some apply raking procedures. However,

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Upcoming Activities, Events, and Meetings

June

27 – Wine Tasting Event

29 – General Membership Meeting

(Members intending to pay dues at meeting must arrive by 1:30pm.)

July

20 – General Membership Meeting

26 – Regatta and BBQ
(Rain date is July 27.)

August

TBA – Pasta Dinner

17 – Guided Nature Walk
(Tour of land owned by The Nature Conservancy, which is adjacent to our community. Sponsored by Ellen Lott, Project Manager.)

23 – Women's Club Dance

TBA – General Membership Meeting

*(Election of Directors)
(Meeting date to be finalized at June meeting.)*

Officers and Director Meetings: 7:00 pm on first Wednesday of each month at the Community Center. Ideas, suggestions, and concerns are welcome. Any meeting date or time changes will be posted on community boards.

Jefferson Township Monthly Meetings: Municipal building on Cortez Road, Mount Cobb, as follows:

- **Supervisors:** 1st Monday of month, 7:30 pm
- **Zoning:** As needed
- **Sewer:** 3rd Monday of month, 7:00 pm
- **Planning:** 2nd Wednesday of month, 7:00 pm

Reminders will be posted on community boards. Please attend whenever possible, as many decisions made during these meetings affect our community.

*"NEVER DOUBT
THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL,
COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD;
INDEED, IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS."*

Margaret Mead

BOARD'S MESSAGE

.... And a warm "welcome back" to all seasonal residents!

As the summer season approaches, we look forward to seeing many of you enjoying all that our woodlands and lakes offer... perhaps taking a tranquil evening stroll to admire the fresh foliage and wild flowers, or braving the chill of an early-season swim in our clean, spring-fed waters.

We also look forward to seeing each of you at our June General Membership meeting. We are requesting that at least one family member from your household attend.

As you read through this newsletter, it should be clear to you that we have been very busy since last August. And we remain committed to serving our Community

*Greetings
Moosic Lakers!*



to the very best of our abilities. But we cannot do this alone, and desperately need your help – which translates to:

your input and ideas at our meetings, and
your active participation as a volunteer.

In our autumn newsletter, we laid out the many areas where we need your help. And particularly now, as we gather at the Community Center later this month, we will expect your commitment to help in these areas.

With our best wishes for good health, prosperity, and a pleasant summer season,

*The Moosic Lakes Club Officers & Directors
– June 2008*

Environmental Studies Forum *continued from page 1*

this method may only cut plants and not reach roots. Others dredge their waters, which is the most expensive procedure. But dredging removes sediment and nutrients and increases lake depth. Liming, another method, increases plant productivity but decreases the desirability for swimming. Weed barriers (carpet mat on lake floor) may also be used.

Bill has been involved in the treatment of vegetation in our lakes for over a decade. This includes the water shield and milfoil, our native plant species that grow in our lakes all summer long. Most recently, he has been focusing on the challenges in the Little Lake, where these species, he states, were "out of control". Left untreated, Bill explained, "The water shield, a nasty lily pad, would eventually cover the surface of the lake and kill everything else." He takes a conservative approach, "spot treating" the water shield by applying an herbicide on the leaves, where it is absorbed into the plant. No chemicals are thrown into the water-at-large. Last year proved particularly challenging in terms of Little Lake vegetation growth. And this year, the monies have been budgeted for treatment "just in case". Joe Kearney, resident and Environmental Committee member, states, "We're prepared for the worst, like last year when the milfoil really took off, but we'll hope for the best. We'll monitor the lake throughout the summer and deal with the growth if needed."

Water Quality & Well Testing

Dr. Joseph Calabro, Aqua-Tech Laboratory

Joe annually samples our lake waters throughout the summer, looking for indicators of pollution and monitoring for swimming safety. He also tests residents' well waters to ensure the water is safe for drinking.

At this time our lake waters are, according to Joe, "unusually clear, clean, and very safe for swimming; there is nothing in the waters upon which micro-organisms can thrive, nothing to make you sick." Still, to maintain our pristine lakes, we must follow these important tips and regulations:



- DO NOT drink or cook with the lake water. DO NOT feed the geese or ducks. And if clearing off docks from waterfowl wastes, DO NOT SWEEP IT INTO THE LAKES. Please bag it and dispose it in the trash.
- DO NOT use soap in the lakes.
- DO NOT put anything into the lake – it is a misdemeanor.
- If you haven't already, connect to the sewer system.
- Beware of beavers, which shed sickness-causing cysts into the water. Be sure to contact MLC if you spot a beaver.

Our Community Water System is maintained by the state. However, Pennsylvania currently does not maintain established rules and regulations regarding well water safety. Dormant wells are particularly vulnerable. If home wells are shut down for more than 2 months, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recommends that homeowners consider disinfecting before starting up again. The procedures involve pouring ½ gallon of bleach into your well head before bedtime and then running all taps the following morning until the odor of bleach is gone. More information is available on the DEP website at www.depweb.state.pa.us. Furthermore, if you have a well, Joe offers the following suggestions:

- Test for fecal coliform each year. MLC offers this testing annually in summertime, through Joe's laboratory. Members will be informed of the date for water sample collection.
- Never use hot water for drinking or cooking.
- Let cold water run until you have a constant temperature.
- Consider a one-time nitrate test on your well water (approx. \$25)
- Contact MLC if your water looks, tastes, or smells "funny".
- If you are having a new well drilled, ensure your drillers perform a "potable test". This tests the pH – nitrates and coliform.

Board Moves Forward



Following discussions at last year's General Membership Meetings, the Board and Directors moved forward on a number of priorities expressed by residents. These covered areas such as enforcement policies, road infrastructure and maintenance, and lakes water quality preservation. Below are just some of the actions taken over the past eight months.

Enforcement Issues

1. Appletree Management Group.

Subsequent to the mandate of the membership, the Board executed an agreement with Appletree Management Group to conduct a site survey of all improved lots in the community. Appletree will begin a survey to identify violations on each improved property according to deed covenants, Club Rules and Regulations, and Township Zoning Ordinances. Letters were sent to residents informing them of the survey and the follow-up functions. The survey is expected to start in June.

Appletree will present the results of the survey to the Board, who will set enforcement priorities based on the findings. As voted upon by the membership last summer, owners of improved lots will be assessed \$40 to cover the cost of the site survey project.

2. Legal. The Board has continued to deal with both existing and new legal issues. At times, though a frustrating, lengthy, and time-consuming process, such issues are to be expected in an ever-growing community. With the increasing number of legal issues and a need to increase the timeliness of our response to each case, the Board is finalizing its' engagement with a second attorney to represent the Club when required. Brigid Carey, Esq., will continue to take on select Club matters and continue to handle existing cases.

3. Dues. Club dues have not been increased in many years, yet annual expenses have increased dramatically. This year, the Board needed to institute dues increases in order to remain financially solvent in providing sufficient funds to cover ever-increasing costs for road infrastructure and maintenance, litigation, collection, and enforcement issues.

Past-Due Accounts. Since unpaid dues and assessments put a financial strain on the Club and create an inequitable situation within the community, the Board has decided to refer all accounts that are over one year past due to the Club's attorney for collection and/or legal action.

Roads

1. Signage. For safety reasons, road signs and reflectors have and will continue to be posted to help increase safety awareness.

2. Maintenance and Repair Priorities. In March, Kristin O'Donnell arranged a visit from Jerry Stiles, Erosion and Sediment Control Technician/Dirt and Gravel Roads Administrator of Lackawanna County's Conversation District. Jerry evaluated our entire road system. Some of

his comments, which will help the Board set priorities for road maintenance, include:

- Cleaning, maintaining, and stabilizing the banks of ditches
- Ensuring roads have prominent crowns to divert water and prevent potholes
- Using the correct aggregate for a driving surface

3. Completed Projects. Projects completed this past year under the directorship of PJ Dempsey included:

- Paving of secondary entranceway off Route 247
- Resolution of run-off challenges at Pines Commons
- Grading, crowning, and creating a new ditch on Saw Mill Road
- Twice-repairing of potholes and application of magnesium chloride for dust control throughout road system

Lakes

1. Fish Stocking. The Board will take appropriate action in fish stocking following recommendations set forth in the various lakes studies during the year.

2. Little Lake Treatment. Various studies conducted on the lakes revealed problems on the bottom of Little Lake. Corrective steps must be undertaken and monies have been budgeted to address the problems. (see page 2)

In addition...

Website

The Board has launched a website to enhance communication among residents. Special thanks to John Menichello for driving this successful project. Check it out! www.moosiclakes.org (see page 5)

Spring Blossoms over the Big Lake

Photo courtesy of John Menichello.





FROM THE *Treasurer*

Many Moosic Lakes Club members were surprised by the increase in dues for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. Why did we have to increase dues? For starters...

- Costs have increased for most of our vendors, and many of our vendors have passed these costs on to their customers.
- We had a very expensive winter in terms of snow removal. Our budget for last year anticipated expenses of \$10,000 for snow removal, yet we spent \$15,000 to keep our roads plowed and cindered.
- Roads (repairs, dust control, snow removal and cindering, etc.) continue to be our greatest area of expense. You may recall that 40% of last year's budget forecast was allocated towards roads. When all bills were paid, the road costs escalated to 50% of budget.
- We expect continued increases in utilities (propane, electric, and telephone), insurance, and road maintenance for this next fiscal year.
- We also have increased our provision for weed treatment at the Little Lake.

In this particularly challenging economic environment, I have no doubt that each of us on a personal level has had to revisit how best to control expenses. Please know that, similarly, we are making every effort to do the same. And we hope that we will be able to operate within the proposed 2008-2009 budget. (Please attend the June 29 General Membership Meeting, where this budget will be presented.)

For those of you who have not yet paid your 2008-2009 dues: We are granting an extension until the General Membership Meeting. But members intending to pay delinquent dues at that time MUST ARRIVE NO LATER THAN 1:30pm. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss your account, please do not hesitate to call me at (570) 489-7163.

Betty Burns

Clean-Up Day at Moosic Lakes

The day was cool. Deep fog limited visibility, but individual residents and families met at the Community Center on Saturday morning, May 3rd, to pick up materials and stake out their territory for the annual Clean-Up Day project. All road perimeters were cleared of bottles, papers, rusted pipes, and miscellaneous items. In all, resident Kurt Hennemuth loaded five trucks of properly bagged waste and material and brought to the entrance of the Community.

Special thanks to: John Menichello for initiating and promoting the event; Susan Hennemuth for working with Penn Dot and organizing the day; Kurt Hennemuth for involvement and pick-up duties; Laila Kane for luncheon preparation; Peggy Hennemuth for her organization skills and assistance with lunch; and our other wonderful volunteers – the Blake family, Hannah, Alexia, David and Geff; the Kovalchik family, Mike and Carole, Mike Jr., Cory; Ian and Maura Farr; Mike and Karen Saffo; Rita and Bob (Mac) MacNeal; Mike and Patti Donaghy; Cory Hennemuth; Cory Meade; Chris Cawley and nephew, Jack; Betty Burns; Barbara Cawley; the Schultz family, Phil and Melanie, Caleb, Hannah.



Thanks to all for a job well done!

*Photo courtesy of Barbara Cawley.
Volunteering on clean-up day.*

Note: Penn Dot, per agreement, hauled away the collected debris. However, unknown individuals have now jeopardized our future participation in this event due to placement of an old mattress and other personal refuse onto "the pile". Both Penn Dot and the MLC Board remind all residents that this event is for roadway refuse disposal only, as collected into plastic bags provided to volunteers on the day of the event. We sincerely express our apologies and appreciation to Susan Hennemuth for having to negotiate with Penn Dot around this incident.

Are You "Blinded by the Light?"

Kristin O'Donnell shares information from the International Dark-Sky Association

As the resident population has grown in our community, the number of lights around both our lakefronts and roadways at night has also grown. With both our neighbors and our ecological community in mind, we should consider some of the principles offered by the International Dark-Sky Association, whose mission is to "preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies through quality outdoor lighting."

What is light pollution? Light pollution is any adverse effect of artificial light, including sky glow, glare, light trespass, light clutter, decreased visibility at night, and energy waste.

Does light pollution affect the surrounding ecological community? Absolutely! Artificial light at night has been shown to affect the mating, migration, and predation behaviors of many different species and, consequently, the ecological community, as a whole. It also reduces visibility of species that communicate through light (bioluminescent flashes), such as glowworms and fireflies. Fireflies are particularly common during the summer within our Community.

Whether outdoor lighting is directly adjacent to a species habitat or located at some distance, as through sky glow, the combined effects of artificial lighting on vast numbers of nocturnal species have the potential to disrupt the functioning of entire ecosystems by disrupting balances in competition and predation.

Is it true that light at night may be harmful to me? Specified periods of light and dark, known as circadian rhythms, are essential for good health for most life on Earth, including humans. Careless outdoor lighting can trespass onto neighboring property and into neighbor's homes, disrupting important healthy sleeping patterns.

What can I do to reduce light pollution? Use outdoor light at night only when and where it is needed and at appropriate lighting levels. Use fully shielded, light efficient fixtures aimed directly at the ground. Finally, incorporate timers and sensors to shut off lights when not needed.

For more information, visit www.darksky.org



We're Online!

Last year, our membership voted in favor of creating a website for our community. And since that time, resident Frank Sylvester has donated much effort to this endeavor. Our site is now "live" and is located on the web at www.moosiclakes.org.

Our website offers a wide range of information -- from a brief history of our lakes to volunteer opportunities, regulations and reminders, and upcoming events. Residents are also able to access previous issues of our seasonal newsletter! Furthermore, as we are an active community, the Board intends to use the site to communicate news that may be of interest to members. We also anticipate that being online may serve as a way to keep seasonal residents connected to year-round community happenings and information. And we plan to use the site to gather feedback and ideas from members regarding issues that may affect the community.

We recognize that many residents may not have access to computers or may not be prone to online communication. So please be assured that the site will not replace our primary methods of correspondence, which are postal mailings and community board postings. Also, the site will not be used to sell properties or promote Moosic Lakes outside of our community. Rather, as we are in desperate need of volunteers from the membership, it is our hope that all those who choose to access this site will gain a greater understanding of issues affecting our community and become more involved in preserving the health and beauty of our lakes and woodlands.

We encourage those with computer access to go to www.moosiclakes.org, and will look forward to your feedback. Thank you, Frank, for getting us to the point of "going live"!

Important Reminders

(Please contact MLC if you have any questions or concerns regarding these reminders. Messages left on voice-mail will be returned within one week.)

Club Property.

MLC owns property along both the shoreline and on either side of the roads. Cutting of any tree along the shoreline of the lake and in the right of way of the road is allowed only after MLC has been contacted and permission has been granted.

As the roads right of way varies greatly throughout the community (can be anywhere from 25 feet to 150 feet), members do not own all of the trees that appear to be on their property.

Trees along the shoreline cannot be cut down without permission, and such opening of the shoreline should be limited to lake access of approximately 20 feet. The less cut down at the shoreline the better, as this area serves as the filter for all runoff going into the lakes. Clear cutting of the shoreline is absolutely forbidden.

These restrictions are to ensure that the lakes are protected from unnecessary runoff and the community maintains its rural quality. Contact MLC in order to review property lines before tree cutting. Also, for the preservation of our woodlands and natural scenery, property owners are asked to consider maintaining as many trees on their property as possible.

Dues and Assessments.

Because we are a private community, all roadwork, snow removal, insurance, and maintenance of facilities, to name only some responsibilities, are financed solely on the dues from property owners. Residents are invoiced annually in early April, and all dues and assessments must be paid-in-full by May 31. Delinquent payments are subject to an additional \$30.00 fee. (Keep in mind that MLC must pay its bills on a timely basis. And, if residents fail to pay their dues on time, MLC will also incur late charges.) Please understand our policy and pay any outstanding fees as soon as possible. If you need to make special arrangements, please contact our Treasurer, Betty Burns, at (570) 489-7163.

Trees.

The Officers and Directors will continue to monitor the cutting of trees where deemed appropriate for safety or infrastructure needs.

Renters.

Rentals of property are not allowed at Moosic Lakes.



Resale Certificate.

Any member considering selling property is required to have a resale certificate at closing. The purpose of this requirement is to give new owners an opportunity to learn of membership requirements, dues, by-laws, and policies.



Roads.

The **speed limit is 15 MPH for all vehicles** including automobiles, trucks, motor and mountain bikes, golf carts, snowmobiles, and ATV's.

Pets.

Dogs are not permitted to run wild and must be leashed when off the owner's property, and restrained when on the owner's property. Also, please clean up promptly after your pet. Pet waste can contaminate our lakes.

Boat Requirements.

No motorboats are allowed. Every watercraft, i.e., rowboats, sail boats, kayaks, other water vessels must be equipped with a PFD life preserver per person and noise activating device (Ex. a whistle). This is in keeping with the PA State Laws. Children must wear PFD at all times when in a craft.

Lakes and Waterfront.

Waterfront rules must be observed. PA rules apply for boating and fishing. Only members' boats with identifying stickers are allowed on the Lakes. To insure the pure quality of the Lakes, residents and guests are requested not to take boats from one lake to another. Boats are to be washed down if being brought from another lake.

Guests at Moosic Lakes.

Guests must adhere to all rules and regulations of Moosic Lakes, including boating, swimming, hunting and fishing regulations. Guests must also have resident members' cards for use of lake facilities.

Community Center Regulations & Aquatic Safety.

All users of the Lakes and Community Center must adhere to the Center's rules and regulations, to all posted main beach rules, and to those rules enforced by lifeguards. For information about renting the Center, or to schedule any activities or events at the Center, please contact MLC.



Safety and In Case of Emergency.

For purposes of safety and emergency issues, residents are asked to consider providing specific directions and addresses to their Moosic Lakes home/property, not only to Jefferson Township responders, but to any home security providers residents may use as well.

The Moosic Lakes Club is a non-profit organization that acquires, holds and maintains real estate, roads, and lake rights for the purpose of the private community. MLC promotes civic, community, and environmental interest via volunteerism among its residents. MLC also promotes recreation by maintaining a community center and fostering social activities for the enjoyment of its members.

Officers & Directors

Chris Cawley *President*
John Menichello *Vice President*
Betty Burns *Treasurer*
Kristen O'Donnell *Secretary*
Barbara Cawley *Director*
Jim Bollard *Director*
P. J. Dempsey *Director*



Photo courtesy of John Menichello.

Environmental Studies Forum

*Guest speakers from the March 15
Environmental Studies Forum L-R:
William Kirkpatrick, Joseph Gallagher,
Dr. Joseph Calabro*

Moosic Lakes Club (MLC)

(570) 489-2664

For questions regarding rules & regulations, by-laws, and general questions or concerns. Messages left on voice-mail will be returned within one week.

Security

Please remember that all residents are members of Moosic Lakes Club Security.

Jefferson Township Police (available 6:00 pm through Midnight) can be contacted by dialing 911.

Contact **Pennsylvania State Police** at (888) 992-6833 when Township police are not available.

Jefferson Twp. Sewer Authority

(570) 689-9522

Jefferson Twp. Municipal Building

(570) 689-7028

The Moosic Lakes Newsletter is produced by the Moosic Lakes Club. Please consider writing for our publication! And if you have events, workshops, or any other information you would like to submit for the next edition, please e-mail the information to bacawley@yahoo.com or to jmenichello@hotmail.com, or call MLC. All information for the next edition must be received by September 30, 2008, and is subject to editing.



MOOSIC LAKES

15 Moosic Lakes
Jefferson Twp. PA 18436

*"It's better to light a candle
than to curse the darkness"*
– Eleanor Roosevelt

Become a volunteer in your
community today!