



## Lake Waramaug Task Force, Inc.

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Sean Hayden  
**Executive Director**

The lake Waramaug Task Force is a non-profit scientific and educational organization dedicated to maintaining and preserving the ecology and water quality of Lake Waramaug and its watershed.

**Dear Friends of Lake Waramaug:**

**Fall 2017**

Congratulations! Your commitment to Lake Waramaug shows. This summer our beautiful Lake sparkled. Swimmers, boaters, water-skiers, kayakers, paddle-boarders, campers, fisher-people... all enjoyed the benefits of your ongoing support: Waramaug's clean, clear, swimmable water.

For the Lake Waramaug Task Force this was not only a beautiful summer, it was also a busy summer.

We welcomed Sean Hayden aboard as our new Executive Director. Sean was out on the Lake almost every day coordinating water quality testing, surveying for invasive weeds, making sure our in-lake aeration system kept working, overseeing the feeding and release of Zooplankton from our incubators tanks on Arrow Point, inspecting stormwater culverts and construction activities along the shoreline, consulting with our lake scientists and assisting landowners on lake-friendly ways to landscape within the Lake Waramaug watershed. Phew!

Our report? Waramaug's water quality continues to steadily improve. This year, water transparencies almost hit 10 feet. Quite a difference from when the Task Force first started measuring clarity back in the 1980's, when 5 feet was typical. Our intensified hand pulling and suction harvesting program continues to fight to minimize the spread of invasive Curly-leaf Pondweed in the Lake. And, most importantly, algae blooms were minimal, lessening the risk of dangerous, toxic Cyanobacteria that has plagued so many of Connecticut's – and the country's – freshwater lakes.

This marks my third year as Chair of the LWTF... and I am awed and energized by what we have been able to accomplish together. We've come a long way, but still have a long way to go. We must remain vigilant. Waramaug is not immune to the lake damaging effects of over development, nutrient loading and the increased intensity of rain events. We are keeping ahead of the Curly-leaf Pondweed infestation... but just barely. We need to maintain and intensify our existing programs and remain on the cutting edge of lake science and soil erosion control strategies.

Please continue to support the work of the Task Force. We depend on donations from people like you. We do NOT get any Federal or State funding. We cannot let down our guard!

Best,

**Molly Butler Hart**  
Chair, Lake Waramaug Task Force

## AN UPDATE FROM SEAN HAYDEN LWTF Executive Director



In my former position as Executive Director of the Northwest Conservation District (NWCD), I worked with many of the lake protection groups throughout the northwest corner of CT, and Lake Waramaug was the only lake where water quality has been steadily improving. I am convinced our Lake is benefiting from the passion of the people connected to it, either by living near it, or folks who frequent the public access points, or the community that enjoys the many surrounding outdoor recreational opportunities. The night has a thousand eyes... and one might say the same for Lake Waramaug.

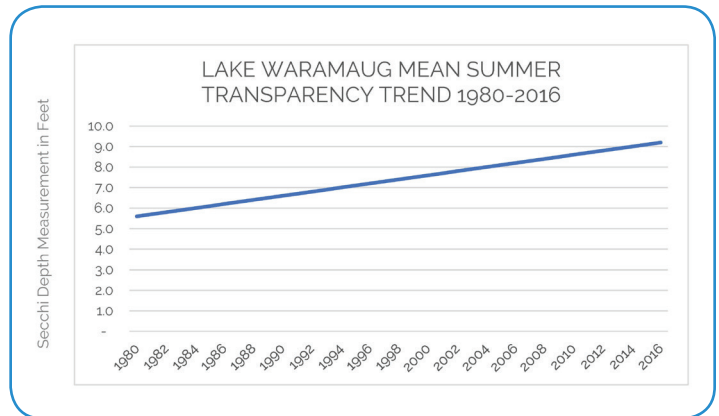
Every week during the summer season, rain or shine, the LWTF goes out onto the Lake. We collect water samples, survey for non-native invasive aquatic plant species and document any significant changes on the shores.



These weekly samples measure water clarity, temperature and the concentration of oxygen dissolved in the lake water. All this data helps us anticipate any issues which may be brewing under the surface, and allows us to react quickly to water quality degrading events.

**LWTF Summer Intern Holly Geddes uses a "Secchi Disk" to measure water clarity in the Lake. Clarity can be affected by high concentrations of algae and/or turbid water entering the Lake. When clarity is diminished, both fish and aquatic plants can be affected, further degrading water quality.**

In addition to the weekly samplings, we also perform extensive monthly sampling for a broad range of physical and chemical properties. These are taken throughout the entire water column, and give us critical information on aquatic organism populations, conductivity and nutrients concentrations including phosphorous and nitrogen. The Task Force also collects and analyzes water samples from five locations on Sucker Brook, the Lake's primary tributary. Each month, after large precipitation events, samples are taken to better understand the watershed's contribution to nutrients and bacteria in the Lake.



**The LWTF takes Secchi Depth measurements every week during ice off conditions and data has been collected on Lake Waramaug for over 40 years. Note the improving trend, especially over the last 16 years.**

Our long-time Limnologist, Dr. Robert Kortmann compiles and helps us interpret all this data so we remain on the cutting edge in developing new, and improving existing, clean water protection strategies. These strategies include:

- Manipulating the oxygen flow from our four aerators and system of piping throughout the Lake
- Enhancing zooplankton populations
- Reducing alewives
- Delaying ice on or ice off to impede algae growth
- Stabilizing erosion sites along Sucker Brook to control the flow of nutrients entering the Lake

### WHO ELSE WATCHES THE LAKE?

Every two weeks throughout the summer swimming season, Torrington Area Health samples the Warren Town Beach for E. coli, a pathogenic bacteria that can cause serious illness at relatively low concentrations. The New Milford Health Department samples the Washington Town Beach every week for E. coli. The CT DEEP samples the Kent State Park swimming area every week for E. coli and they also measure Cyanobacteria concentrations, which at high concentration can create toxins that cause serious illness in humans but are much more hazardous for pets.



## JOIN OUR WEED WATCH PROGRAM

Control of invasive aquatic plants is also where the LWTF's – and your – eyes on the Lake is key. The Task Force retains experts who identify and control the invasive aquatic weed populations in the lake. Now LWTF is launching a citizen science/weed-watch program to increase the number of eyes on the Lake looking for invasive aquatic plant species. We will sponsor a half-day training to teach Lake lovers how to spot these noxious weeds. Early detection is the only way to eradicate an invasive weed population. If you, or your children, would like to learn how to spot invasives, please email or call LWTF, or stay tuned to our website for an announcement. Our Aquatic Invasive expert George Knoecklein of Northeast Aquatic Research will be running the training.



**Invasive Aquatic Plant expert George Knoecklein using a lake rake to pull and identify Curlyleaf Pond Weed (*Potamogeton Crispus*), a non-native, invasive aquatic species, from Lake Waramaug.**

## A FISH STORY

Alewives are down – that's good! "We're not seeing schools of Alewives shimmering in the water like we used to," says Hank Valley. "And, we're not finding them in the bellies of other fish." Hank is a long time Lake Waramaug fisherman who documents the steady improvement in the health of the Lake by what's biting. He is also the Washington Boat Launch Director, which provides another vantage point to assess the catch. Hank also reports that larger Pickerel are showing up more frequently, along with large and small mouth bass. So why would an inveterate fisherman celebrate the decline of a fish population?



**Hank Valley shows off his 5 lb large mouth bass caught in Lake Waramaug this summer.**

A decreased alewife population can mean an increased zooplankton population, which in turn can mean less blue green algae, aka Cyanobacteria.

## BOAT LAUNCH SUMMER TALLY

The Lake Waramaug Task Force runs the Washington Boat Launch Inspection Program. Any power boat that wants to come onto Lake Waramaug must be inspected for invasive aquatic weeds. Boats that have been cleared for launch receive a sticker. If boaters are stopped on the Lake without a sticker, they can be fined. This program, which has been in force for the past 10 years, prevents boats that have been in other Lakes from coming into Waramaug with invasive weeds hitching a ride.

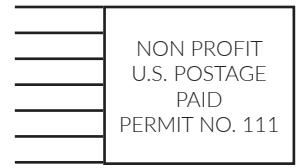
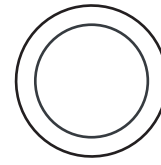
Washington Boat Launch Director (and dedicated Waramaug fisherman) Hank Valley reports that over this summer he turned away 7 day fishing boats that showed up at the launch. He surmises that the number was relatively low because by this time, the fisherman who want to fish in Waramaug know the ropes and know they cannot get their fishing boat in the lake without having it inspected. If Hank sees weeds, he insists they take the boat and get it cleaned. This helps us keep such invasives as Milfoil, Water Chestnut and Fanwort from choking the Lake. "So those that come, come clean. Those that don't want to bother cleaning up, go elsewhere." Which is exactly what we hoped would happen!

## GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA AWARD

The Lake Waramaug Task Force has been honored by The Garden Club of America! We received the GCA's award for "The Lake Waramaug Task Force's dedicated commitment to a restoration program to maintain the ecology and water quality for the future." LWTF Chair Molly Butler Hart accepted the award from Karen Marche, GCA Conservation Committee, Zone II Representative at a luncheon at Hollister House. Kudos to all those who have supported the Task Force over the years. This prestigious award is yours as well as ours.



**LWTF Chair, Molly Butler Hart (center), accepts award from Karen Marche (right) of The Garden Club of America Conservation Committee.**

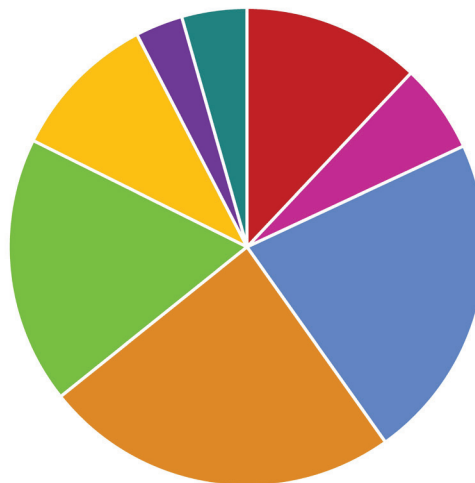


## KEEP IN-THE-KNOW. IT'S EASY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LWTF ACTIVITIES:

- Visit our NEW website at: [www.lakewaramaug.org](http://www.lakewaramaug.org)
- Join our mailing list on our website or email us at [info@lakewaramaug.org](mailto:info@lakewaramaug.org)
- Follow us on Facebook (LakeWaramaugTaskForce) or Instagram (lwtaskforce)

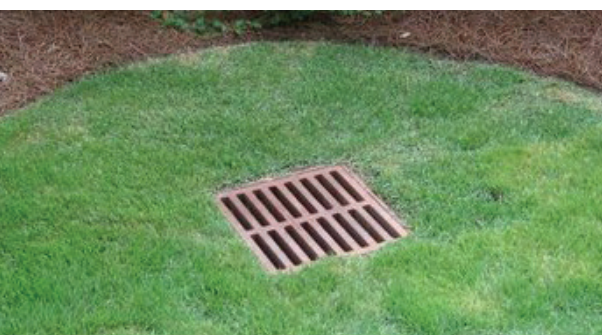


LWTF - HOW YOUR LAKE PROTECTION DOLLARS ARE DISTRIBUTED



- Invasive Aquatic Plant Control 12%
- In-lake Aeration 6%
- Water Quality Testing 22%
- Watershed Protection 24%
- Community Education & Municipal Assistance 18%
- Administrative Services 10%
- Zooplankton Farm 3%
- Brown Trout Stocking 4%

This chart shows how LWTF allocates your dollars among our major clean water programs and initiatives. It also demonstrates the relative size of a program as compared to the LWTF's overall budget. All of these initiatives were made possible because of generous donors such as you.



## CLEAN WATER CORNER

Do you have a catch basin or storm drain on your property? If you said yes, it most likely empties directly to the Lake. To help keep sediment out of the Lake and keep your Lake clean, it is important to remember to remove any collected debris from the bottom of your catch basins. If you have questions about your drains and catch basins, give us a call and we can schedule a storm water management inspection.