



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELIZABETH CHANDLER

Lake Waramaug Task Force, Inc.

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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 — Spring 2021

Have you ever wondered where the roughly six billion gallons of water in Lake Waramaug came from? Some very pure water surely comes from underwater springs over the Lake's approximate square mile; and there's rain, of course, about 50 inches of relatively clear water in an average year. But the vast majority of the Lake comes from the watershed, the topography surrounding the Lake — with sixty percent of the entire Lake from Sucker Brook alone! It's from here and other runoff that the difficulties arise; with phosphorous, sediment and nutrients of various sorts introduced by brooks, catch basin outflows, driveways and lawns all flowing into the strata of the Lake and creating the conditions that promote cyanobacteria growth.

It's axiomatic to say that it's way easier and more efficient to stop these elements from entering the Lake than it is to remove them once they are in, and that's why, over the years, the Task Force has increasingly focused its efforts on the watershed:

- We've spent and continue to expend enormous effort and resources working with our farming friends to reduce the amount of runoff from their fields.
- We've remediated many spots along the various brooks feeding the Lake to reduce erosion along their banks, with many more sites to do.
- We've installed sediment collection basins toward the bottom of four streams to collect sediment before it gets to the Lake and have periodically excavated those basins clean, removing many hundreds of cubic yards of sediment.
- And, we're in the process of surveying every catch basin around the Lake to identify those that are contributing pollutants to the water with the intent of finding and removing the sources of those pollutants.

These efforts, along with our in-Lake cyanobacteria and invasive weed controls, have combined to create one of the most pristine lakes in the region. The contributions of our donors have been critical to our efforts and we thank each and every one of you very much. With your continued support we'll keep working to keep our billions of gallons of lake water clean, clear, and swimmable. Best wishes for a glorious summer!

Peary Stafford

Chair, Lake Waramaug Task Force

SOIL SAMPLING, A SIMPLE SOLUTION TO POLLUTION

A successful plan to improve water quality in Lake Waramaug requires close attention to possible pollutants that originate from the surrounding watershed (see a map of the Lake Waramaug Watershed on our web site). The watershed contains pollutants just waiting for the opportunity to contaminate the Lake via stormwater runoff. One of the Task Force's goals is to help the agricultural community keep nutrients on the land so they can help grow food and fiber, not washing into the lake to feed noxious weeds and toxic cyanobacteria.

Soils have a carrying capacity, and when exceeded, water quality degrading compounds are released from the soil and into the streams and brooks that drain to the Lake. Therefore, the Task Force provides agricultural field soil sampling and analysis services (see photo). Knowing the exact concentration of nutrients in the soil enables farmers to gauge how much fertilizer to add for optimum plant growth. As a result, there is less toxic run-off. This simple \$12 soil sample can save thousands of dollars in fertilizer while also protecting the Lake.

Soil sampling is just as important for any property in the watershed. If you use fertilizers on your property, always be sure to take a soil sample first to see if it is even necessary. Then use the results to add only the missing nutrients .

Easy to follow instructions are under the "Sampling Instructions for Homegrounds/Lawns/Landscapes" tab at soiltest.uconn.edu



Currently the Lake contains over 800 lbs. of water quality degrading phosphorus, which promotes the growth of toxic cyanobacteria. It takes \$1,000 of Task Force resources to remove *just one pound* of phosphorus from the Lake. Simple land management techniques can help us all keep the Lake's water quality improving.

If you would like to learn more, please do not hesitate to contact us.

CLEAN WATER = WATERSHED AND IN-LAKE MANAGEMENT



Watershed and in-lake management are essential components of a clean and healthy lake. A watershed is the area of land that drains or flows to a single point; in our case, the Lake. Good management of a watershed involves balancing a property owner's wishes with appropriate land use practices that minimize negative impact on downstream water quality. Lake Waramaug's continued water quality is proof of the effectiveness of that approach.

The Task Force has a long history of overseeing the Lake's watershed. We have been sampling stormwater for almost forty years, and this data indicates that our work with local farmers, stabilization of erosion sites on feeder streams, installation of sediment collection basins and more – have been successful in protecting Lake Waramaug.

We've also begun monitoring the catch basins around the Lake to better understand the effects of stormwater run-off. It is much cheaper and easier to prevent pollutants from entering the Lake than it is to remove them. To combat potential toxic cyanobacteria blooms, we need to limit the nutrients from the Lake's watershed and manage excess nutrients already in the Lake. The Task Force is committed to creating an inhospitable environment for cyanobacteria blooms to protect Lake Waramaug for years to come.

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CLEAN WATER CORNER

SHINING A LIGHT ON WATER QUALITY

The Lake Waramaug Task Force research boat was launched at the end of April this year, just in time for Ben Burpee, our consultant limnologist to get on the Lake to collect important early season Lake condition data. In the photo, Ben is assessing the clarity of Lake Waramaug's water column with a transmissometer (pictured device). This device measures water clarity at each depth interval down through the entire water column (data is collected at every meter from surface to sediment). One important piece of information that we can extract from the data output from this device is the location of concentrated bands of algae and/or cyanobacteria that can appear at any depth. Knowing the location and concentration of toxic cyanobacterial can help us predict future blooms, and in some cases employ additional lake management techniques to minimize them.

