

**BOROUGH OF MOUNTAIN LAKES, NJ**  
**LAKES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Monthly Meeting Minutes – Quick Notes**  
Minutes for August 6, 2024 at 7:30 PM - Zoom

**1. Call to Order**

A monthly meeting of the Lakes Management Advisory Committee was held on [January 2, 2024] on Zoom teleconference. It began at 7:30 PM and was presided over by chairperson Derek Jackson.

**2. Attendees**

Voting Members in attendance: Alpesh Amin, Debra Dewing, Lucien Foster, Derek Jackson, Jason Miner, Nikki Riley, Wayne Roth, Mike Russo

Non-voting Members in attendance: Chris Richter (Borough Council Liaison), Mitchell Stern (Borough Manager), Bob Schindler (Tigris Lake Management), Jackie Bay (Environment Commission Liaison)

Members not in attendance: Andy Hilton, Billy Barrett (Student Representative), Jack Buckley (Student Representative), John Corbo (Student Representative), Connor Higgins (Student Representative)

Guests in attendance: Vicki Allison (Borough's Beach Director), Jeremy Lonsk (Sunset Lake resident)

**3. Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on July 9, 2024 was made by Debra. Dewing and seconded by Lucien Foster.

**4. Borough Management Report**

Report was presented by Mitchell Stern.

- Introduction of the Crystal Lake Harmful Algae Bloom, followed by discussion (see notes in "New Business").
- Sunset Dam update
  - The Dam is closed and the lake is taking on water.
  - Follow-up from July meeting: "Do we have the ability to delay filling the lake until the Fall?". According to our engineer, there is no opportunity to delay it. Similarly, there is no practical means to remove the plant life on the lake bed before filling the lake. The plant life will die once it drowns during the refill. Upon the lake refilling, we would likely hydro rake the material out of the lake.
- Independent Consultant / Advisor and Grant Application update – The grant has been submitted and we are waiting for a response. It will likely be several months before we hear.

## **5. Tigris Lake Management Report**

Report was presented by Bob Schindler.

Bob Schindler presented a large amount of information on the Crystal Lake algae bloom (see notes in “New Business”).

The water lilies in the northern end of Birchwood continue to be plentiful. It may have been worsened this summer because of the low water level. There should be a lengthy discussion of the potential approaches, and cost/benefit if there is going to be more work done to remove sediment.

Outside of Crystal Lake, it has been a normal year. Fortunately, the hot and dry weather has not created problematic conditions in the other bodies.

- Chris Richter mentioned that the milfoil or potentially other plant growth has blossomed in the cove near his house. Tigris will look at this.

## **6. Old Business**

- Wildlife Study/Audit Update – Wayne has visited the main lakes. He divided the lakes into quadrants and included his observations on and off the water. In addition, he incorporated feedback from others.
  - Tentative Ratings
    - Mountain Lake 4.3 – has recovered greatly. The fishing is great, likely helped by the influx from Sunset Lake.
    - Crystal 4.1 – Wildlife was the most plentiful. While there were not many fish, they were generally quite large.
    - Birchwood 3.9 – Basically, a recreational swimming lake. The fishing population is not great.
    - Wildwood 2 – Wayne does not believe the lake is a healthy habitat. There were minimal fish and turtles.
- The study will continue until the Fall. Wayne will create a formal report.

## **7. New Business**

- Crystal Lake HAB
  - There was an initial bloom in June. There were not high levels of harmful algae in the bloom that created a risk to swimmers or pets. The initial bloom was treated per the normal course of action for such events, and cleared up for several weeks. Unlike prior events or years, the bloom in Crystal re-surfaced. During the interim period the phosphorus levels were higher than what is normally observed in that lake or the other large lakes in Borough.
  - The adverse test result was measured in the last few days. The borough and residents were communicated to. That test found a high cyanobacteria count in Crystal Lake. The count was greater than the NJ DEP threshold of 80000. Given the minimal rain fall and low water levels, we have not seen as much flow from Birchwood. However, the natural springs from Crystal had it draining into Sunset Lake. There is/was no bloom in Sunset.

- Committee Member Alpesh Amin lives on Crystal Lake. He observed nothing out of the ordinary on Crystal Lake from a resident construction and landscape perspective.
  - Phosphorus can become inert / inactive with Alum treatments. This is the reason we use that type of treatment in Mountain Lake and Wildwood Lake. However, Crystal Lake has not historically needed or required such a treatment in the last 15+ years. We have not and cannot apply such a treatment to Crystal Lake in 2024 in response to the bloom and increased phosphorus levels because of the State of NJ's new permitting process (effective late June). To obtain a permit, we need to create a Lake Monitoring plan and submit the same for Crystal Lake and our other lakes enable such treatments.
    - Looking forward to the 2025 season, we will proactively apply to the NJ DEP to be able to apply alum to all of the lakes including the small bodies of water. In order to ensure we have a NJ DEP response by April, the permit application should be submitted around October. Tigris will prepare the proposal.
  - In the absence of the Alum treatment, we will be treating the lake every two weeks with copper-based Algacides. This treatment frequency is also limited by the new NJ DEP requirements. We could apply "green clean" treatments every few days without a permit, but it may not speed up the process. Such treatments come with an additional expense to the borough because they are not included in normal treatment plans due to the higher cost. The cost of materials for a minimal dose is in excess of \$8500. We would need a much greater treatment for this bloom.
  - Outside of humans and animals swimming or bathing in the lake, there is additional risk to the aquatic life in the lake due to the oxygen levels in the lake.
  - The Borough's advisory for Crystal Lake can be removed if/when we receive favorable test results. The plan is to treat the lake tomorrow (Wednesday) and continue tests weekly. Tigris is hoping that these treatments, along with the rainfall and cooler temperatures will rectify the situation.
- Dredging Birchwood Swim Lanes
  - At the last two swim meets, we have not been able to use the 25-yard lanes 1-3 because the lane depth is less than 4 feet. The lake is currently down about 18 inches. It is not 100% certain whether the situation would differ if the lake were at full depth.
  - Further conversation is required with the recreation director and engineers. Analysis is required using the bathymetry tests. We may need to use dredging or suction dredging to remove some of the accumulated sediment, sand or other material.

## **8. Announcements**

Next meeting September 3, 2024

## **9. Adjournment**

Derek Jackson moved that the meeting be adjourned. Debra Dewing seconded the motion. The motion passed at 8:45 PM.