

**SLWA
PO BOX 44
SWARTSWOOD, N.J. 07877**

SLWA FALL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2012

CAMP LOU HENRY HOOVER

DINING ROOM

TRUSTEE MEETING 9 A.M.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING 10 A.M.

**PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND
THIS IMPORTANT MEETING!**

Shore to Shore News



Swartswood Lakes & Watershed Association, Inc., PO Box 44, Swartswood, NJ 07877

August 2012

President's Message

I am happy to see that this summer has not been as dry as last year. The heavy rains in late July were very welcome. The local lawns look green and healthy. It's also great to see the many activities on or around the lake; fishing contests, rowing and sailing regattas and camp activities. Swartswood State Park is seeing plenty of activity, too.

In early July I went out on the big lake on my windsurfer. As soon as I got halfway across the lake I saw the sky darken and heard the rumble of thunder in the distance! I attempted to high tail it back to the launching area, but when I was 100 yards away, the wind stopped and the storm was nearly upon me. I jumped off my board and swam a sidestroke, pulling the rig all the way into the nearest shore. It turned out that the home of a fellow trustee was where I finally reached terra firma. Jim Bastinck invited me up to his deck to wait out the storm and rest from my ordeal. After witnessing a marvelous storm pass by we were also blessed with a rainbow. It is nice to know that we have several friends on our lakes who are willing to help out when there is a problem.

As far as water quality goes, there are a few issues the trustees are working on. Specifics will be found in Randy's report.

I look forward to seeing fall lake activities and meeting with fellow lake members.

Best regards,

Jim Stark

Report from Randy Sprague - Technical Consultant

Technical Issues with NJDEP

There are three very important SLWA related issues that either came to fruition or resurfaced earlier this year. These issues relate to the American Lotus, herbicide treatment and the Office of Natural Lands Management (ONLM) and are expanded upon below. Further detail concerning these issues is in correspondence posted at slaw.net .

American Lotus:

On a positive note NJDEP has agreed to reduce the size of the lotus bed. All lake users have been very aware of how the American lotus aggressively expanded and took over the North Cove and is now rooted in the State Park swimming area. Although the American lotus has been at issue for more than a decade, getting resolution on the American Lotus took almost two years of persistently pursuing the issue. An excerpt from the NJDEP statement is:

has determined that no more than 40-50% of the population is to be removed from the Lake. Basing this level on approximate current estimates of the population, this will translate to a minimum of 10 acres of American Lotus is to be maintained in the lake at all times. If at any time there is noted a decrease in the size of the population, all removal actions will cease immediately, to ensure there is no decline in the species."

The bad news is that the weed harvester is down for repairs and no lotus control has been performed yet this year. Weed harvesting did occur at the State Park cove by use of a borrowed weed harvester.

One way to control lotus is to flood it. Flooding is not a very practical approach, unless Mother Nature intervenes, which did occur this past fall in the form of a tropical storm double whammy. The storms raised the lake about three feet and in the process inundated the Villate of Swartswood and Blairstown. It appears that the lotus bed, while still robust, is diminished and thinned out. This is an opportunity for NJDEP to keep the bed at bay with far less work and less cost than previously anticipated.

Special thanks to Lynn Fleming with NJDEP and to Helen Carew with the office of Senator Oroho, Assemblywoman McHose and Assemblyman Chiusano for working with SLWA on this matter.

Year 2012 Herbicide Treatment

For the 2012 herbicide treatment application, ONLM rejected treatment of all the area from Greenwood Point through Dove Island and several other areas of the lake. This essentially is a repeat of the ONLM imposed year 2008 weed-harvesting ban, which resulted in invasive weed growth choking the above areas.

Again at the eleventh hour, Lynn Fleming assisted and reversed most of the herbicide treatment rejection. The area between Dove Island and the East Shore remained in the rejected area.

No rational explanation for the ONLM rejection has been provided, as ONLM contentions are inconsistent with available studies and information. Unfortunately this lack of definition is consistent with the ONLM practice of speculating while being secretive as to their logic, if any.

ONLM Protest and NJDEP Organization

The third issue is repeat problems with certain ONLM imposed criteria which SLWA considers detrimental to proper lake management. On three occasions over the past five years SLWA needed to bypass ONLM and escalate issues higher within the NJDEP structure. Because of these repeat problems and arbitrary actions SLWA has written a letter to NJDEP expressing our concerns (see slwa.net.)

Over its twenty-year history, SLWA experienced fifteen years of excellent relations with NJDEP and made major progress on lake water quality. For that fifteen year time period the Watershed Management group, within NJDEP, was our primary contact. We now understand that Watershed Management has been disbanded, thus about five years ago the lead and focus within NJDEP shifted elsewhere. In that process, ONLM has been allowed to proceed without checks and balances. More importantly, NJDEP has lost focus of what should always be its primary mission, which is water quality.

The corrective action SLWA is seeking from NJDEP is as follows:

1. Take charge of ONLM and keep ONLM actions in perspective with the overall program.
2. Designate a Watershed Management equivalent to take the NJDEP lead on lake water quality and lake management issues.
3. Require annual updating of threatened and endangered species, written rationale and removal of non-applicable species.
4. Eliminate concealment of documentation to stakeholders that is relevant for proper program management.

As it now stands SLWA is the only entity dedicated to overall lake management of Swartswood Lakes. NJDEP is supposed to be the stewardship leader for clean water, and clean water must always be the first priority. Contact your state representatives and demand responsible action.

With the disbanding of watershed management SLWA apparently has lost over \$100,000 of unused grant monies, which among other possibilities, might have been used to repair or replace the weed harvester.

Stir-Fried Lotus

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| 2 pounds of lotus root, trimmed and peeled | 2 Tbsp. dark soy sauce (or regular if preferred) |
| 2 Tbsp. sesame oil | 1 Tsp. toasted sesame seeds |
| 1.5 Tbsp. sugar | 1 small hot pepper of choice, I like chipolte |
| 1 Cup sake (or pale dry sherry) | Optional: 2 scallions |

Cut the lotus crosswise in quarter-inch slices. Soak in water, change until water runs clear. Dry. Heat sesame oil. Add lotus roots and toss for a minute. Add the rest of the ingredients. Stir continuously until reduced, about 10 minutes. Good hot or warmed up. <http://eattheweeds.com/american-lotus-worth-getting-wet-for/>

Fishing Club report - Ed Szabo

The fish knew it was the hottest July on record so they did not cooperate. Fortunately, June was a different story as we had a lot of reports of trout, pickerel, bass and panfish caught. Our trout tagging program produced 19 tag returns but no big ones reported. Last year we had 42 returns, and 38 in 2010. Walleyes were scarce and the largest reported were about 3 or 4 pounds but rumors abound that you can only catch them well after dark. I told that to Stillwater Mayor, George Scott, who said "Baloney...we were out till 11 p.m. in a deep spot near an aerator and only caught a few sunfish and a crappie about () that long." We did have a bright spot a couple of weeks ago. Immediately after an evening rainstorm, Paradise President Ken Snyder was out trolling and reported that about one minute after the last raindrop fell he caught one fish after another for half an hour. Stop in at the Boathouse and ask him about it. He may even tell you where he caught them...then again you know fishermen.

Membership report - Larry Condit

We currently have about 101 paid members for the 2011-2012 season. We have also received about \$500 in donations. Many thanks to all those who contributed. If you wish to check your membership status, Larry can be reached at larrycondit@gmail.com or on his cell at 201-394-2724. Encourage your neighbors to join and support SLWA.

Water meter replacement

Each summer volunteers from SLWA monitor the conditions of the water in Swartswood Lake. To do this a YSI meter is used, which digitally measures Dissolved Oxygen and Temperature. A Secchi disk is also used to measure water clarity. It should be noted that water clarity has been exceptional this summer.

Each spring Pat Hamilton from Fish and Wildlife offers to recalibrate our meter to match that used by the State. In this way, our readings match state standards and are acceptable as accurate. Unfortunately Pat reported that the temperature sensor was inoperable. She contacted the manufacturer to inquire about a part replacement, but the part is no longer available for our older model meter. Since replacement parts are out of the question, a new meter was needed to continue our water monitoring program.

Through the good graces of Larry Kovar of Aquatic Analysts Inc. we are in the process of purchasing a new meter. The cost of the unit is \$825. Since we no longer have access to grant monies, the cost of the unit will be taken from our general budget. If you would like to make a donation to off-set the cost of the new meter, your contributions would be welcomed.

Swartswood State Park and lake lowering information

Dear Neighbors:

It has been a good but challenging season this year. Severe storms have caused power outages and damage to facilities and systems. This has made it difficult to maintain services to the public during our busiest time of the year. However, with a skilled staff, help from other parks and cooperation from our visitors, we have managed to keep all facilities open with little down time in between. We hope residents have fared well during these storms.

Due to the age and deteriorating condition of our fleet, we have also been dealing with major vehicle and equipment breakdowns. Many have probably noticed the absence of the harvester on the lakes this season and that is because it is not operational and in need of major repairs. As a result, we had to hire Aquatic Analysts to harvest the weeds in our swimming cove as we were inundated with the native aquatic plant species: largeleaf pondweed. While we were successful in finally gaining some control over the Eurasian watermilfoil with the Sonar, we were blindsided by the aggressiveness of this native plant. Harvesting was critical as it was severely impacting the water quality in our swimming area.

We realize that weed conditions are poor in other areas, particularly, where we have the lotus. We are trying to find funding to have Aquatic Analysts harvest the lotus as well. The good news is we have been approved to remove up to fifty percent this year.

We will be submitting the application for lake lowering this year as this is now occurring every two years for aquatic weed control. If approved, water levels must be drawn down to the full extent permitted November 1st in order to protect turtles and frogs during the onset of hibernation. Therefore, lowering will begin October 21, 2012 and end March 15, 2013.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform residents of our (non-medical) emergency contact number to report emergencies on State park property. It is 877-WARNDEP or 877-927-6337. This the 24-hour dispatch center for park police. This includes emergencies on the State-owned lakes. You may also call this number to report an environmental emergency such as an oil spill. Please do not call the park office in the case of emergency as this may delay the response by trained emergency personnel.

Last but not least, we have been receiving reports of gray water or waste being dumped in Swartswood Lake. We have not been able to locate the area but we ask that you call the number above if you suspect this may happening in your area. All reports will be kept confidential.

We appreciate your support and hope you enjoy the rest of the summer.

Sincerely,

**Blanca Chevrestt
Swartswood State Park**

Nominations

The following slate of candidates will be presented for election at the fall membership meeting to be held on Saturday, October 13, 2012:

Treasurer: Larry Condit

**Trustees: Milt Becker
George Morville
Stu Quarty
Alex Roney
Randy Sprague**

Nominations may also be made from the floor. If you, or someone you know would like to become a Trustee you may nominate that person at that time. If it is a person other than yourself, you should first ask that person for permission to place their name in nomination.

We hope you will mark your calendar to attend the meeting on October 13th. Bring your neighbors! Randy Sprague will present an update on the status of negotiations with the State regarding the future of the lake. This includes what will be done about the lotus, the possibility of lake lowering this season and weed harvesting/herbicide applications.

If you have not yet paid your dues for the current year, please plan to do so at the meeting.

Reminder - SLWA will be paying for a new DO (Dissolved Oxygen) meter to monitor lake water quality. If you wish to make a donation to defray this cost, it would be sincerely appreciated.

See you on October 13th at 10:00 am

Camp Hoover dining room