

MELODY LAKE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE MELODY LAKE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS



February 2025

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH???

With close to 90 members, we cannot expect everyone to agree on everything that's being done around the lake, however, we should all agree on things that affect the health of the lake and the association property. No matter what our political/religious/moral views are, we should all agree that the actions of a small group of property owners should not be allowed to negatively affect our beautiful lake. There seems to be several maintenance items and improvements that many of us want to support such as a better road, new pavilion, new walkway over the dam and more, but as long as we must use our dollars over legal issues, these "wants" will never become realities. Throughout 2025, our resources will be used to update and enforce our by-laws and then concentrate on issues that can and should legally be addressed. We will also look at issues that may not yet be illegal, but are proven to have a negative impact to our lake and the property around it. We will also look at what other states are doing to protect the lakes and properties of the people they serve. We cannot continue to accept the actions of even 1 property owner when it may negatively affect the health, beauty or value of the association property or the property of other members.

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Melody Lake Association was formed on June 22nd, 1964 to:

Aid and promote the preservation and protection of Melody Lake and the land around it

To aid in the protection of fish and game in such lake and area

To promote and cultivate social relationships among its members

To undertake programs and activities calculated to advance the above purposes

IMPORTANT PHONE #'S, EMAILS, DATES AND INFORMATION

Melody Lake Association

PO Box 95

Willet, NY 13863

www.stny.info/melodylake

or visit us on Facebook

HOW TO CONTACT:

Association Officers:

President – Bob Rosati (607)863-4425 rcrosati@frontiernet.net

Vice President – Bob Eastman (607)722-3294 bob@ceserve.com

Secretary – Kelly Cerroni (607)760-2311 kellycccc7@gmail.com

Treasurer – Steve Smith (607)729-8823, sjstev@gmail.com

Member at Large – Eric Wortman (607)440-1044,
ericwortman@hotmail.com

Webmaster – Jim Pratt – (607)775-4925 webmaster@stny.info

Emergency Response

NY State Police – (607)756-5604 or 911

Cortland County Sheriff – (607)753-3311 or 911

Fire & Ambulance – 911

NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation:

Conservation Officer – 1-844-332-3267 (24 hr)

Permits – 1-800-388-8244 or (607)753-3095 ext. 235

Dam Safety – (518)402-8185

Town Government Officials:

Willet Town Hall – 863-4877 (for building permits)

Town Supervisor – Alvin (Sandy) Doty – 863-3252

Town Clerk – Annie Wilcox – 863-4329

Highway Superintendent – Ted Kemak 863-3265

Tax Assessor – Frances J Butler 849-6966 **Other:**

Cortland County Health – 753-5035 (permits for wells & septic)

DOGS AROUND THE LAKE:

Remember that your dog must be under your control at all times. If the dog is loose, they must remain on your property. Every year we receive complaints from people walking around the lake that they are confronted by loose dogs. Excessive barking is also a nuisance and is in violation of the Town ordinance. All complaints should be referred to the Town of Willet Dog Warden. (Country Acres Animal Shelter – 749-2734)

THE MEETINGS FOR MELODY LAKE ASSOCIATION FOR 2025 WILL BE HELD AT 12:00 NOON ON THE SECOND SUNDAY OF JUNE, JULY, and AUGUST. ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD AT THE WILLET TOWN HALL, (IF AVAILABLE). THE MEETING DATES FOR 2025 ARE: JUNE 8TH, JULY 13TH AUGUST 10TH.

The date of the association family picnic will be determined at the first meeting in June.

YOUR IDEAS ARE IMPORTANT TO THE ASSOCIATION. PLEASE TRY TO ATTEND WHENEVER POSSIBLE. WE WILL ATTEMPT TO LIMIT THE MEETING TO ABOUT 1 HOUR HOWEVER WILL CONTINUE UNTIL ALL IMPORTANT TOPICS ARE DISCUSSED.

The Town Of Willet Town Board Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 PM.

WE WOULD LIKE TO REMIND ALL PROPERTY OWNERS AND THEIR GUESTS THAT EVEN THOUGH MELODY LAKE IS A PRIVATE LAKE, ALL NYS LAWS APPLY. THIS INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO FISHING, HUNTING, BOATING AND MOTOR VEHICLE LAWS. ALSO REMEMBER THAT ALL BOATS THAT ARE POWERED BY AN ELECTRIC MOTOR (INCLUDING PONTOON BOATS) MUST BE REGISTERED. ALL NON-NYS RESIDENTS MUST HAVE A NONRESIDENT FISHING/HUNTING LICENSE. ALL BOATS AND FISHING GEAR USED ON ANOTHER BODY OF WATER MUST BE THOROUGHLY CLEANED BEFORE BEING USED BACK ON MELODY LAKE.

CORTLAND/CHENANGO RURAL SERVICES

NEARLY NEW SHOP (gently used clothing)

2704 Lower Cincinnatus Rd, Cincinnatus, NY

Located at the Catholic Church (607)863-3828

Mon & Fri - 9:30 am – 11 am

Tues & Thurs – 9:30 am – 11:00 am & 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Wed – 9:30 am – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Sat–9 am –12 noon (also Local Farmers Market in season)

Remember that the speed limit on Melody Lake Rd. is 30 mph and on Melody Lane is 10 mph. Also parking on Melody Lake Road is prohibited unless you are completely off the road. Please remind your visitors and everyone that you may be doing business with such as contractors, fuel delivery companies, etc. Also remember that NO OFF ROAD vehicles are allowed on association property (Melody Lane, right of ways, etc.)

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter by Melody Lake Association's diverse group of volunteers may not necessarily reflect the views held by the Association, its members, or its sponsors.



COMMENTS FROM THE ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT:

By Bob Rosati

This winter I had some time to think about my 60+ years here at Melody Lake. As a kid about 10 or 11 years old, I remember occasionally attending an association meeting with my dad. Even then I was impressed how the adults that had some ideas would take the lead to bring that idea to reality by explaining and recruiting others. They worked together to raise the money or find the time

necessary to

complete the project if enough people agreed. If there wasn't enough support, or available funds, the idea was moved to a back burner and the association continued to move forward with things that had to be done. Even then, there were rules that were made and with the help of the majority of the members the rules were followed. As kids, we spent most of the summer at the lake. We were the envy of our friends back home. Once in a while, we brought a friend to the lake. Dad would explain the rules and the reason for them. If the rules were followed, they were welcome to come back but if they did not, they were not allowed back. My how things have changed as we look at the example we show to our children and grandchildren. The destruction of association property and liability to the association by the unauthorized use of unlicensed vehicles. The negative impact to the quality of the lake caused by the development of our property right up to the edge of the lake. The lack of performing annual maintenance and pumping our septic system even when the Cortland County Soil and Water will often pay the first \$100 of the bill, "Improvements" we do on our property even though they negatively affect our neighbor's property. The list goes on and on. (we'll look at some of these things later in this newsletter.

Fast forward to the mid 1980's when I was asked to represent Melody Lake Association when we joined New York State Federation of Lake Associations (NYSFOLA). I remember attending the conferences and hearing other associations voice their concerns regarding problems of the more than 200 NYS lakes and asking for advice from our lake regarding membership, rules and topics that helped Melody Lake continue to be a model for other lakes to use as an example. Several times throughout the year, NYSFOLA would be contacted by associations throughout the state, only to be redirected to Melody Lake Association for advice. Many times, throughout the years, topics at the annual conferences included our lake, and our association as an example on how to be a successful association. Now let's fast forward again to the late 1980's. We join into a program called Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP) which gave us a chance to have a water sample sent to a lab in Syracuse several times a year and tested for parameters which told us that our lake was high in nutrients such as phosphorus, nitrogen, transparency, chlorophyll a and more. This information was shared with all property owners to help them make sound decisions while enjoying their property.

In 2011, we even got some nationwide recognition when I am contacted by a publication called "Clear Waters" and asked to submit an article called ***"Lake Association Works for Dam Safety – Vital Issue to Downstream Residents"***. In 2016 I was contacted by the magazine called "Cabin Living" and asked to write an article entitled ***"strength in numbers – Lake Associations Have Your Back"***.

The health of our lake is declining. Invasive vegetation such as Eurasian Water Milfoil has returned and is taking over the lake. Confirmed Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) are becoming more and more frequent, mainly along the properties on Melody Lake Rd. Many times, when the ideas are just suggestions rather than legally required, the property owner will ignore the suggestions and continue pointing their finger at the actions of others. We'll look at some examples later in this newsletter. I promise that this newsletter won't be all doom and gloom, but since less than a third of the property owners attend the meetings, this just might be the only way we can inform you about what is going on and how the association is trying to protect everyone's investment. If only we could return back to when we were the good example. I'll finish up my page by reminding everyone that:

"AS PROPERTY OWNERS ON MELODY LAKE, WE HAVE THE OBLIGATION TO ALTER OUR WAY OF LIFE TO PROTECT MELODY LAKE, RATHER THAN TO ALTER MELODY LAKE TO PROTECT OUR WAY OF LIFE" – Bob Rosati

On the next two pages, we will take a brief look at the topics covered at the 2024 association meetings. Even though we have more than 80 members, attendance and decisions are usually made by less than 25% of membership. We realize that you have purchased your property to enjoy the lake and we attempt to keep the meeting to an hour or so, however the meeting will continue until all important topics are covered.

June 9th 2024 association meeting: New Members, Dues, Contact Information: We welcomed 2 new members (Mike & Kathy Mele and Travis Accardi). Steve announced that we had reached 100% paid membership for what we believe at least for 22 years. Very few, if any, lake associations can say this. Attendees were reminded to keep the association up to date with their contact information (email, phone, address, etc.) With the cost of postage going up every year we would like to use electronic notification as to “what’s happening”. Also, with the increase of confirmed hazardous algal bloom (HAB’s) we need to use this electronic notification to keep all members informed and safe.

NYSFOLA Conference: A big thanks to Sara Warner and MaryJo Watts for representing Melody Lake at the annual NYSFOLA Annual Conference at Lake George NY. The association paid the fee for the conference but Sara and MaryJo paid their own travel and lodging expense. Melody Lake Newsletter was presented with a first place newsletter award again this year. If you would like more information on the topics covered at this conference,, feel free to contact them. It is hoped and expected that Sara and Mary Jo will represent us again at the 2025 conference.

CCSWCD: Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District has received a grant to help all lakes in Cortland County, including Melody Lake, combat Invasive Species. (more on this and other topics regarding the assistance we have received from CCSWCD elsewhere in this newsletter.

Bylaw and Rules Committee: No report available

Fish Committee: No report available

Lake Testing: the testing sessions have been cut back to 4 times/yr which both DEC and NYSFOLA feel is enough to determine the quality of the lake. We will be testing once during the months of June – September. This cutback will allow more lakes to participate in the program. The results of the 2023 samples show that we are again higher than we would like to be in phosphorus and nitrogen which tells us we should expect more algal blooms.

Association Picnic: tentatively scheduled for August 3rd at the Town pavilion. The association will once again provide the hotdogs, hamburgers, non-alcoholic beverages. Everyone is asked to bring their own table setting, a dish to pass and your adult beverage if you want. Also please consider a raffle item and a baked good for the cake wheel.

July 14th 2024 association meeting

Treasurer’s Report: Our CD’s will soon mature and Steve announced that he is merging the two at a rate of 4.25%. Steve also announced that expenses have been higher than projected and will be reflected in next year’s budget.

Pavilion Fund: At this time, we are nowhere near enough to fund a decent pavilion. There is some concern that if one was built, how would the maintenance/upkeep/tax/insurance increase be funded. There are also some concerns that funds have been given specifically for a pavilion and all contributors should be contacted if the project doesn’t go thru to see where the money should go. Greg Cliff and Bill Matola will head a committee to address these issues.

Association Picnic: will be held on August 3rd. Member Jeff Turner will be donating a meat package (brisket, spare ribs, sausage) from the Southside Meat Market in Texas in appreciation for the work that Sara and Mary Jo have done for the association and for Jeff personally.

Fireworks: Melody Lake Association will be participating with more than 600 other lakes nationwide on the possible negative effects of fireworks on water quality. Water samples will be taken both before and after fireworks on the 4th of July and sent to a lab to be tested. Not sure when the results will be available but will be shared when received.

Dam: Our by-annual dam inspection will be held sometime this year. Results of this inspection will be shared with all members when received.

Dam Bridge: Bill Matola wanted an update on the dam bridge repairs or replacement and was told that there was nothing to report at this time. Bill also mentioned that the board had committed up to \$50,000 to replace the foot bridge but was assured that this wasn’t the case.

Brief overview of the August 11th association meeting

Treasurer's Report: Steve announced that he and Bob met with the bank and merged our 2 CD's resulting in an increase at a rate of 4.25% interest.

Association Picnic: The picnic was a lot of fun with a good turnout resulting in a good turn out. Jeff Turner was thanked for the donation of the meat package from Texas. The 50-50 raffle was won by Tami Zebrowski which she awarded her portion back to the association. Tami also donated a good sum to the association from her can and bottle deposits throughout the summer. She requested that both donations be put towards invasive species control. THANK YOU TAMI! We were joined by Emily from Cortland County Soil and Water who answered questions and distributed information regarding invasive species and other topics.

Grant available from CCSWCD for Septic Replacement (more about this and other projects elsewhere in this newsletter).

Dam Inspection: Every 2-3 years our dam is inspected by our association dam engineer, Alex Urda P.E. The usual fee is about \$2000 but this year the cost was reduced to \$1068 due to the good shape of our dam and the amount of time it took to complete the inspection. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the seepage of water at the dam. The board assured everyone that the leakage is being monitored to the satisfaction of both DEC and our association PE.

Dead Tree Removal on Association Property was completed by Steve Elliot, Bob Eastman and Bob Rosati

Invasive Species; Invasive species, such as Eurasian Milfoil, Purple Loosestrife, has returned to our lake. We had applied for a permit with DEC to restock with Grass Carp which we have used before with positive results, only to be denied due to our high phosphorus presence. We will continue to explore other options but in the meantime we should concentrate on hand removal and phosphorus reduction.

Pavillion: Greg Cliff passed around some ideas on an association pavilion along with photos and other information. Greg will get some prices from some contractors, to include the local Amish that have done work at the lake in the past.

Unlicensed vehicles (ATV, UTV, Farm Tractors, etc.) on Melody Lane and other Association property. (More on this topic elsewhere in this newsletter).

Member Respect: We continue to have multiple issues of members displaying vulgar behavior and disrespect toward other members as well as board members. These instances should continue to be treated as harassment and reported to the authorities. The phone numbers for the County Sheriff, NY State Police and the DEC Conservation Officer can be found on Page 2 of this newsletter.

Dogs Running loose and nuisance barking: these should be reported. The phone # for the dog warden can also be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

50/50 Raffle was won by Sandra DeHaven (Risko). Sandra donated her winnings back to the association to be used towards the Pavillion Fund.

THE MEETINGS FOR 2025 WILL BE HELD 12 NOON AT THE TOWN OF WILLET TOWN HALL ON SUNDAY JUNE 8TH, SUNDAY, JULY 13TH AND SUNDAY AUGUST 10TH.



A SIGN OF THE TIMES: Every year we see more and more unlicensed, uninsured vehicles on Melody Lake Association property. Not only are some of these being operated by non-member neighbors with no or extremely limited rights to this association property but also some longtime members that obviously think that since they are members, they are also property owners of association property with unlimited use of this property. These are vehicles, such as ATV's, UTV's, dirt bikes, and similar. While we do allow construction and agricultural equipment when the equipment being used is involved with the intended usage such as mowing, road repair, etc. We now also see a farm tractor pulling a modified hay wagon loaded with both adults and children

being used on not only Melody Lane and

other association property, but also Melody Lake Rd. which is a town road. A check with the Town, of Willet, as well as the Cortland County Sheriff and State Police only to be told that these types of vehicles are unlawful and should be discouraged. Several years ago, we inquired with our long-time insurance carrier, Gray & Sons Agency and they checked with the parent insurance provider, Midstate Mutual Insurance Company. Their reply was that they would "recommend that the association does not permit use of ATVs, or similar vehicles on the association private road (Melody Lane) or any association property". The letter went on to say that "if the association continues to allow such activity on our private property, they would probably issue a cancelation, due to this ATV or similar exposure". When the policy was due for renewal, our policy was canceled. Once a policy is cancelled, finding a new carrier wanting to take a risk, is extremely difficult. After searching with several companies, we finally found one, however the policy specifically states that "any obvious dangerous or unlawful act would not be covered". At this time, we and they consider these types of vehicles are an obvious, dangerous or unlawful act.

So where does this leave the association or its members? Most probably it would not affect you as a member, it might affect the actual owned property of the association such as Melody Lane, association owned rights of way, the pasture property, and maybe even the lake itself. The way that some of the lawsuits we read about now days, with the right lawyer, the skies the limit. This type of usage is also creating severe damage to our association property by the



destruction of our open fields that act as a buffer to our lake. Our members property along the far end of Melody Lane used to be protected since that road was a dead end and any unauthorized traffic coming in, also had to use that same dead-end road to get back out. Now those properties are left unprotected by connecting Melody Lane by a hardened trail to Forshee Rd. which is a maintained town road which now allows traffic to enter and exit undetected by most members. We have posted this property several times but usually end up with the signs being torn down. We have also asked law enforcement several times to increase patrols in this area but since we are located so close to the boundaries of



Cortland, Chenango and Broome Counties, patrols are extremely rare. This summer we will attempt to modify the bylaws allowing us to use the NY courts to help us take whatever actions are necessary to protect our beautiful lake. More on this concern is continued on Page

7.

More on ATV, UTV usage on association property

On the previous page, we looked at the damage and liability we are placing on our members and our beautiful lake. This winter I had an opportunity to have communication with the commissioner's office of the NYS Dept. of Motor Vehicles regarding our problem with ATV/UTV usage on association property. In turn, I was put in contact with Christine Legorius, Director of NYSDMV Law Bureau who offered the follow information:

- All ATVs must be registered with DMV if it is operated anywhere within NYS, including on the vehicle owner's private property.
- If the ATV is used specifically for agricultural purposes, or plowing snow, the registration requirement is exempt
- You may not operate an ATV on any public road or property unless it is designated and posted for such use by the state or local authority
- You must have permission of the land owner to operate any ATV, UTV or similar vehicle on any private property.
- Since at this time, there is no registration class available for a UTV, Section 401 of the Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) applies to all vehicles including a UTV

More on association property and Melody Lane

While looking thru some records I found a letter that was sent to all members of the association, from Victor Courtney, Association President, dated August 1971:

Resolved at the August 1971 association meeting. No person shall operate a motor vehicle of any or all types, designs, and forms what so ever upon Melody Lane , unless said vehicle is properly registered and insured as required by the NYS Dept. of Motor Vehicle (DMV) Traffic Law.

The resolution goes on to say that "this resolution shall apply to all members of Melody Lake Association, their families and their friends as well as any and all users of the said roadway known as Melody Lane and that said resolutions were arrived at in the interest of safety and the public welfare." We see nowhere that this resolution was ever changed so will stay in effect until a decision by the membership decides different.

Many members question whether or not an association (or HOA) have a right to fine you for ignoring the bylaws, rules, or regulations of the Association. NYS Not For Profit Corporation Law states that violations to bylaws, motor vehicle violations, pet violations, architectural violations, landscape rules and several other violations are subject to fines and other penalties once the violations are made known and are not resolved by the individual member. To be completely enforceable, these violations should attempt to be corrected peacefully, however when these attempts fail, fines may be issued and enforced in a court of law. By law ownership of property in our association subdivision makes membership mandatory which makes the payment of these fines, with any late fees, mandatory and enforceable. In some cases, nonpayment of these fines, allows the association to place a lien on your property. Keep in mind that these laws apply to NYS and may vary from state to state.

CORTLAND COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (CCSWCD)

Our relationship with CCSWCD continues to grow and prosper. There is no way we can thank Amanda Barber enough for all she, and her agency have helped us over the years. In 2024, she sent Emily, one of her crew to join us for the family picnic to share some information regarding some new programs and water quality info with us. She also included Melody Lake in the creating of “boat launch stewards” to come to lakes throughout Cortland to share info on how to properly clean our watercraft in an attempt to limit the spread of invasive species. She is also in the process of writing a grant for a weed harvester to help lessen the amount of aquatic vegetation on lakes throughout Cortland and surrounding counties. I hope to have some more information in 2025 to share at our meetings. Late last summer, Amanda informed me that she had a sizeable grant that may allow a few property owners around Melody Lake to replace or repair inadequate or failing septic system and could offer up to 75% of the cost to be paid by her agency. As far as I know, nobody took advantage of it. Several times, Amanda, along with the Cortland County Environmental Health Dept. will get together for a 1 hour talk on private septic systems. Any property owner that attends the presentation will receive \$100 to be used for pumping, inspection or maintenance to their system. Even though this is offered usually every 2 years or so, only about 6 Melody Lake property owners take advantage of the program. Last summer, Amanda sent Brandon Aschmutatcv to go out onto the lake to measure the dissolved oxygen (DO) in the deepest part of the lake. Just as we suspected, our DO is much lower than we had hoped for. Over the next few weeks, I will be meeting with Amanda to get an update on these and other topics. Just an FYI – our DO readings were:

Surface 97%, 5' from surface 88%, 10' from surface 46%, 13' from surface 3% and 0% at the lake bottom. Very few aquatic species can survive at 0% oxygen. We will discuss some causes, and what we can do at the meetings in 2025.

As mentioned above, CCSWCD and the County Environmental Health Dept have both gone out of their way to help property owners around Melody Lake to monitor the condition of our private wastewater systems (septics). Due to the small size most of our properties, most are required to have a sealed tank that will hold the waste and then pump and haul to the county wastewater treatment plant. This would require the process to happen 1 or more times per year. While some members do keep an eye on their usage, there are some that continue to feel that if the toilet is flushed and the “stuff” disappears, then the system is working as designed and required. Now comes some info for the few that don't even wonder where their “stuff” goes.

1 inch of water over 1 acre of land = 27,192 gallons, and Melody Lake is a little bigger than 40 acres in size with an average depth of 10' which means that Melody Lake holds approximately 130,521,600 gallons of water. Now my question to those few property owners, or their neighbors is:

HOW MANY LEAKING 1000 GALLONS TANKS OF “STUFF” DOES IT TAKE TO NEGATIVELY AFFECT THE QUALITY OF THE OVER 130 MILLION GALLONS OF THE LAKE THAT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY ARE SWIMMING IN??? IF YOU FEEL THAT THERE IS ACTUALLY AN ACCEPTABLE AMOUNT, PLEASE LET US KNOW. THANKS!!

| Year | days with zero precipitation | total summer precipitation (inches) |
|------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2004 | 68 | 32.14 |
| 2005 | 81 | 18.09 |
| 2006 | 57 | 30.08 |
| 2007 | 72 | 17.95 |
| 2008 | 54 | 16.87 |
| 2009 | 60 | 24.11 |
| 2010 | 62 | 19.58 |
| 2011 | 61 | 28.99 |
| 2012 | 52 | 21.58 |
| 2013 | 52 | 29.14 |
| 2014 | 63 | 26.31 |
| 2015 | 65 | 23.81 |
| 2016 | 77 | 15.98 |
| 2017 | 56 | 22.72 |
| 2018 | 56 | 28.29 |
| 2019 | 53 | 24.03 |
| 2020 | 63 | 18.15 |
| 2021 | 45 | 29.17 |
| 2022 | 72 | 18.97 |
| 2023 | 48 | 19.47 |
| 2024 | 59 | 22.01 |

Rain, rain, go away: by Bob Rosati

How many times when winter is here, does it seem like all it did was rain most every day here at Melody Lake? I belong to a group called CoCoRaHS where rainfall, snowfall, or lack of rainfall is recorded daily at 7 AM each morning and sent to the Colorado State University in Ft. Carson, Colorado and have done so since 2004 (7655 days total). This winter, I went back into my records to see how much annual rainfall and how many days with no rain for the period of time that most of our members use their property here. I used the dates between May 20th – Sept. 20th of each year (123 days) from 2004 – 2024. The chart to the left will show you some information from right here from my front yard here at Melody Lake.

For more information go to www.cocorahs.org

Some news from New Hampshire Dept of Environmental Services

(used with permission):

Waterfront property transfers now require septic evaluations. Starting Sept. 1, 2024 buyers of water front property with septic systems will be required to have professional septic system evaluation conducted by a state licensed evaluator in advance of the sale. This is being done to curb the advancement of HAB's and other risks to public health. This will involve the

sale of any property within 250' of any waterbody of 10 acres or more in size. If the evaluation shows any signs of failure, the system must be replaced within 180 days of the transfer of the property.

(editor's note) This requirement is not yet in effect here in NY, however with the increase in HABS and the lack of oversight it is hopefully only a matter of time before our lakes are protected in a similar manner.

The following information is furnished by the New Hampshire Dept of Environmental Services (used with permission)

Low Mow Spring: Give Your Lawn (And Your Wallet) A Break!

Have you ever heard of the No Mow May movement? No Mow May is a recent annual campaign started by [Plantlife](#). The goal of this campaign is to discourage people from mowing their lawns during early spring, some people simply refer to this as Low Mow Spring. Why pump the brakes on mowing? A key benefit is giving diverse plant species the time to grow in order to sustain native pollinators just emerging from hibernation. Flowers are already scarce during early spring, especially in cities or suburban areas, so waiting to mow your lawn could help bees and other critters get the boost of nutrients they need early in the season. A natural lawn will help support different native species of flowering sprouts, thus helping local pollinator populations.

And, hey, the time you'll be saving by not mowing will amount to more time available to rest and relax in your yard and garden!

In addition to time, you will also be saving money by not using gas for the lawnmower, not using fertilizers and not watering your lawn as often as usual. Taller grass develops longer and stronger roots, which means less water will evaporate from the ground and the overall drought tolerance of your lawn will increase. The EPA has noted that [lawn mowers and other gasoline-powered lawn/garden equipment release harmful and hazardous air pollutants](#), so taking a break from mowing will also be beneficial toward your health and local air quality.

A Few Alternative Low-Mow Lawn Styles

The No Mow May movement is a great concept for helping local bees, butterflies and other insects, but is there a way to keep this movement throughout the year without sacrificing the look of a beautiful lawn? Well, there are many kinds of alternative lawn styles. Choosing specific plants to implement into your yard could help ease your yardwork load during the warmer months. For example, switching out turfgrass for another type of groundcover will help with less mowing during the year. Also, adding sections of additional biodiversity and flowers into your yard will shrink your lawn size, thus making mowing quicker and less harmful. Plus, an alternative lawn will be popular with bees and other beneficial insects and animals year-round!

White Clover Lawns

All-clover lawns, or hybrid grass and clover lawns, are a [simple and sustainable option for a low-mow maintenance lawn](#). Clover is not just a pesky weed; it actually has a lot of lawn potential! This plant manages to remain a vibrant green even throughout the hot summer, and the white clover flowers are a favorite of the bee population. White clover provides a lush green cover for your yard from spring through fall. It is also a natural fertilizer as it creates its own nitrogen supply in the soil that also helps keep your regular grass looking green and fresh. Plus, it's affordable. Clover seeds are quite inexpensive and will only need to be reseeded every couple of years to keep them looking full and thick.

Moss Lawns

Moss is certainly an unconventional lawn alternative, but in [shaded and acidic areas](#) of your lawn, consider letting the moss blanket stay! It usually grows where turfgrasses have a weak presence, and its soft texture makes for a comfortable groundcover that requires very little to no maintenance. It is also a great home for [pollinating insects to take shelter in](#). Moss is a unique plant and will require no weeding, fertilizing, mowing or watering from you!

Meadow Lawns

Meadow lawns or "tapestry lawns" are easily the most biodiverse and pollinator-friendly lawn alternative there is! While grasslands are defined as having more than 50% grass cover, [meadows contain more than 50% "forb" cover](#). Forb includes wildflowers and some nonflowering native plants like ferns. Meadows only require mowing a couple of times a year to increase plant diversity and they require significantly less watering than a regular turf lawn. These lawns are visually appealing, cost-effective, low maintenance and great for the environment!

Hybrid Lawns

Who said you need to choose just one type of lawn style? Some prefer the traditional look of a turf lawn, which is A-okay. If this is more of your style, consider setting aside just a small section of your yard for wildflower growth, clovers or any kind of garden. Additionally, there are specific no-mow/low-mow grass species that keep the "green blanket" look of a traditional lawn.

There are a multitude of benefits in choosing a no-mow/low-mow alternative to traditional turfgrass. Not only will it save you time and money in lawn upkeep, but integrating diverse plants into your yard will make a difference in the overall health of your lawn, while helping local pollinators too.

Thinking of creating a “beach”? Please think again:

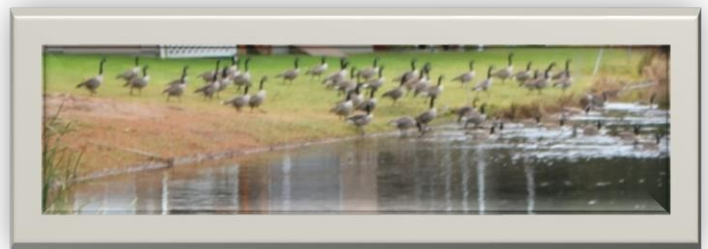
Many times, owners of waterfront property may sometime want to bring in sand to enhance the value of their property. After all, in the past, beaches were created that way on many fresh water lakes throughout NYS. However, we now know that adding sand to a shoreline can have a huge impact on water quality, wildlife, and the natural beauty of shoreline area. Also, if the sand washes into the lake, it's also illegal. Just like other types of soil, sand contains the nutrient phosphorus which is food for algae and study shows that 1 pound of phosphorus can produce up to 10,000 pounds of algae according to the Maine Dept. of Environmental protection. Sand does not stay put. Every footstep on the “beach” pushes it downhill towards the water. It also drifts with the wind and current. A study by the Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife has shown that exposed sand blows from one spot to another, moves with rain and snowmelt and ends up where it is not intended. Once in the water, the sand does not drift away and will eventually work its way to the lake bottom where even though we don't see it, it will remain in the lake where it will smother the beneficial bottom dwelling algae and invertebrates, reduce the amount of available habitat and may disrupt the food chain of higher organisms, including fish. The deposited sand will also destroy spawning or nesting sites for fish. The sand may also clog gills and interfere with normal fish behavior.

Won't a “beach” add value to my property?

It's true that a beach may add value to property you rent to others or plan to sell, the effects of this beach will, over time, contribute to the overall deterioration of the quality of the lake. While you may be adding to the value of your property, you may actually be lowering the value of other property around the lake. Declining property values affect individual landowners and the economics of the entire lake community.

Isn't a sandy beach cleaner for my family to enjoy?

While there is nothing more enjoyable than playing and relaxing at the beach, think about what happens at the lake when you are not there to monitor. Besides a place where your kids and grandkids play, this “beach” is basically a GIANT litterbox to the geese, dogs, and feral cats in the neighborhood.



Are you saying that my “beach” is the cause of the Hazardous Algal Blooms, the loss of fish habitat, the decline of the fish population and other concerns at Melody Lake?

NO! we are not saying that. While your sand is not the only cause of these and other concerns, it is the easiest to control. By the board just turning their back and ignoring the construction of just one beach, we are opening the door to other waterfront property owners to do the same thing. Please take a look at your property and see what you can do to protect our lake and the value of your property.

THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS HELP TO MAKE THIS NEWSLETTER POSSIBLE LET'S SUPPORT THEM IN RETURN

Many of these same sponsors have supported us for years.. Members Bob and Andrea Eastman have been major sponsors of this newsletter with **Eastman Studio & Gallery** and **C&E Electronic Display**. Need a nice warm handmade quilt to snuggle up in on a cool night at the lake? Stop by at **Carol Rosati's** place. She also makes quilted purses with matching accessories. Want to help the health of the lake? Contact Bob @ **Robert Pendell Septic Service**. Bob is seen around the lake year-round. This guy really knows his.....STUFF. Expecting some company? Make sure you have some "adult cocktails" available from **The Point Wine and Sprints** in Whitney Point or if you're in the Union Springs area try their sister store **"DOC" SIDE WINE & SPIRIT**. Is it time to upgrade your boat or dock on the lake? Most of the small pontoon boats, paddle boats and many of the docks and kayaks you see on the lake were purchased from **96 Power and Paddle**. If you are not sure what you want, they even have a pond next to his showroom so you can try before you buy. They also sell boating supplies, chainsaws and safety equipment, work boots and much more. Last but not least is the **Cincinnatus Home Center** or what I like to call the "Cincinnatus Mall". Nowhere else can you find lumber, propane, hardware, paint, fresh flowers, beer, fresh made subs, groceries, and more all under one roof. Owner Bill Cobb, daughter Kristin, son Mark and staff have always supported us in more ways than this newsletter. Most association meetings and every association family picnics includes a donated item from Bill which brings several \$\$\$ into our available funds. We also have a few new sponsors so please support them whenever you can and let them know you saw their ad in the *Melody Lake Newsletter*.

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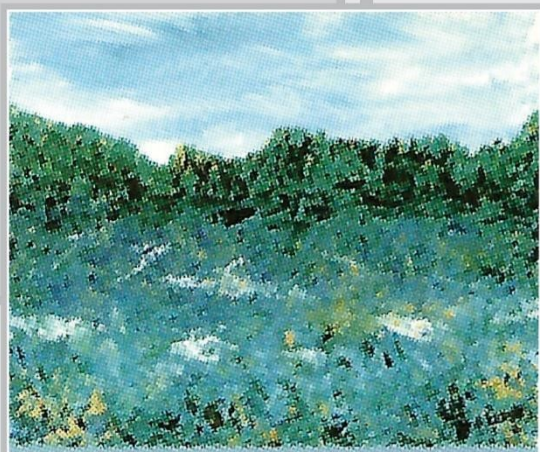
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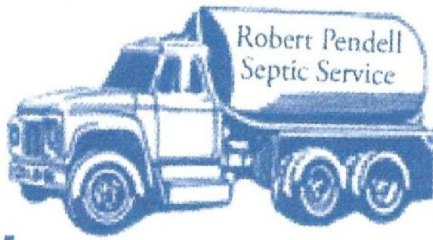
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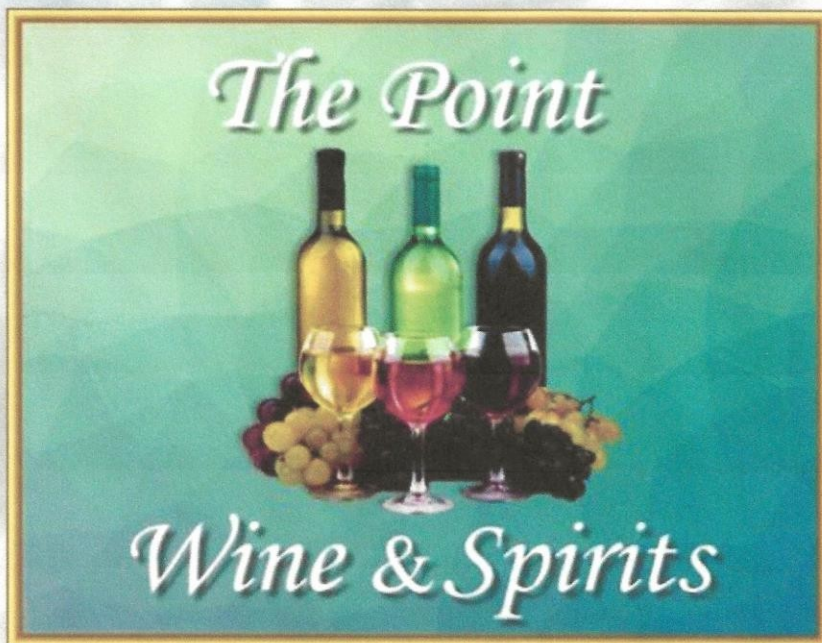
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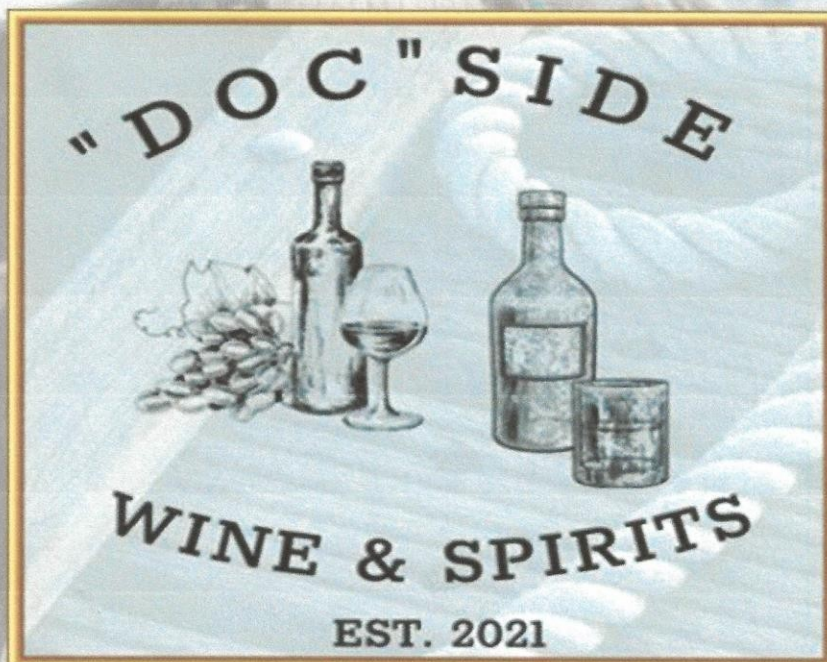
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