



LAKE MUSCONETCONG REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board
*Byram, Netcong, Roxbury, Stanhope,
Morris and Sussex Counties, the State of New Jersey*
77 Main Street Stanhope, NJ 07874
(973) 527-3200
www.lakemusconetcong.com

**ANNUAL REPORT
2023**

<u>Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Earl Riley, Chairman	Byram	12-31-25
Robert Hathaway, Jr., Vice-Chairman	Netcong	12-31-24
Joseph Keenan, Secretary/ Treasurer	Netcong	12-31-26
Shawn Potillo	Roxbury	12-31-26
Lester Wright	Roxbury	12-31-24
Steven Rattner	Morris County	12-31-23
Rudy Shlesinger	Stanhope	12-31-24
Rosemarie Maio	Stanhope	12-31-26
Judith McGrath	Stanhope	12-31-26
William Hayden	Sussex County	12-31-23
Laura Franek	State of New Jersey	Indefinite
Vacant (1 Seat)	State of New Jersey	Indefinite

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Canal Society	- Mr. Wright
Site Plan Review/Stream Encroachment	- Mr. Wright
Musconetcong Watershed Association	- Mr. Rattner
Audit Committee	- Mr. Shlesinger
Lake Awareness	- Ms. Maio
Lake Management	- Mr. Hathaway
Operating Budget Committee	- Mr. Keenan

Members of the Board represent Byram, Netcong, Stanhope, Roxbury, the Counties of Morris and Sussex and the State of New Jersey and are appointed by their representative governing body. The number of representatives and the amount of annual membership fees are based on shoreline.

The terms of the Board Members vary according to the ordinances (4-year terms) of each municipality. Resolutions by the County Freeholders include a one-year term and the State appointments are indefinite.

LAKE MUSCONETCONG REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD

The Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board was established on January 10, 1990 as an advisory board whose purpose is to recommend to the municipalities of Byram, Netcong, Roxbury and Stanhope and the Counties of Sussex and Morris and the State of New Jersey, methods by which the many problems evident in the Lake Musconetcong Watershed area may be solved.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board is the complete restoration of the lake for recreation and other uses and to act as its guardian so that future generations may enjoy the use of the lake.

Mission Statement

The Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board's mission is to work with the general public, local, state and federal governments in restoring, preserving, protecting and enhancing the environmental conditions of Lake Musconetcong and its surrounding watershed to ensure high environmental quality, increased recreational potential, public awareness and economic vitality. Through educational awareness, the Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board hopes to preserve the historic, economic and recreational values, and community pride once enjoyed by the residents of the municipalities it serves, as well as by the general public.

Meeting Schedule and Appointments

The reorganization meeting was held on January 18, 2023. Officers were elected at the reorganization meeting, as shown on the first page of this report.

Regular meetings were held on the third Wednesday of each month throughout the year.

The regular meeting place is designated as the Netcong Municipal Building. All meetings are scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m.

Appointment of Personnel & Consultants - Appointments were made by resolution at the reorganization meeting. Ellen Horak was re-appointed as an independent contractor to perform clerical duties deemed necessary by the Board. Marvin Joss was appointed as Qualified Purchasing Agent and Clifford Lundin was appointed to serve as legal counsel for the Board for the year 2023.

Web-Site - The Board's web-site is www.lakemusconetcong.com

Standing Committees

Canal Society

Mr. Wright served as the chair of committee and kept the Board informed on matters of the Canal Society.

Site Plan Review/Stream Encroachment:

Mr. Wright served as the Board member to oversee all site plan/stream encroachment applications. The Board received several site plan notices and variance notices, and after review it was determined that they did not affect the lake. Mr. Wright continued to monitor the water near the FJZ Properties LLC property on Allen Street in Netcong.

Musconetcong Watershed Association

Mr. Rattner served as the Board's representative to the Musconetcong Watershed Association ("MWA"). Mr. Rattner kept the Board informed on matters of the MWA. A five-year cooperative agreement was signed with the federal government for the Musconetcong Watershed Association and the MRMC, which was a five-year audit for which they had to account for every penny spent. The Beatty's Mill dam removal the floodplain restoration scheduled for 2023 was delayed due to a rainy season and the Lake Hopatcong and Lake Musconetcong drawdown.

Lake Management Program

Mr. Hathaway served as chair of the committee. The lake management committee oversees the weed harvesting operations and herbicide treatment, as well as other lake management issues. Through the efforts of Mr. Hathaway along with members of the Board and our volunteer operators, all necessary maintenance and repairs were done to the equipment.

The equipment was placed in the lake and removed from the lake with assistance from the Netcong Department of Public Works.

The Board entered into the second year of a two-year contract with Solitude Lake Management for herbicide treatment in the lake. The lake was surveyed for weed intensity

and a map was created. The survey showed the largest population was milfoil. They treated 150 acres, most of which was in the back end of the lake. The chemical used addressed the milfoil and the other weeds in the lake. In addition to the milfoil, there was a significant amount of bass weed in Byram Bay which was addressed. There was also a substantial bloom of water chestnut in the back of Byram Bay, which was supposed to be treated by Solitude Lake Management, but was not; however, the scheduled 2-foot draw down eradicated the water chestnut.

There was a two-foot draw down of the lake from October 1st to November 1st with a hold November 1st to December 15th and then a refill of the lake. The Board conducted a shoreline clean-up on December 2nd. The shoreline clean-up was one of the most successful clean-ups the Board has conducted. They had volunteers from all four towns. Netcong's DPW assisted by removing the large debris from the lake.

In 2022, the Board contracted with Solitude Lake Management to administer the probiotic treatment in the lake. The Board created a probiotic treatment program using a product that they had understood did not require a permit. After purchasing the MD Pellets, the Board learned that all probiotic treatments were going to be a controlled use by permit from the NJDEP. The NJDEP did indicate a willingness to move forward on an experiment, but they need time to do research. The Board provided the NJDEP with documentation and data, but the Board has heard nothing further from the State. The MD Pellets were in Solitude Lake Management's possession for storage until the Board could either use them or sell them. Solitude Lake Management misplaced the nine 50-pound bags of pellets they had been storing for the Board. The total cost of the misplaced pellets is \$2,531.25 for which Solitude Lake Management acknowledged was owed to the Board and they would provide a credit or reimbursement to the Board. To date, this issue has not been resolved.

Arrangements were made with Morris County MUA for disposal of the weeds removed from the lake and an agreement was again made between the Board and Intrepid Hauling & Carting for transportation of the weeds.

The Board performed minimal harvesting this year. The lake was in very good condition which is the result of the Board's long-term plan.

In 2023 the Board again received no financial support from the State. The Board has one appointment of a State representative; however, there is still one vacancy of a State appointed representative on the Board.

The Board received \$2,400 from the Borough of Netcong for administering the goose egg addling program again this year which program enables goose control across the entire waterbody. They found 4 goose nests, addled 17 goose eggs and 26 swan eggs.

In 2022, the Board was informed they were awarded a Water Quality Restoration Grant in the amount of \$572,000 for the purchase of specific equipment. The Board

signed the grant agreement mid-July 2023 for the purchase of a new weed harvester, trailer, shore conveyor and backhoe. The grant is a three-year program. The grant agreement went through the review process, and after going through the budgetary process, the Board received their first advanced payment of \$150,000 to be used as a down payment on the new weed harvester. The Board contracted with Aquarius Systems to build the new weed harvester. The build time for the new harvester is between six and eight months and it will be in use by the Board for the 2024 season. The Board submitted the required report for the financials on the grant and in-kind services; however, portions of the report on in-kind services were not approved. The Board must track every hour of in-kind services, including the Board members and volunteer harvester operators and submit that information in order to have the financial report approved. The Board is in the process of tracking all in-kind service hours and after submission and approval by the NJDEP, the Board should receive the second \$150,000 advanced payment.

The Board again utilized volunteers for this year's weed harvesting program. This year 30 loads were removed with the harvester totaling 504,000 pounds of wet weeds. There was an estimated 383 hours of volunteer time, including 75 hours for maintenance of the equipment. The Board recognized the tremendous amount of time and effort by these dedicated volunteers.

Weed Harvesting Budget: The Board spent approximately \$15,070.00 in management of the lake. Approximately \$5,734.00 was spent on operation of the harvester. The LMRPB utilized funds received from Byram, Netcong, Roxbury, and Stanhope which are apportioned according to percentage of shoreline as well as funding from both Sussex and Morris Counties.

See **Appendix A** for a breakdown of the total costs associated with the 2023 herbicide treatment and harvesting effort.

Lake Awareness

Fishing Contest

The Board conducted the fishing contest on Sunday, June 11th. In the past, the Board held the fishing contest the morning of Stanhope Day, but in 2023, Stanhope Borough did not have a Stanhope Day. This year, in addition to the junior fishing contest, the Board included a senior citizen fishing contest after the junior fishing contest. Approximately 25 children participated in the junior fishing contest and only 1 senior citizen participated in the senior citizen fishing contest. The Board decided next year they will hold both fishing contests at the same time. Trophies were awarded to the winners and prizes were given to all participants. Ramsey's again donated prizes for the event. The Morris County Sportsmen Federation again donated \$200 to help cover the cost of the fishing contest.

Annual Budget

The annual budget for the governmental entities is based on a pro-rated percentage of shoreline by municipality which totals 75% of the requested budget. The remaining 25% of the budget is allocated equally to the two counties and is represented as follows:

	<u>Percent of Shoreline</u>
Byram	03.525%
Netcong	18.675%
Roxbury	20.1 %
Stanhope	32.7 %
Morris County	12.5 %
Sussex County	12.5 %

The total Budget vs. Actual for 2023 follows:

Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board Annual Budget FY 2023			VS:	Actual
Member	Adjusted Shoreline %	Anticipated		Actual
Morris County	12.500%	\$ 6,259.38		\$ 6,259.30
Sussex County	12.500%	\$ 6,259.38		\$ 6,259.38
Byram Township	3.525%	\$ 1,765.14		\$ 1,765.14
Netcong Borough	18.675%	\$ 9,351.51		\$ 9,351.51
<i>Netcong Parks Herbicide</i>		\$ 800.00		\$ 800.00
Roxbury Township	20.100%	\$ 10,065.08		\$ 10,065.08
<i>Roxbury Parks Herbicide</i>		\$ 750.00		\$ 750.00
Stanhope Borough	32.700%	\$ 16,374.53		\$ 16,374.53
<i>Stanhope Parks Herbicide</i>		\$ 750.00		\$ 750.00
Shared County and Municipal Contribution		\$ 50,075.00		\$ 50,074.94
Misc Revenue (Egg Addling)		\$ 2,400.00		\$ 2,400.00
Equipment Sale (Backhoe)				\$ 6,100.00
<i>Plus three municipal parks herbicide</i>		\$ 2,300.00		\$ 2,300.00
LMRPB Anticipated Income		\$ 54,775.00		\$ 60,874.94
Operating Budget		Anticipated	VS:	Actual
Clerical		\$ 6,600.00		\$ 6,600.00
Education		\$ 250.00		\$ 394.00
Office Expense		\$ 75.00		\$ 72.00
Insurance(Directors & Officers)		\$ 900.00		\$ 884.00
Legal		\$ 2,000.00		\$ 3,386.00
Legal notices		\$ 150.00		\$ 98.00
Postage		\$ 50.00		\$ -
Website		\$ 350.00		\$ 1,164.00
Miscellaneous		\$ 100.00		\$ 337.00
		\$ 10,475.00		\$ 12,935.00
Lake Management				
Fuel		\$ 1,500.00		\$ 891.00
Weed Transport/Disposal		\$ 6,000.00		\$ 1,350.00
Equipment Maintenance		\$ 5,000.00		\$ 3,493.00
Equipment Purchase (Roll off container)				\$ 4,150.00
General Liability Ins		\$ 1,200.00		\$ 717.00
Inland Marine Ins		\$ 2,000.00		\$ 1,959.00
Commercial Property Ins		\$ 400.00		\$ 134.00
Volunteer Ins		\$ 200.00		\$ 200.00
Umbrella Coverage		\$ 700.00		\$ 666.00
Weed Control		\$ 22,600.00		\$ 1,510.00
Lake Management		\$ 39,600.00		\$ 15,070.00
Plus Operating		\$ 10,475.00		\$ 12,935.00
Expenses shared by municipalities and counties		\$ 50,075.00		\$ 28,005.00
Misc Revenue applied to Weed Control		\$ 2,400.00		\$ -
Plus three municipal Parks Herbicide treatment		\$ 2,300.00		\$ 2,300.00
Total LMRPB Expenses		\$ 54,775.00		\$ 30,305.00

Volunteer Hours and Contributions

The Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board is grateful for the many volunteer hours and in-kind contributions of materials and labor through individuals, organizations and participating governing bodies. During 2023 the Board logged 793 volunteer hours, totaling an in-kind value of \$23,512.00 (\$29.65 per hour (2023 Federal Rate)). Since the year 1995, the total volunteer hours logged to date are 36,086 hours.