



CANDLEWOOD LAKE AUTHORITY

Member Municipalities: Brookfield • Danbury • New Fairfield • New Milford • Sherman

PO BOX 37 • SHERMAN, CT 06784 • P (860) 354-6928 • F (860) 350-5611

Minutes of CLA Regular Meeting Wednesday, October 14, 2026 - 7:00PM via ZOOM

ATTENDING:

Michael Conforti
D. Cushnie

Sherman
Sherman

D. Minchin
J. Archer
J. Main

New Fairfield
New Fairfield
New Fairfield

M. Gaffey
W. Meikle
B. Lohan

Brookfield
Brookfield
Brookfield

E. Siergiej

Danbury

J. Laughinghouse

Danbury

S. Kluge

New Milford

M. Howarth, Executive Director
N. Mellas, Chief
D. Wright, Administrative Coordinator
M. Gasperino, Operations Manager
S. Licht, Director of Ecology

Recorder:

D. Wright

Guests:

2

ABSENT:

M. O'Connor

Sherman

S. McColgan

Danbury

M. Toussaint
J. Wodarski

New Milford
New Milford

Vice Chairman, Marianne Gaffey, called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

Jeff Main made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Bill Lohan, all voting in favor.

TREASURER (Will Meikle)

Will noted that a financial report was not presented because we have a new bookkeeper who is transitioning into the position. Will's preliminary analysis is that we are close to budget. Will discussed that Delegate Steve Kluge submitted mileage reimbursement for travelling to a Salt Summit Conference in Albany, NY, with Sofie and Mark H.

*Will Meikle made a motion to the Board to approve the reimbursement to Steve for \$174.80 for his mileage associated with attending the Albany Salt Summit Conference, **Bill Lohan** seconded, all voting in favor.*

Will discussed that we are working on the budget for Fiscal year 27/28, and he reminded the Committee chairs that budgets are due October 28th and a brief 30-minute meeting will be held with each committee after the budget is submitted.

PUBLIC SAFETY (Will Meikle)

Will stated we are approaching the end of the season; and this weekend is our last planned on the water. We've begun the process of putting vessels away and returning officer's equipment. Will noted that we are beginning the process of updating and revising the memorandum of agreement with DEEP and we met with five CEOs and law enforcement leaders to discuss our areas of focus. Will added that the Public Safety budget will be presented to the committee next week.

EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES (Ed Siergiej)

Ed provided an update on the end of season, and that the buoys will begin removal next week. Some of the vessels are out of the water and others will follow. Mike thanked everyone who is helping with the buoy removal, and we plan on examining and gathering information on the zebra mussels that are found on the buoys.

PUBLIC AWARENESS (Joan Archer)

Joan extended gratitude to Mark Rasmussen for his help over the years to the Public Awareness committee. "The Candlewood Lake Authority extends its deepest gratitude to Mark Rasmussen for four years of dedicated service on our Public Awareness Committee. Razz was already a familiar name in the community as the founder of the *I Boat on Candlewood Lake* Facebook group, which has grown to 10,000 members and has become an essential resource for the Lake community. As questions on social media arose, Razz reached out to the CLA to ask how he could volunteer. He quickly became a key part of our team.

Since joining the committee, Razz took the reins of our annual lake cleanup and organized and managed our educational video series, along with driving forward various other key initiatives. He consistently took on the heavy lifting and has saved this organization significant time and money over the past four years.

As Razz moves to be closer to his grandkids, we wish him and his wife nothing but happiness in this next chapter. He will be greatly missed, and he leaves some very big shoes to fill. Thank you, Razz, for everything you've given to Candlewood Lake!"

Joan discussed an event to honor the four heroes who saved three lives at Chicken Rock this summer on Saturday, October 24th, 9:00am at Charter Hall in Sherman.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT (Sofie Licht)

Sofie and Steve completed October water quality monitoring. Sofie noted that the lake is turning over in many areas, bringing nutrients toward the surface and potentially contributing to blue-green algae blooms. She added that she will be examining where they find zebra mussels during buoy removal.

Sofie discussed the Salt Summit in Albany, NY, which Steve, Mark, and Sofie attended to learn about road salt's effects on lakes and the natural environment. Steve added that data has shown a steady increase in salt levels in Candlewood Lake over the years and they will be analyzing the data further. At the summit, they also explored how rising salt concentrations may influence cyanobacterial blooms. Mark added a lot of great

information was learned, and they will continue to discuss the findings and possibly present to the Towns, keeping in mind that the many lake communities often use private contractors for salt application.

ADJOURN

*Marianne Gaffey made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by **Joan Archer**, all voting in favor.*

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan Archer" followed by a small superscript "dw".

Joan Archer, Secretary
Dee Wright, Administrative Coordinator

These minutes are not considered official until they have been approved at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Candlewood Lake Authority



CANDLEWOOD LAKE AUTHORITY

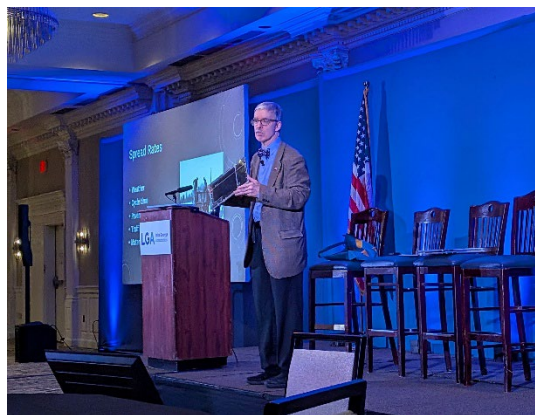
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October 14, 2026
Executive Director
Mark Howarth

Monthly Report

- We are nearing the end of the boating season, with some boaters still enjoying the changing foliage and pleasant fall temperatures. We will start the process of removing, cleaning and storing the hazard, speed and navigation buoys for the winter, shortly. As we do each year, we remind all boaters who engage in late-season boating to take extra precautions if out on the lake after the buoys have been removed. We also remind everyone who is out on a kayak or other manually propelled vessel that from October 1st through May 31st, when the water and air are coldest, that it is required that you wear your PFD while out.
- Sofie, Steve and I went to the one-day New York State Salt Summit last week, in Albany, NY. This was the 11th Annual Salt Conference, hosted by the Lake George Association, though this year was the first year they held it in Albany and made it a regional conference. The conference was extremely well done, with a lot of valuable information both on the science behind rising salt levels and their impacts on lakes and groundwater, as well as smart salting practices and equipment to keep roads safe during the winter, all while reducing salt use.



Rising salt levels in Candlewood Lake is one of the strongest trends we have been seeing over the 40 years we have been studying the water in the lake. Salt that gets put down on

the roads during the winter and that runoff goes into the lake. The information we learned will help inform our management recommendations for the lake and watershed.

- I completed our submission for the Sherman Annual Report and it is attached at the end of my report.
- We filmed what is likely to have been our final educational video of the season. Thank you so much to all who helped this year, and especially to Mark R who took the lead on this ongoing project and helped ensure its success this year. With that now completed, we have a number of videos in the pipeline to be released in the spring and early summer, with a list of additional topics to film in the coming year.
- As we move through the fall season, we have been working on changes we wish to make for the next 3-year MOA with the CT DEEP EnCon Police. We are anticipating meeting with DEEP in the near future to sit down and discuss proposed changes to the agreement. The current MOA expires on December 31st of this year.



CANDLEWOOD LAKE AUTHORITY

Preserving and Protecting Candlewood Lake Since 1972

Annual Report

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2026

During the 2025/2026 fiscal year, the Candlewood Lake Authority continued its commitment to protecting the environmental values of Candlewood Lake while providing a safe recreational environment for lake users through the Marine Patrol. As recreational use patterns and environmental conditions continue to evolve, the CLA remains focused on science-based lake management, public education, invasive species prevention and public safety initiatives that help preserve Candlewood Lake for future generations.

The CLA has a professional office staff, a seasonal Marine Patrol and a 15-member Board of Delegates. The following report highlights some of the organization's accomplishments and activities during the 2025/2026 fiscal year.

Water Quality and Ecology

Research Vessel



A major milestone for the CLA was the addition of its new multi-purpose research vessel. Designed to support environmental fieldwork and water quality efforts, the vessel also serves as an auxiliary Marine Patrol boat and auxiliary operations vessel.

The new boat has expanded the Authority's ability to conduct lake-wide environmental studies. Its enclosed wheelhouse allow for operation later into the fall and earlier into the spring. It also serves as an educational platform for the CLA, provides

support for research diving operations, transports equipment, allows us a greater public safety presence during special events and emergency situations and is used to help maintain the 90+ hazard, speed, navigation and informational buoys the CLA has on the lake.

Water Quality

The Candlewood Lake Authority continues to study lake conditions to better understand long-term trends and make informed management decisions that protect water quality and ecosystem health. The CLA's four decades-long water quality monitoring program generates valuable data that helps identify long-term ecological trends and emerging concerns. Water quality throughout the lake remained generally good during the 2025-2026 monitoring season.

Director of Ecology

The CLA brought Sofie Licht on to the team as the Authority's new Director of Ecology in June. Her field experience and diving expertise have expanded the Authority's ability to conduct underwater surveys, document aquatic habitat conditions, monitor plant communities and support ongoing ecological research programs throughout Candlewood Lake.

Nutrient Budget

The CLA initiated stream input study as a component of the development of the first comprehensive nutrient budget for Candlewood Lake. This project seeks to identify and quantify the nutrient sources entering the lake and improve understanding of factors that may contribute to water quality concerns and algae growth.

The information gathered will continue to support future management decisions and long-term water quality protection efforts.

Aquatic Plant Monitoring

The CLA continued collaborating on and assessing regrowth of aquatic vegetation in the lake, including via underwater surveys conducted through diving operations.

While some plant growth has been observed, overall aquatic vegetation remains limited. Continued monitoring remains critical for the early detection of invasive species and changes within the lake's ecosystem.

Lake Stewards Program

The CLA Lake Stewards Program continued to serve as one of the region's most important invasive species prevention efforts. Funded primarily through a grant from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Lake Stewards provide voluntary invasive species inspections, educational outreach and awareness at public launch locations. The program continues to serve as a valuable first line of defense against the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species.

Beach Testing Partnerships

The CLA's ongoing partnerships for E. coli monitoring and cyanobacteria testing continued during the 25/26 season. These efforts provide valuable information to municipalities and the public regarding recreational water quality conditions throughout the summer months.

Public Safety

The Candlewood Lake Authority Marine Patrol continued to provide patrol services throughout the boating season. Through education, enforcement and strategic deployment of personnel and equipment, the Marine Patrol worked to address changing recreational demands while maintaining a strong public safety presence on the lake.

Island Closures

Prior to Labor Day weekend 2025, the public islands of the lake were indefinitely closed due to health and safety concerns. With the islands closed for 2026, some on-shore recreational use migrated to portions of Vaughn's Neck, particularly the area known as Little Neck, in New Fairfield. The CLA has actively monitored and documented activity levels, litter accumulation and environmental conditions in this area to better understand evolving recreational patterns and potential management needs.

Marine Patrol PWCs

The CLA Marine Patrol's Jet Ski Task Force evolved to begin the 2026 season. Two new Marine Patrol PWCs replaced two 18-year old aging and unreliable PWCs, increasing mobility and operational effectiveness.

The PWCs have proven especially effective for near-shore, shallow water and congested area operations providing officers with additional capabilities beyond those available from traditional patrol boats.

Event Safety

The CLA continued serving as the lead coordinating agency for major on-water events held on Candlewood Lake. Working with local fire departments, municipal police departments, CT DEEP Environmental Conservation Police and event organizers, the CLA helped ensure safe operations during the Danbury fireworks display and the New Fairfield boat parade as permitted marine events during the season.

Public Awareness

Public Engagement and Education

The CLA's educational video series continued to grow in popularity during the 2025/2026 fiscal year. New episodes covering boating safety, environmental stewardship and lake management topics were released and distributed through the Authority's website and social media platforms. The videos continue to reach a broad audience and remain an effective tool for educating both residents and visitors about the responsible use and protection of Candlewood Lake.

In addition to online outreach, the CLA participated in community events, school programs, public meetings and educational presentations throughout the year.

Equipment & Facilities

Buoys and Operations

The CLA operations team continued maintaining more than 90 navigation, hazard and regulatory buoys throughout the lake. Staff also maintained Marine Patrol vessels, scientific research boats and operational equipment while supporting field projects and public safety operations.

The annual resident boat count was completed and both office facilities and operational assets remained fully staffed and functional throughout the fiscal year.



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Sofie Licht

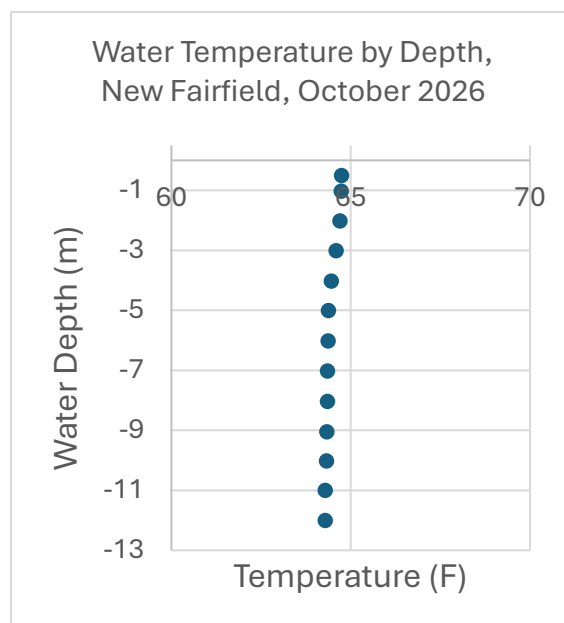
Director of Ecology

Candlewood Lake Authority

Re: October Monthly Report

Date: 10/14/2026

- Steve and I completed October Water Quality monitoring at our four Candlewood Lake sites, and we're planning to sample Squantz Pond this Thursday. The lake is turning over at most of our sampling sites, meaning water temperatures are becoming more consistent from the surface to the bottom. This process occurs as surface waters cool in the fall, becoming denser and sinking through the water column, which allows the lake to mix. During this time, nutrients that accumulated near the lake bottom during the summer can be redistributed throughout the water column. This process can cause increased algae and cyanobacteria growth, making fall turnover a period when blooms may become more common.



- We finished filming with for a video introducing our new research vessel to the Candlewood Lake communities. The crew filmed each of the chief elected officials of our five municipalities, along with a representative from FirstLight, sharing what the lake means to their communities and how this new research vessel will help us better understand, preserve, and protect the lake.
- I gave a virtual presentation at WCSU's Lake Symposium seminar series on October 5th titled "Candlewood Lake Ecology – A Constant State of Change." During my talk I discussed the changing vegetation patterns in Candlewood Lake, as well as the invasion of zebra mussels, and our efforts to keep further invasive species from entering our waters.

Graph of Water Temperature by Depth at our NF Monitoring site, showing that water temp is fairly consistent at 64°F throughout the water column.

- I am working on writing up the 2026 Lake Steward Report and will be working with Will in the next few weeks to get all of the documentation together to get our reimbursement for this grant project from CT DEEP. After that, we will apply for another Aquatic Invasive Species Grant to fund next year's Lake Steward Program.
- Mark, Steve, and I attended the 2026 New York State Salt Summit in Albany, NY, on October 8th to learn about the impacts of road salt on surface water and groundwater resources. Hosted by the Lake George Association, the summit brought together scientists, water operators, business owners, and state and local Department of Transportation representatives to discuss the challenges of road salt overuse and explore potential solutions. While road salt is important for maintaining safe driving conditions in the winter, the summit highlighted alternative practices, such as brine application and newer snowplow technologies, that can reduce salt use without compromising road safety. These approaches offer opportunities to better protect our freshwater resources from the harmful effects of excess salt.



Steve checks out a newer snowplow design that is able to fit better to the roads.

- With knowledge that Hydrilla has been observed in nearby lakes and rivers, we sent out a newsletter asking community members to be on the lookout for Hydrilla on September 17th, titled “Hydrilla: Know It, Spot It, Report It.” In the newsletter, we explained the negative impacts that a Hydrilla invasion would have on Candlewood Lake, as well as how to identify it, and what to do if it is spotted in Candlewood.
- Mark, Steve, and I are registered to attend the NALMS conference from November 2-6th, which I am very much looking forward to. Steve and I will be attending a workshop there titled “Internal Phosphorus Loading and Cyanobacteria: Hypotheses, case studies, internal load estimation and remediation” to learn more about cyanobacteria blooms and how we can better understand the conditions that cause them. Steve will also be presenting a poster about the impact of the pump-up water from the Housatonic River on the lake.
- I’m planning to help Mike with buoy removal starting next week. This will also give me an opportunity to assess zebra mussel settlement across different areas of the lake by observing which buoys have higher or lower densities of zebra mussels. This information could help us better understand patterns in zebra mussel distribution throughout Candlewood Lake.