

# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Friends,

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of Candlewood Lake Authority. When the Lake Authority started in 1972, it was formed solely to provide public safety with a Marine Patrol. In response to water quality challenges the CLA was also tasked with environmental stewardship. As the challenges to keep the lake safe and healthy have grown, so have the responsibilities of the CLA. We appreciate your financial support to help us meet each challenge that comes our way.

This year included many highs and lows. We continue to face a high volume of boat traffic, invasive species and increased usage on the lake and islands. On the water our officers responded to multiple emergencies this season and worked hard every day to prevent others. Your generosity has allowed us to add shifts for our Marine Patrol, better equip our boats for day and night patrols and provided us flexibility to better monitor and assess the lake's constantly changing ecology.

Please support our work to preserve and protect Candlewood Lake through conservation, education, and public safety with a gift to our Annual Appeal. Thank you!



Mark Howarth, Executive Director



Marianne Gaffey, Chairman of the CLA Board

## MARINE PATROL

**Bigger Presence:** *Since 2019 the CLA has increased patrol hours on the water by 68%.* Additional patrol shifts were added and shifts were extended to cover the lake days and nights. A strategic goal of the CLA continues to be increasing the Marine Patrol presence on the lake.

**Increased Interaction:** *The number of contacts with the public increased by 127% since 2018.* Last year the Marine Patrol had more contacts with the public than ever. The Marine Patrol is working to proactively keep boaters safe on an increasingly popular lake.

**Education and Enforcement:** *Over the past five years the Marine Patrol has had a 110% increase in the number of warnings and infractions issued.* The Marine Patrol's primary goal is to promote boating safety through education and when necessary, enforcement.

**Collaboration:** *The CLA Marine Patrol is proud to work closely with State of CT and our local police, fire and rescue services.* Serious incidents on the lake require a large collaborative effort and we appreciate the close working relationships that have developed in recent years between all available emergency services.



**Better Equipping the Patrol:** *The Marine Patrol put over 830 hours on their newest vessel this past season.* We acquired our first aluminum purpose-built patrol vessel in 2021 and the second is due to arrive this coming spring. The capabilities of these vessels combined with the presence they provide allow us to more effectively provide for a safer boating environment for all who wish to enjoy the lake.

**Of Note:** *The Marine Patrol provided assistance to over 80 stranded vessels this year.* While not our primary mission, the Marine Patrol often assisted stranded vessels, conducted safety inspections at boat launches and proactively addressed and educated boaters and recreaters about excessive noise.

## LAKE ECOLOGY

**Water Quality:** *We have nearly 40 years of water quality data through our monthly monitoring program* which allows us to better understand long-term trends and identify changes that may be occurring to the lake over time which help inform management recommendations.

**Lake Stewards:** *For the second year of this successful program, nearly 550 boats and trailers were inspected for invasive species at the ramps* this summer and boaters were educated on the importance of CLEAN DRAIN DRY when entering and leaving the lake. With many other invasives in nearby waterbodies, this program is helping to keep Candlewood free from new invasive species.

**Zebra Mussels:** *We continue to work with FirstLight Power and the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to better assess the zebra mussel situation.* This past summer divers found 370 adult zebra mussels in 30 locations, after which FirstLight Power announced they were lifting the voluntary restriction on summer water being pumped into the Lake, which had been put in place to prevent zebra mussel larvae in the Housatonic from reaching Candlewood during spawning season. The CLA voiced its opposition to FirstLight's plan, believing at least two more years of study is warranted to better understand where the population is headed.

**Lack of Vegetation:** *We are actively studying the potential cause of the disappearance of most of the vegetation and working with our partners and stakeholders to help the lake regain a balanced level of aquatic vegetation.* As the summer went on the vegetation largely disappeared from the lake prompting concern from the CLA and others. The CLA is investigating possible contributing factors, including the roles the sterile grass carp, winter drawdowns and climate may have played. While too much vegetation negatively impacts recreation it is important that the lake retains some vegetation as part of its ecosystem.



**We thank all of the stakeholders who support our mission to preserve and protect Candlewood Lake. Your contributions make a difference!**

Please consider a gift to the Candlewood Lake Authority.



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