

A watershed plan is underway! The Lake Quality Improvement Committee (LQIC) has begun the long process of developing a Lake and Watershed Management Plan (LWMP) for the Lake Hayward watershed, which is 1,500 acres in size, including the 174 acres of the lake. Approximately half of Lake Hayward's watershed is in Colchester and all of it is within the Eightmile River Watershed, forming part of that watershed's northern boundary. The Lake Hayward watershed map is posted on POALH's website.

The key early step in forging a LWMP is to meet with non-resident stakeholders to solicit their perspectives about what they view as threats to the lake and watershed and identify potential goals for the LWMP. Also, the Stakeholders' Meeting helps in development of mutually beneficial relationships for lake residents and these non-resident stakeholders and their organizations. Opportunities for Lake Hayward resident stakeholders to provide their input on Plan development will be offered in the spring/summer. Stay tuned for an announcement as to when that will take place.

A two hour non-resident Stakeholders' Meeting, organized by LQIC, was held Saturday, January 31, 2015 at the East Haddam Grange. Stakeholders attending included East Haddam 1st Selectman Mark Walter, State Rep (34th District) Melissa Ziobron, East Haddam Land Used Administrator Jim Ventres and representatives of the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee, CT River Coastal Conservation District, CT Agricultural Experiment Station, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, East Haddam Land Trust, East Haddam Conservation Commission and Aquatic Control Technologies. Also in attendance were POALH Board members, The Nature Conservancy's Eightmile River Watershed Land Steward, representatives of the Bashan Lake Association and the Moodus Reservoir Preservation Group and our LWMP technical advisor Rick Canavan, who is the incoming President of the CT Federation of Lakes (www.ctlakes.org). After a short opening PowerPoint presentation (located on POALH's website) by LQIC member and project leader Randy Miller and Rick Canavan, the stakeholders participated in a lively and informative discussion that elicited many ideas useful toward helping chart the direction of the Plan. We were fortunate to have several people on the

panel with significant experience in development of watershed management plans. All stakeholders were highly supportive of our initiative to develop a Plan!

So where do we go next? We will start with formulating a framework for the Plan, including specific recommendations for mitigating stormwater outfalls (drainage pipes that empty directly into the lake). Coming as no surprise to LQIC members, management of stormwater outfalls was identified as the top watershed management issue during the Stakeholders' Meeting. There will be much discussion around this issue going forward, as well as other threats, issues and actions that can be taken by property owners at the lake and throughout the Lake Hayward watershed to protect and maintain Lake Hayward.

It is important to understand that a successful watershed management plan must be a living breathing document that provides guidance both now and in the future. While it is a huge effort to develop, the LWMP will serve as our road map for many years to come, as long as it is regularly reviewed and updated.

Support of stakeholders is key to the success of this initiative that is so vital to the future of our community. Lake Hayward is becoming recognized as a responsible lake community and lake steward in Town, in the region, across the State and among the environmental community. One of the stakeholders commented after the meeting that we should "take pride in how Lake Hayward continues to step up to its stewardship responsibilities." Let's continue the good work.