

Deep Creek Lake Policy and Review Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: May 5, 2025

Time: 6:00PM

Location: Garrett College, PAC

Board Members in Attendance:

- Chairman Bob Browning
- Bob Sutton, Property Owners Association representative
- Patty Manown Mash, Chamber of Commerce representative
- Bob Hoffman, representing Senator McKay
- Jim Hinebaugh, Delegate
- David Myerburg (Virtual)
- Wendell Beitzel, Member

Other Attendees:

- Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Regional Manager Sarah Milbourne, Assistant Secretary Paul Peditto, Deep Creek Lake Manager Cristina Sanders, Jenna Sivic, Grace Armendariz, Kevin Speary, Sgt. Ethan Leonard, NRP
- Dr. Jim George, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Tom Parham, Resource Assessment Service (Virtual)
- J.C Brooks, Maryland Department of the Environment (Virtual)
- Ethan Lenoard, NRP
- Bruce Michael, Garrett County Government
- Members of the Public

Meeting Summary:

- Updates were provided on staffing changes and recent equipment purchases at the Deep Creek Lake Management Office, as well as ongoing efforts to digitize all permitting processes to improve efficiency and accessibility.
- The meeting also included continued public discussion on several key topics, including shoreline erosion control, the carrying capacity study, and enhanced water quality monitoring initiatives.
- Additionally, there was a discussion on the Harvester Pilot Project and the finalized Residential Dock Rental Regulation, which is scheduled to take effect in the beginning of June.

Detailed Minutes

Introductions and Office Updates:

Sarah Milbourne, Western Regional Manager, introduced Cristina Sanders as the newly appointed Deep Creek Lake Manager. Cristina will officially begin her role on May 14th.

Sarah also introduced members of the Lake Manager's Office team:

- **Grace Armendariz**, recently converted to a long-term contractual (LTC) position
- **Jenna Sivic** and **Kevin Speray**, currently serving as Natural Resources Technicians

In addition, three seasonal employees will be joining the team in the near future. The office is also receiving virtual support from an administrative professional, and the potential hiring of a seasonal administrative assistant is being considered.

A new pontoon boat is being added to the Lake Management Office fleet to enhance outreach efforts and better support community engagement on the lake.

Digitizing the permitting system is a top priority for the Lake Management Office, with the goal of reducing paper waste and streamlining operations through a fully online platform.

Resource Assessment Services will resume water quality data collection, which had been previously paused due to minimal changes in the data over several years. The renewed effort aims to provide a more comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of water quality conditions.

The Residential Dock Rental Regulation is complete and currently on the Maryland Register. The regulation goes into effect in the beginning of June.

Frostburg State University is being considered as a potential partner to conduct a carrying capacity study, utilizing drone imagery to support data collection and analysis.

Harvester Pilot Program:

Funding was secured for the Harvester pilot program. DNR is currently evaluating the most effective use of the harvester, including its potential impacts on the lake, lake bottom, and submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). It was brought up that similar Harvesters are already in use at other locations in Maryland, providing real-time data to help guide the implementation at Deep Creek Lake.

Natural Resource Police Update:

Sgt. Leonard presented enforcement statistics for 2024, reporting a total of 177 citations issued and over 300 warnings given. He also recommended that the PRB consider developing a safe boating policy, with a particular focus on the areas surrounding the Route 219 and Glendale bridges for the 2026 boating season.

Maryland Department of Environment:

MDE Representative Jim George mentioned a "Fee Bill" was passed (SB 250) in the General Assembly and two of the fees pertain to establishing a fund for potential dam repairs. One such fee is effective July 1, 2025 and another is effective January 1, 2027.

Jim George is retiring from MDE and his replacement for the Administrative Council is J.C. Brooks. A replacement for the PRB has not yet been announced.

Final Remarks and Adjournment:

Molly Ramsey, Garrett County Watershed Coordinator spoke briefly to the work of a variety of folks concerning the Deep Creek Watershed.

Motion was made for the regulation committee to review and recommend any action taken from Paul Durham's Letter to Policy and Review Board.

Bruce Michael provided a follow-up on the Arrowhead dredging project. Site visits have confirmed that the mitigation plan required by DNR has been implemented, with all but one tree surviving the winter. Resource Assessment Services (RAS) will continue monitoring the planted submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) to ensure successful overwintering and establishment.

The Attorney General and DNR have reconfirmed that The United States Coast Guard does not consider Deep Creek Lake as navigable waters. This had to be clarified after there was some confusion at a recent livery meeting.

Conversation will continue about allowing commercial entities to operate on Deep Creek Lake without being associated with a dock permit.

The meeting adjourned at 7:39pm.