

Deep Creek Lake Policy and Review Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: January 27, 2025

Time: 6:00PM

Location: Garrett College, PAC Conference Center

Board Members in Attendance:

- Chairman Bob Browning (virtual)
- Bob Sutton - Property Owners Association representative
- Patty Manown Mash - Chamber of Commerce representative (virtual)
- Bob Hoffman - representing Senator McKay (virtual)
- Jim Iden - Maryland Bass Federation representative
- Wendell Beitzel - Member
- Marta Schroyer - Member

Other Attendees:

- Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Regional Manager Sarah Milbourne, Assistant Secretary Paul Peditto, Emily Vainieri (Office of the Attorney General for DNR), NRP Lieutenant Chris Miller and Sergeant Mike Friend
- Dr. Jim George, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Members of the Public

Call to Order: Bob Sutton called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Updates on Lake Management and Event Sponsorships

- Regional Manager (RM) Milbourne talked about sponsoring a serigraph to honor the Deep Creek Lake 100 celebration, which will be available at the Discovery Center and events like the gala.
- Bob Sutton shared an update about the 3D rendering of the watershed that is being framed by park staff for the Discovery Center at Deep Creek Lake State Park. He advised a second rendering will be given to the county for the Transportation Museum.
- Wendell Beitzel recalled a past event involving fireworks and asked if the DNR can support a similar event this year. DNR is open to ideas and encouraged to keep the conversation open. Karen Meyers discussed some of the upcoming DCL100 events, suggesting combining a nighttime display with the boat parade.

Regulation Updates and Personnel Changes

- Assistant Secretary Paul Peditto provided updates on the regulation allowing dock owners to rent docks, which has been approved through departmental

channels and is moving forward. He advised the regulation will be reviewed by the Administrative Executive and Legislative Review Committee of the General Assembly. The formal regulation should be adopted in May.

- Assistant Secretary (AS) Peditto discussed the reclassification of the Lake Management role from a Planner IV to a Planner V. The new position is expected to be posted in February, and the hiring process will take 6-8 weeks moving through Human Resources.

Budget and Reserve Fund Expenditures

- RM Milbourne provided an update on the reserve fund balance, which is \$638,000, and mentions potential expenditures like purchasing a work boat and hiring seasonal staff.
- RM Milbourne mentioned typical budget expenditures like buoys and the 10 and 10 work around the lake as expected expenditures.
- RM Milbourne shared overall updates regarding the office, including that permits should be printed in February.

Website Updates and State Lakes Restoration Fund

- RM Milbourne discussed upcoming updates to the Deep Creek Lake NRMA web page, including a landing page and links to useful resources and updates to permits to make them more user friendly.
- The website will be a one-stop shop for realtors, adjacent landowners, and contractors, with space for feedback on missing information.
- Bob Sutton inquired about the State Lakes Restoration Fund, and RM Milbourne explained that funding is drying up and remaining funds will be used for projects like hydrilla treatment. She also shared that if funding was available or through grants, the Department would work to sponsor wall project grants.
- Bob Sutton inquired about a bill submitted and AS Peditto provided an overview of the bill introduced by Delegate Hinebaugh and Senator McKay that would allocate \$1 million (amended to \$500k) annually to Deep Creek Lake starting in fiscal year 2027.
- Bob Hoffman asked for any updates on the website to be shared with the Board. RM Milbourne agreed and invited the Watershed Association to provide input for the page.
- Contractor Clif Fowler joined the conversation to share concerns about the potential loss of State Lakes Funds. He shared that many permit holders had been advised by the Lake Management Office that there would be funding, and he was petitioning on their behalf to honor those requests.

Nuisance Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Control Public Meeting

- RM Milbourne shared notes from Tom Parham who could not attend. He provided an update on the public meeting on nuisance submerged aquatic vegetation control, which included presentations from consultants on methods for addressing the issue.
- The presentation and summary sheet will be posted and linked to the Deep Creek Lake NRMA web page when they are available.
- RM Milbourne provided Resource Assessment Service's Mike Naylor's email for further questions and comments.

Final Remarks and Adjournment

- MDE's Senior Policy Advisor Jim George mentions the working group on adjusting water levels to manage submerged aquatic vegetation, but notes that MDE is not currently doing anything in this regard. He shared that Brookfield had a public meeting, discussed their progress on reporting and shared they had closed out the process.
- Bob Sutton and other speakers express dissatisfaction with the progress and lack of major questions or concerns.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 pm.

Action Items

- RM Milbourne - Send out notification to the Policy Review Board when the updated Deep Creek Lake NRMA website is live.
- RM Milbourne - Investigate the status of the shoreline erosion control grant program and explore options to support property owners who have already completed work.
- Coordinate with RM Milbourne to develop the section on the website for the Policy Review Board and Watershed Association.
- Follow up on the potential legislation to secure funding for the State Lakes Restoration program, specifically for Deep Creek Lake.