



LAKE MUSCONETCONG REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board

*Byram, Netcong, Roxbury, Stanhope,
Morris and Sussex Counties, the State of New Jersey*

77 Main Street Stanhope, NJ 07874

(973) 527-3200

www.lakemusconetcong.com

**ANNUAL REPORT
2025**

<u>Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Earl Riley, Chairman	Byram	12-31-25
Robert Hathaway, Jr., Vice-Chairman	Netcong	12-31-28
Lester Wright, Secretary Treasurer	Roxbury	12-31-28
Joseph Keenan	Netcong	12-31-26
Shawn Pottillo	Roxbury	12-31-26
Steven Rattner	Morris County	12-31-25
Rudy Shlesinger	Stanhope	12-31-28
Rosemarie Maio	Stanhope	12-31-26
Judith McGrath	Stanhope	12-31-26
Vacant	Sussex County	12-31-25
Jacob Hamilton	State of New Jersey	Indefinite
Vacant (1 Seat)	State of New Jersey	Indefinite

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Canal Society	- Ms. McGrath
Site Plan Review/Stream Encroachment	- Mr. Wright
Musconetcong Watershed Association	- Mr. Rattner
Audit Committee	- Mr. Keenan and Mr. Shlesinger
Lake Awareness	- Ms. Maio
Lake Management	- Mr. Hathaway
Operating Budget Committee	- Mr. Wright
CD Investment Committee	- Ms. McGrath, Mr. Shlesinger & Mr. Rattner

Members of the Board represent Byram, Netcong, Stanhope, Roxbury, the Counties of Morris and Sussex and the State of New Jersey and are appointed by their representative governing body. The number of representatives and the amount of annual membership fees are based on shoreline.

The terms of the Board Members vary according to the ordinances (4-year terms) of each municipality. Resolutions by the County Freeholders include a one-year term and the State appointments are indefinite.

LAKE MUSCONETCONG REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD

The Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board was established on January 10, 1990 as an advisory board whose purpose is to recommend to the municipalities of Byram, Netcong, Roxbury and Stanhope and the Counties of Sussex and Morris and the State of New Jersey, methods by which the many problems evident in the Lake Musconetcong Watershed area may be solved.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board is the complete restoration of the lake for recreation and other uses and to act as its guardian so that future generations may enjoy the use of the lake.

Mission Statement

The Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board's mission is to work with the general public, local, state and federal governments in restoring, preserving, protecting and enhancing the environmental conditions of Lake Musconetcong and its surrounding watershed to ensure high environmental quality, increased recreational potential, public awareness and economic vitality. Through educational awareness, the Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board hopes to preserve the historic, economic and recreational values, and community pride once enjoyed by the residents of the municipalities it serves, as well as by the general public.

Meeting Schedule and Appointments

The reorganization meeting was held on January 15, 2025. Officers were elected at the reorganization meeting, as shown on the first page of this report.

Regular meetings were held on the third Wednesday of each month throughout the year.

The regular meeting place is designated as the Netcong Municipal Building. All meetings are scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m.

Appointment of Personnel & Consultants - Appointments were made by resolution at the reorganization meeting. James Bryce was appointed as attorney for the Board and Ellen Horak was re-appointed as an independent contractor to perform clerical duties deemed necessary by the Board.

Web-Site - The Board's web-site is www.lakemusconetcong.com

Standing Committees

Canal Society

Ms. McGrath served as the chair of committee and kept the Board informed on matters of the Canal Society.

Site Plan Review/Stream Encroachment:

Mr. Wright served as the Board member to oversee all site plan/stream encroachment applications. The Board received several site plan notices and variance notices, and after review it was determined that they did not affect the lake.

Musconetcong Watershed Association

Mr. Rattner served as the Board's representative to the Musconetcong Watershed Association ("MWA"). Mr. Rattner kept the Board informed on matters of the MWA. The MWA continued its work on the Water Vision Plan, which when completed, will be the first in the State. In 2025, the Delaware River was recognized as the River of the Year.

Lake Management Program

Mr. Hathaway served as chair of the committee. The lake management committee oversees the weed harvesting operations and herbicide treatment, as well as other lake management issues. Through the efforts of Mr. Hathaway along with members of the Board and our volunteer operators, all necessary maintenance and repairs were done to the equipment.

The equipment was placed in the lake and removed from the lake with assistance from the Netcong Department of Public Works.

The Board solicited proposals from three vendors for herbicide treatment in the lake and received proposals from two of the vendors. The Board awarded a contract to Ready Scout, LLC. A treatment plan was created. Ready Scout surveyed the lake and found a new species of weeds in the lake, being curly leaf pondweed, which is a native species that has been aggressively taking over the lake. The Board altered the chemical to be used in order to also address the curly leaf pondweed in addition to the water chestnut and Eurasian milfoil, at no additional cost to the Board.

After the initial application, Ready Scout needed to go back on the lake to address some areas that the herbicide did not effectively manage. There was a substantial retreatment of the water chestnut as the impact of the original treatment was minimal.

With respect to Ready Scout's return for a guaranteed application, there was a misunderstanding by Ready Scout with respect to the area to be treated. There was about a 12-acre area with very significant water chestnut, six of which was the responsibility of Ready Scout as per the contract. Six of the 12-acre area was not treated because it was over the 10 acres in the contract. It was agreed that the area would be treated and Ready Scout would be responsible for the cost of 6-acres and would bill the Board for the other 6-acres. The Board recommended the use of the SePro product, which is a more expensive chemical, but is good for two years. The Board was satisfied with the final results of the treatment.

In addition to the herbicide treatment, the Board continued weed harvesting areas of the lake. The Board faced a challenge in 2025 trying to find a facility that would accept the weeds from the lake. Jefferson Recycling agreed to accept the weeds; however, the weeds had to be tested before the Board could bring them to their site. The testing would not need to be done annually going forward. The weeds were tested and came back unchallenged so they could be brought to Jefferson Recycling. Sussex County MUA required that all weeds be dewatered before being brought to their site. Morris County MUA originally said they would not take the weeds; however, temporarily for this year, they opened to the Board and their price was more agreeable so the Board disposed of the weeds at the Morris County MUA. Arrangements were made with Crazy Cans for transportation of the weeds.

The Board removed the existing docks that were damaged during the sever ice movement during the past winter installed EZ Docks at the harvester site and conveyor site. This type of dock enables any ice to run underneath the dock. The Board needed a type of platform for the harvester operators to safely access the equipment so ramps were constructed at both sites. There are two floating docks at the conveyor with ramps and a single floating dock at the harvester with a ramp.

In order to ensure the safety of the new equipment, the Board installed security cameras at Barney's Way and the Allen Street site. Previous equipment had been vandalized and noting the value of the new equipment, the Board believed security cameras were necessary.

In 2025, the Board received and approved a request from Tyler Perry of Boy Scout Troop 91 to make his Eagle Scout Project the "Lake Musconetcong Shed and Land Restoration Project." The project included refurbishment of the shed, repairing the roof, fixing and painting the shed's exterior walls and door and clearing away all the dead brush and debris around the site. This site had been an eyesore to the community and due to the efforts of Mr. Perry, the area is now unbelievably improved and an asset to the Board and the community.

There was a one-foot draw down of the lake that began on October 15th. The draw down affords the lake front property owners, municipalities and volunteer organizations to remove debris from the exposed shoreline. The Board held a "Shoreline Clean-Up Day" on December 13th. The event was very successful. There were about 15-16 volunteers and about fifteen 55-gallon bags were collected. In the past, large items were pulled out of the lake during the clean-up, i.e. tires, couches, etc., but this year the debris consisted of only bottles, cans, plastics and similar, which is a significant improvement over the past years.

In 2025 the Board again received no financial support from the State. The Board has one appointment of a State representative; however, there is still one vacancy of a State appointed representative on the Board.

The Board received \$2,400 from the Borough of Netcong for administering the goose egg addling program again this year, which enables goose control across the entire waterbody.

In 2022, the Board was informed they were awarded a Water Quality Restoration Grant in the amount of \$572,000 for the purchase of specific equipment. The Board signed the grant agreement mid-July 2023 for the purchase of a new weed harvester, trailer, shore conveyor and backhoe. The grant is a three-year program. In 2023 the Board contracted with Aquarius Systems to build the new weed harvester. The new weed harvester, trailer and shore conveyor were delivered to the Board in 2024. In January 2025, the Board purchased a backhoe with the grant money allocated for the same. The Board has received all of the grant funds with the exception of \$57,200, which is the 10% the State holds back until the final paperwork has been approved.

The Board again utilized volunteers for this year's weed harvesting program. This year 28 loads were removed with the harvester totaling 470,400 pounds of wet weeds. There were an estimated 258 hours of volunteer time, including 57.5 hours for maintenance and training on the new equipment. The Board recognizes and appreciates the tremendous amount of time and effort by these dedicated volunteers.

Weed Harvesting Budget: The Board spent approximately \$72,816.00 in management of the lake. Approximately \$19,718.00 was spent on operation of the harvester. The LMRPB utilized funds received from Byram, Netcong, Roxbury, and Stanhope which are apportioned according to percentage of shoreline as well as funding from both Sussex and Morris Counties.

See **Appendix A** for a breakdown of the total costs associated with the 2025 herbicide treatment and harvesting effort.

Lake Awareness

Fishing Contest

This year, the Board held their annual fishing contest in conjunction with the Hopatcong Elks Club’s fishing contest. The fishing contest was held on Father’s Day, June 15th at Lakeside Park in Stanhope. State Parks served as a co-sponsor of the fishing contest. The weather was cold, rainy and windy. Due to the unpleasant weather, attendance was lower than usual. There were only 15 children who participated; however, there were 49 fish caught by the participants. Trophies were awarded to the winners and prizes were given to all participants. Ramsey’s again donated prizes for the event plus gave the Board a 20% discount on everything they purchased. The Lake Musconetcong Community Association donated \$100 for the trophies and the Sportsmen’s Federation donated \$200 for prizes.

Annual Budget

The annual budget for the governmental entities is based on a pro-rated percentage of shoreline by municipality which totals 75% of the requested budget. The remaining 25% of the budget is allocated equally to the two counties and is represented as follows:

<u>Percent of Shoreline</u>	
Byram	03.525%
Netcong	18.675%
Roxbury	20.1 %
Stanhope	32.7 %
Morris County	12.5 %
Sussex County	12.5 %

The total Budget vs. Actual for 2025 follows:

Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board Annual Budget FY 2025				VS:	Actual
Member	Adjusted Shoreline %	Anticipated			Actual
					\$
Morris County	12.500%	\$ 7,628.13			7,628.13
					\$
Sussex County	12.500%	\$ 7,628.13			7,628.13
					\$
Byram Township	3.525%	\$ 2,151.13			2,151.13
					\$
Netcong Borough	18.675%	\$ 11,396.42			11,396.42
					\$
<i>Netcong Parks Herbicide</i>		\$ 800.00			800.00

Roxbury Township	20.100%	\$ 12,266.03	\$ 12,266.03
<i>Roxbury Parks Herbicide</i>		\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00
Stanhope Borough	32.700%	\$ 19,955.18	\$ 19,955.18
<i>Stanhope Parks Herbicide</i>		\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00
Shared County and Municipal Contribution		\$ 61,025.02	\$ 61,025.02
Misc Revenue (Egg Addling)		\$ 2,400.00	\$ 2,400.00
Plus three municipal parks herbicide		\$ 2,300.00	\$ 2,300.00
LMRPB Anticipated Income		\$ 65,725.02	\$ 65,725.02
Operating Budget		Anticipated	VS: Actual
Clerical		\$ 6,600.00	\$ 6,600.00
Education		\$ 500.00	\$ 311.42
Office Expense		\$ 75.00	\$ 167.92
Insurance(Directors & Officers)		\$ 950.00	\$ 950.00
Legal		\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,170.00
Legal notices		\$ 150.00	\$ 110.80
Postage		\$ 50.00	\$ -
Website		\$ 50.00	\$ -
Security Cameras		\$ -	\$ 2,343.53
Miscellaneous		\$ 150.00	\$ 347.33
		\$ 10,125.00	\$ 12,001.00
Lake Management			
Fuel		\$ 1,000.00	\$ 473.58
Weed Transport/Disposal		\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,880.00
Equipment Maintenance		\$ 2,000.00	\$ 8,182.00

BSA Eagle Project	\$	-	\$	1,800.00
Dock Replacement	\$	-	\$	19,240.00
General Liability Ins	\$	1,500.00	\$	1,700.00
Inland Marine Ins	\$	3,000.00	\$	4,450.00
Commercial Property Ins	\$	400.00	\$	400.00
Volunteer Ins	\$	200.00	\$	400.00
Umbrella Coverage	\$	800.00	\$	933.00
Weed Control	\$	65,000.00	\$	60,358.00
<hr/>				
LMRPB Capital Offset	\$	(28,000.00)	\$	(28,000.00)
<hr/>				
Lake Management	\$	50,900.00	\$	72,816.58
Plus Operating	\$	10,125.00	\$	12,001.00
<hr/>				
Expenses shared by municipalities and counties	\$	61,025.00	\$	84,817.58
Misc Revenue applied to Weed Control	\$	2,400.00	\$	2,400.00
Plus three municipal Parks Herbicide treatment	\$	2,300.00	\$	2,300.00
<hr/>				
Total LMRPB Expenses	\$	65,725.00	\$	89,517.58
<hr/>				
2022 Clean Waters Grant	Income		Expense	
NJDEP in 4 payments over time	\$	514,800.00	\$	
Paid to Aquarius Systems			\$	460,000.00
Paid for Backhoe			\$	111,762.25
Sale of old equipment	\$	72,500.00	\$	
Transportation Cost for new Harvester			\$	22,500.00
Crane Cost for new Harvester			\$	3,050.00
<hr/>				
	\$	587,300.00	\$	597,312.25

Volunteer Hours and Contributions

The Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board is grateful for the many volunteer hours and in-kind contributions of materials and labor through individuals, organizations and participating governing bodies. During 2025 the Board logged 258 volunteer hours, totaling an in-kind value of \$9,538.26; (\$36.97 per hour (2025 New Jersey In-kind Value Rate)). Since the year 1995, the total volunteer hours logged to date are 45,846 hours. (Over the past 30 years the LMRPB has logged \$1,694,936.00 of volunteer contributions). (at todays value).