

Wastewater Study Update

This document provides a status report of the activities following engineering studies on three Lewisboro lakes as of April 30, 2023. Authored by Sue Enos, chair of the Lewisboro Lakes Coalition.

Background

The Town of Lewisboro received a grant to perform engineering studies on three Lewisboro lakes, Kitchawan, Truesdale and Waccabuc, to assess the impacts of septic systems on the lakes and to identify potential solutions. Each of the lake reports indicated that septic systems were negatively affecting the lakes and assessed sewer and septic improvement options. The findings were presented to the Town in November, 2021

Following the release of the three individual reports, several Lewisboro residents proposed a central wastewater treatment system to serve the homes around five eastern Lewisboro lakes, two of which were not included in the original engineering studies. The Lewisboro Lakes Coalition, consisting of representatives from each of 7 lakes in Lewisboro, gained the support of Lewisboro, Westchester County, NY State and DEC officials to explore the feasibility and affordability of various solutions to mitigate septic pollution for this combination of lakes, with the eventual goal of including all of the lakes in Lewisboro. A second goal was to obtain the required capital funding required through grants.

As part of a grant provided by Representative Burdick's and Senator Harckham's offices, the engineering firm of Woodard and Curran has been able to provide us with a review and summary of alternative treatment options for the Lewisboro lakes. Currently, the report is still in draft form and should be completed and made public sometime in May.

Some initial conclusions of the summary include the following:

1. A wastewater treatment (sewage) system for all the lakes would have the maximum benefit of substantially reducing septic contamination, but it would have the maximum cost. Therefore, a more affordable "hybrid" solution is being evaluated. This solution would incorporate three components; newly installed "enhanced treatment systems" where necessary, conventional septic system repair/ replacement where appropriate, and a wastewater treatment system servicing some of the more critical lake properties which are in close proximity to one another.
2. Since Lake Kitchawan is a substantial distance from the other 4 eastern lakes, connecting residences around this lake to a central sewage treatment plant would be prohibitively expensive. The best solution for mitigating pollution in this lake may be to follow the recommendation of the 2021 engineering report (completed by Woodard and Curran) and replace many inadequate septic systems with "enhanced treatment systems." There is a probability of available funding to complete this project and this solution for Lake Kitchawan is less complicated than possible solutions for the other

Lewisboro lakes. If adequate funding is awarded, Kitchawan may be designated as the first phase in remediating septic pollution in our lakes.

3. Alternatives for mitigating septic pollution in the remaining Lewisboro lakes are being actively studied by Lewisboro, Westchester County, and NY State officials, as well as the DEC and Lewisboro residents. There are many variables to be considered before deciding the best solution for each of the lakes. For this reason, additional research is needed and applications to fund continued planning are being initiated this year. It is hoped that proposals for the other lakes will be available soon. Implementation of these plans will, however, take time and need to be completed in stages.
4. A Community Outreach group of Lewisboro lake residents has been formed to update residents on the continued progress to find feasible and affordable solutions to mitigate septic pollution in all our lakes. Information will be available through individual lake associations, on lake association websites and in other publications. The Community Outreach group will work closely with Tony Gonçalves, Lewisboro Town Supervisor, to keep everyone informed.

We are grateful to have the continued support, guidance, and availability of these officials: Tony Gonçalves, Lewisboro Town Supervisor; Chris Burdick, NY State Assembly Representative; Peter Harckham, NY State Senator; Erica Pierce, Westchester County Legislator; Millie Magraw, Westchester County Water Quality and Planning Dept Coordinator; and Tom Snow, NYC Watershed Coordinator, NYS DEC.

Anthony Catalano and Ken Kohlbrenner, from the engineering firm of Woodard and Curran, have provided the vital planning work as well as a considerable amount of time and insights to this project.

The Lewisboro Lakes Coalition members who have currently been part of the “Working Group” with the officials listed above are; Janet Andersen, Tadeusz Rajwer, Jonathan Peters, Allison Settineri, John Gusmano, Sue Enos, Carol Sherwood, Susan Allport and Leah Graygor. The entire “Working Group” has had monthly or bimonthly meetings since January 2023.

Lewisboro Lakes:

Eastern area; Lakes Kitchawan, Oscalaeta, Rippowam, Truesdale, Waccabuc, and Whatmore
Western area; Lake Katonah and Timberlake