2025-07-12 ALA Annual Meeting at Averill Corp Inn

As of 7/1/25 we had 108 paid members, 36 people attended, and 24 member-camps were represented.

Registration and coffee/social hour was from 10:00-11:00 am. Special thanks to our volunteer t-shirt and raffle ticket sellers, Lilly & Rachel Patterson! At 11:00 President Bernie Gracy introduced Jud Kratzer, Fisheries Biologist with VT Fish & Wildlife.

Jud started his presentation with the reasons that Great and Little Averill are unique: our two lakes have fish populations that are closest to what the original lake species would have been in the state. There are no bass or pickerel, which are typically found throughout Vermont lakes, because they were stocked. These fish tend to eat all the minnows which would otherwise be available to feed lake trout. Also the water quality is very good, with colder, oxygenated waters. Jud went on to describe fish surveys that VT F&W has conducted, and the results of those studies. There were lots of questions from the audience, which Jud expertly answered.

Following Jud's presentation, Sam, a summer intern from VT Department of Environmental Conservation, presented the ALA with a Gold Lake Wise Award. This is the result of our community's efforts to promote healthy lakeshores through the Lake Wise program. The award is given to a Vermont lake where at least 15% of the lakefront property owners have been designated as Lake Wise. Little Averill is only the 6th lake in the state to earn this designation. Sam then described the Lake Wise designation and handed out a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in participating. We hope to see Great Averill receive a Gold Lake Wise award next summer!

A delicious lunch from the Solomon's Store deli was served from 12:00-12:45.

The business meeting started after lunch. The first order of business was to vote to accept the 2024 minutes: motioned and seconded, and all present were in favor.

The second order of business was to approve the treasurer's report: per Gennette, the '23-'24 ending balance was $7,995.38; income received from dues, meals, donations, raffle and (greeter program) grants totaled $11,704.55. Expenses for office supplies, postage, web fees, memberships and greeter program payroll was $7,056.23. As of 7/1/2025 we had 108 paid members, and a balance of $12,643.70. Our books were audited by Ginette Ladd, and were all in order. Motion was made and seconded to approve the treasurer's report; all were in favor.

President Bernie gave beginning remarks about the health of the lakes and the strength of the ALA. He touched on our Lake Watershed Action Plan progress, and pointed out that very few lake organizations are approved by VT DEC for the grants to complete these watershed surveys and action plans. The strength and engagement of our organization and community was key to securing the funding for this comprehensive project. There will be a public presentation by the Memphremagog Watershed team, who have been working to analyze needed improvement for our watershed basin. This meeting will outline projects identified and will give the lake community the chance to help select the (first) three projects that we will implement. Sunday, August 24th at 10:00 am at Jackson's Lodge on Lake Wallace.

Susan discussed the wake sport ruling: all petitions, including ours, were denied by VT DEC in favor of revamping their new wake boat rules from 2023-24 (which they were never able to fully implement).

The revamped rules once again put both Great and Little Averill on the approved-for-wake-sports list, while 12 of the 30 lakes initially approved fell off the list. Susan, Jim Clemons and Tim Cowan, our volunteer wake sports warriors who put in hundreds of hours on our initial petition, are meeting this week to determine our next steps. Once again there will be hearings and a public comment time period. The only good news is that ARCO, who owns the Little Averill boat launch, voted last summer to not allow wake boats to launch from their landing. Our legal "team" (Jim Clemons) designed a sign, which was paid for by ALA and installed at the Little Averill boat launch last summer.

Related to the wake sport issue of introduction of aquatic invasive species (AIS), Susan also spoke about the Lake Greeter program which she has been organizing and running on both lakes for two summers. The only real preventative measures to reduce the risk of AIS are lake greeters, who should be equipped with hot-water power washers to clean all boats entering the lakes. This would entail building washing stations that would not drain into either lake, purchasing diesel-powered washers and hiring full-time staff for the entire boating season on both lakes. Our summer weekends-only program already strains our budget and our volunteer organizer. Last year VT DEC funded 72% of the cost of our program; this year they will only fund 62%.

The next item of business was a vote to approve the Averill Lakes Association becoming incorporated as a 501(c.)3 corporation. Bernie explained the advantage of being able to apply for grants and donations from organizations who will only give grants to such non-profit corporations. The draft Averill Lakes Association, Inc bylaws were handed out and previously published on the website. The new structure would eliminate specific director roles, other than the officers, and would allow the board to consist of up to 11 directors. Motion was made and seconded; all present were in favor of incorporating.

Elections followed: the ALA Board Officers - Bernie Gracy-President, Susan Gresser-Vice President, Gennette Carr-Treasurer, Connie Jackson- Secretary - all agreed to serve another 1-year term. There were no other nominations for officers.

Current Board Director's Tim Cowan, Don Tase, and Kim Hubbard terms expire at end of June 2027; Larry Steeneck's term expires at end of June 2026.

Susan Gresser nominated Zach Chapman as a director. Bernie read Zach's Averill background, and Zach spoke about his willingness to join the board in order to contribute to the ALA, as his father Philip had done for many years. The nomination was seconded; all present were in favor. Zach's term will expire at the end of 2027.

We sold T-shirts and raffled off several beautiful handmade items, which raised $835. The pair of Adirondack chairs were won by Linda Tase; the loon painting was won by Lisa Martin; the ceramic fish mug was won by Patrick Calecas; the charcuterie board by Kim Hubbard, the ceramic fish wall hanging by Brian Springmann and the cutting board by Cathy Springmann. Thank you donors!

The meeting ended on time at 2:00 pm. Bernie thanked the leadership team for all of their hard work and dedication to the health of our lakes.

Many thanks to our hosts, Averill Corp, for providing us a wonderful venue this year!