Lakes Association

Brittany O'Mara
EHLA Representative

EAST HADDAM LAKES ASSOCIATION 2025-26 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET REQUEST

East Haddam's Three Lakes are: Bashan Lake-273 acres, Lake Hayward-174 acres and Moodus Reservoir-486 acres. Each Lake has a CT. State Boat Launch

The lake communities of Bashan Lake, Lake Hayward, and Moodus Reservoir represent nearly 20% of the Town's Real Estate Grand List. This is largely due to the significant additional property taxation of about $1,200,000 levied on them via higher valuation factors. It is in the Town's financial interest to support this important tax revenue source by contributing funds to the substantial private financial expenditures made by the lake communities to protect, preserve and remediate issues facing the lakes. The health and recreational value of the lakes drive property values and resulting increased tax revenues. Sought after lake life helps make East Haddam a desirable and attractive town.

The current threats to the economic value of the three lakes and the properties surrounding them are varied. They consist of invasive aquatic species, excessive algae blooms, storm water runoff and erosion and pollution from poorly functioning septic systems, excessive fertilization, pesticides and detergents. Each lake has a state boat launch which makes the control of invasive aquatic weeds more challenging and expensive to control. In addition, the issues of over-development and out-of-character development are facing each lake community.

Consistent with prior years, the rationale for the 2025-26 budget request is based on the 1999 Economic Study conducted by the University of Connecticut and CT Department of Environment and Energy Protection (funded by the U.S. EPA's Clean Lakes Program) entitled "How Much is a Lake Worth To You". If water quality issues are ignored, tax revenues from lake properties will decrease in direct relation to the deteriorating water quality of the lakes and if water quality drops to the point where it is unsafe to swim and/or eat fish caught in the lakes, lake property values will drop in the range of 36-43%. What does this mean for East Haddam? This could correlate to a tax revenue loss in the range of $1.650,000 to $1,9200,000 or 6.2% to 7.2% of tax revenues.

The three Lakes Associations' budget request is made to help with many projects currently in action and for the future to prevent the decline of the quality of our three lakes. These include professional services for herbicide applications, mechanical weed treatment operations, exploration of alternative solutions, water testing to measure bacteria levels and other physical, chemical and biological lake parameters necessary to determine further actions required. New emphasis has been placed on the harmful algae blooms (HABS) which are a concern as our climate changes. Monitoring these factors requires professional guidance and laboratory services. In addition to this monitoring, we need to keep our public educated on these topics, risks and prevention methods. This is done with newsletters, e-mails, websites, and in-person presentations.

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Major Service Level Accomplishments

BASHAN LAKE

- Fanwort in the boat launch area was again treated in the spring of 2024 under the 2 year permit received from DEEP in 2023.
- CAES mapped and checked the lake for milfoil, fanwort and hydrilla. CT River hydrilla was found in Bashan Lake in 2024 and 50 plants were hand pulled in the dam cove. Milfoil has also reappeared and spread in the boat launch cove. It's too extensive to hand pull and will need to be treated.
- The CT DEEP, initiated a 3-foot drawdown of Bashan Lake starting November 1, 2024 and will close the gate on or about March 1, 2025. New procedures implemented by DEEP in 2024 were followed to request the lake drawdown. The Bashan Lake Association continued to work with DEEP to draft a drawdown agreement in accordance with the State law passed in 2016 requiring the drawdown.
- Lake residents were kept informed of boating regulations, safety issues, and the need to pump septic systems to protect the lake. Water quality testing was completed at high runoff areas and the association beaches with excellent results.
- After doing significant research on wake surf boats and the ecological and safety concerns created by these boats in 2023, the Bashan Lake Association appealed to State Representative Irene Haines in 2024 to have the CT Office of Legislative Review look further into creating State Legislation on the use of these boats on CT Lakes, similar to what NH and VT have already done.
- The Bashan Lake Association requested that the Town of East Haddam create a Town Ordinance banning wake surfing on Bashan Lake. A public meeting on that potential ordinance was postponed until June 2025 when more lake residents will be available to attend.
- The BLA applied for and received a 2 year Aquatic Invasive Species grant from the DEEP to provide for launch monitors at the State Boat Launch on weekends from May to October with the goal of preventing new invasive species from getting into Bashan. Monitors inspected boats for aquatic invasive species and provided educational material to boaters before they launched.
- The BLA again worked with the Seaplane Association and the Goodspeed Airport to stop seaplanes from doing landings and take offs from Bashan Lake. These planes need to exceed the lake speed limit to take off and they add another risk for bringing aquatic invasive species into the lake.
- The BLA polled residents on the lake about a proposed Cell Tower on land bordering Bashan Lake that will be visible by residents and boaters on the lake. The results of 61% against and 39% in favor were presented at a Town meeting on the tower.

LAKE HAYWARD

- Continued our invasive aquatic weed mitigation treatment for the eradication of fanwort. The infestation was especially dense by the state boat launch.
- Continued our weekly testing of our three common association beaches for the presence of E Coli
- Contracted professional help to aid in Canadian Geese deterrence which was beneficial to keeping beaches clean. We have had some very encouraging success with this program.
- Continued our twice monthly in season water quality testing with sampling professionally analyzed. In-water work is conducted by resident volunteers.
- Continued performing sampling of tributaries leading into our lake to determine nutrient levels that may contribute to our sporadic algae issues. We believe we now have data concluding that our watershed needs remediation to control algae.
- Aided the Dam Committee in the work needed to implement repairs needed as recommended by our last inspection by DEEP.
- Met with the town to address our concerns with the erosion caused by last year's rainfall.

MOODUS RESERVOIR PRESERVATION GROUP

- Participation at monthly meetings has significantly increased with more lake residents showing interest and volunteering their time to take on projects geared toward stopping the spread of invasive weeds and preserving the Moodus Reservoir.
- Created a plan to introduce sterile grass carp into the Upper Moodus Reservoir as a test to remove and stop the spread of invasive weeds. Received approval from the town to proceed with the netting plan to contain the carp on one side. Continuing to work with DEEP for approval.
- We held our annual picnic in June which sold 130 tickets and raised approximately $3,000 for the group. This picnic served as an event to educate members and town residents about invasive weeds in our lake and best practices to mitigate the spread of invasive weeds in all of our town's lakes. It was also a great social event to meet new neighbors and network with members as a way to recruit additional volunteers.
- In March we will host our spaghetti dinner which historically has had about 90 ticket sales. This event is similar to the picnic and used to educate members and neighbors, recruit volunteers and fundraise.
- Sponsored and hosted a free CT Safe Boating course in July as a way to educate boaters and also recruit volunteers as boating licenses are needed to operate the Ecoharvester.
- In August we hosted our second boat parade on both the upper and lower Moodus Reservoir. Participants were encouraged to decorate their boats and the event was judged by Irene Haines. . This was a free event to anyone who wanted to take part. MRPG provided prizes to the winners as a way to give back to members and residents for the support over the years. It also was a great community event for the town as bystanders were able to view the parade from the causeway. Viewers were able to see firsthand the weed problems the Reservoir faces.
- Continued to encourage outside participation via news articles, email blasts, website and Facebook.

Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Major Service Level Goals

BASHAN LAKE

- Continue to assist in the development of lake maintenance and protection programs and strategies appropriate for Bashan Lake. (E.g. Septic awareness)
- Water sampling of streams and beaches.
- CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) will map and check the lake for milfoil, fanwort and hydrilla and any new invasive weeds.
- Treatment of invasive weeds as necessary.
- Continue working with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), to initiate a 3-foot drawdown starting November 1, 2024 and to finalize a drawdown agreement.
- Continue to educate residents on the ecological and safety concerns surrounding wake surfing on small lakes like Bashan. Work with the Town to implement an ordinance to ban wake surfing boats on Bashan Lake. Continue to ensure Bashan Lake residents are fully informed on all regulations.
- Explore all options for preventing new invasive weeds from getting into Bashan Lake.
- Work with the Town to stop seasonal cottages on small waterfront lots from being converted into year round homes without the Town's knowledge.
- Continue to explore options for a new cell tower that would improve the quality of cell reception for emergency services while not contributing to view pollution.

LAKE HAYWARD

- Continue our much-needed annual invasive weed mitigation treatment.
- Continue our weekly testing at Association beaches for E Coli.
- Continue our efforts to deter the Canadian Geese from settling on our lake properties
- Continue our twice monthly in season water quality testing with sampling professionally analyzed
- Start new projects focused on curbing runoff from our residences and nearby farms with the aid of the data we have collected from our stream sampling. This would be coupled with input from the town and Chatham Health. Maintenance of septic systems and curbing farm runoff will be imperative to restrict the growth of algae in our lake.
- Educate our residents through submissions in our in season weekly newsletter.
- Continue to aid our Dam Committee with any help they may need to implement repairs on our dam
- Schedule meetings with the other lakes in town on a more regular basis. We can learn a lot from each other.

MOODUS RESERVOIR PRESERVATION GROUP

- Continue fundraising activities to obtain funds necessary for ongoing operating and maintenance costs of the Ecoharvester as well as costs for new equipment needed.
- Explore options for an additional machine or equipment to use to remove weeds. We recognize the current Ecoharvester has many hours on it and has had mechanical issues. We will need to purchase a new machine or find an alternate solution in the next few years.
- Work with new operations committee members and volunteers to develop more routine and scheduled weed harvesting operation for 2025 season. This will allow for the most usage of the machine and coverage of the lake.
- Operate the Ecoharvester for the summer and fall seasons and tackle the weed problem in all accessible areas of the Moodus Reservoir.
- Continue working with the DEEP on the grass carp application approval.
- Complete application and get approval for lake draw down for fall of 2025. We hope to do this annually as it has been requested by lake residents as a way to clear weeds from lakefronts and prevent erosion.
- Pursue Grant funds from various organizations.

Additional Budget Information

LAKES ASSOCIATION

The Lakes Association would like the Board of Finance to establish a policy that transfers any remaining funds for each Lake at the end of each fiscal year into their reserve funds. Specifically, the East Haddam Lakes Association is requesting that any budgeted funds for the 3 lakes that are unused at the end of each fiscal year be held in reserve in a Special Fund for the future treatment of CRH in any of the lakes.

Connecticut River Hydrilla (CRH) is the next major threat to East Haddam's lakes. Hydrilla is an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Connecticut River Hydrilla is a unique and aggressive strain of Hydrilla. DNA testing has proven that this strain is native to Eurasia and not found anywhere else in North America. Known for its ability to rapidly overtake native plant communities, it spreads through fragmentation and propagules called turions. Connecticut River hydrilla occurs in the river from Agawam MA to near Long Island Sound. It's already impeding swimming, paddling, fishing, and boating in coves and along the shores of the Connecticut River. Studies are still being conducted on how to eradicate CRH while protecting native aquatic species.

In 2023, The CRH hydrilla was discovered in six lakes including Amos Lake - Preston, Lake Pocotopaug- East Hampton, East Twin Lake - Salisbury, Middle Bolton Lake -Vernon. Lake Pamechea – Middletown, and Lake Congamond – West Suffield. Typical the sites are near public boat launches and introduction by boat trailering is acute. Bashan Lake and Moodus Reservoir have State boat launches and are popular with fishermen. That increases the possibility of CRH getting introduced. Moodus is the shallowest of our lakes and could be significantly impeded by aggressively growing CRH.

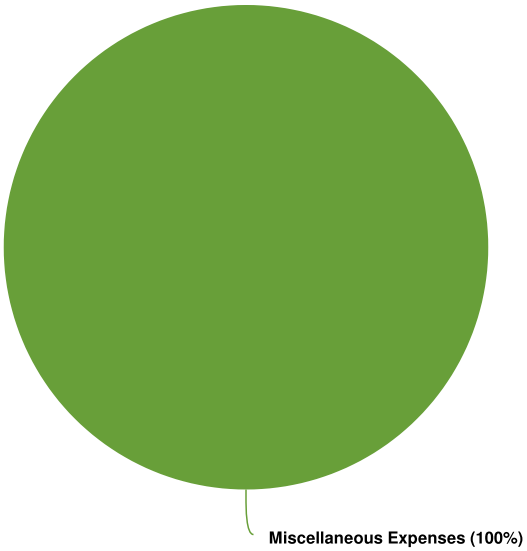
Greg Bugbee from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) Office of Aquatic Invasive Species is extremely concerned about the potential for CRH to get into Bashan Lake because of its close proximity to the Salmon River boat launch. That launch has CRH and it's known that boaters travel from the river to Bashan to run clean water through their motors to flush out brackish water from the river. Bill Denya, President of the Bashan Lake Association has spoken to one such boater who was only interested in his own boat and showed no concern about what could happen to Bashan Lake.

As CRH has now been found in our lakes, it will be an expensive process to eradicate it. The Town of Coventry had a 10 year plan to eliminate typical Hydrilla from Coventry Lake at an annual cost of $100,000. For the first 3 years the State contributed $50,000. But as of 2022, the Town was in year 7 of their plan and the cost was between 120,000 and 130,000 per year and the State was not contributing. Instead the Town of Coventry was applying for DEEP grants for AIS to help defray the costs.

The East Haddam Lakes Association is requesting that any budgeted funds for the 3 lakes that are unused at the end of each fiscal year be held in reserve in a Special Fund for the future treatment of CRH in any of the lakes.

Expenditures by Expense Type

Budgeted Expenditures by Expense Type



Name	Account ID	FY2023 Actual	FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Budgeted	FY2026 Budgeted	FY2026 Budgeted ($ Change)	FY2026 Budgeted (% Change)
Expense Objects							
OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	10545130-53400-77301	$5,931	$4,445	$0	$0	$0	0%
OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	10545130-53400-77302	$8,330	$15,950	$0	$0	$0	0%
OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	10545130-53400-77303	$5,711	$5,310	$0	$0	$0	0%
BASHAN LAKE	10545130-77301		$0	$11,912	$24,216	$12,304	103.3%
Lake Restoration	*10545130-77301*	*$0*	*$0*	*$6,083*	*$18,111*	*$12,028*	*197.7%*
Public Education	*10545130-77301*	*$0*	*$0*	*$150*	*$150*	*$0*	*0%*
Aquatic Plant Monitoring	*10545130-77301*	*$0*	*$0*	*$4,187*	*$4,438*	*$252*	*6%*
Water Drawdown	*10545130-77301*	*$0*	*$0*	*$1,493*	*$1,517*	*$24*	*1.6%*
LAKE HAYWARD	10545130-77302		$0	$15,500	$13,750	-$1,750	-11.3%
Invasive Weed Control Treatment	*10545130-77302*	*$0*	*$0*	*$6,500*	*$5,500*	*-$1,000*	*-15.4%*
Water Quality Testing and Monitoring	*10545130-77302*	*$0*	*$0*	*$5,000*	*$5,000*	*$0*	*0%*
Public Education	*10545130-77302*	*$0*	*$0*	*$250*	*$250*	*$0*	*0%*
Misc. Adjustment	*10545130-77302*	*$0*	*$0*	*$2,750*	*$2,000*	*-$750*	*-27.3%*
Watershed Stream Sampling	*10545130-77302*	*$0*	*$0*	*$1,000*	*$1,000*	*$0*	*0%*

Name	Account ID	FY2023 Actual	FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Budgeted	FY2026 Budgeted	FY2026 Budgeted ($ Change)	FY2026 Budgeted (% Change)
MOODUS RESERVOIR	10545130-77303		$0	$6,500	$12,250	$5,750	88.5%
Lake Restoration	*10545130-77303*	*$0*	*$0*	*$6,250*	*$10,000*	*$3,750*	*60%*
Public Education	*10545130-77303*	*$0*	*$0*	*$250*	*$250*	*$0*	*0%*
Misc. Adjustment	*10545130-77303*	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*	*$2,000*	*$2,000*	*N/A*
Total Expense Objects:		**$19,973**	**$25,705**	**$33,912**	**$50,216**	**$16,304**	**48.1%**