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3 lakes expected to be dredged

POINT PLEASANT BEACH COUNCILMAN MEETS WITH DEP CHIEF *NAOMI MUELLER/TOMS RIVER BUREAU STAFF*

POINT PLEASANT BEACH - After discussing the need to dredge the borough's lakes with the commissioner of the state Department of Environmental Protection for the second time in just more than a year, Councilman Timothy Lurie said he believes at least one lake will be dredged next fall. Before beginning the dredging, Lurie said, borough officials must determine the toxicity of Lake Louise's sediment and apply for the necessary permits. He said he hopes the tests will be conducted in January and that the dredging will take place next fall.

Lurie's meeting with DEP Commissioner Bradley M. Campbell comes more than a year after Campbell promised that his department would make dredging all three borough lakes a priority and would help the borough develop a plan to begin the projects.

Since the meeting Friday, Lurie said he has sent letters to several area legislators, asking for help funding the project, which he says will cost \$650,000.

DEP spokeswoman Elaine Makatura said Campbell remains committed to helping the borough find funding sources. Ocean County Freeholder Director James F. Lacey, who works as the borough's administrator, said the county is also willing to help pay for the dredging.

County officials have also committed to allowing Point Pleasant Beach to dump its dredge material on Gull Island.

Officials began working toward getting state money to have the lakes dredged as long as 11 years ago. Lake Louise, the center of which is owned by the state, was last dredged in the 1950s, while the other two lakes have never been dredged, officials said.

The Legislature approved \$300,000 for the borough to dredge Lake Louise in 1999. But the money never came because then-Gov. Christie Whitman objected to the absence of a study proving that the dredging was needed. At that time, the borough received money for the study, which concluded the dredging was needed.

Council members renewed their lobbying efforts last year, after an estimated 500 fish were killed at the Lake of the Lilies in what county health officials blamed on a depletion of the lake's oxygen supply caused by excessive algae growth. The Ocean County Health Department warned at the time that unless the borough's three lakes were dredged, the fish kill would be repeated.

Although Lake Louise will likely be the first of the borough's lakes to be dredged, Lurie said that once that dredging is done, officials will move forward with plans to dredge Little Silver Lake and the Lake of the Lilies. It is unknown how much dredging those lakes will cost.

