

# Council currently seeking funding sources to dredge three lakes

By Katelyn Hayes

In response to the massive fish kill that took place at the Lake of the Lilies last September, Point Pleasant Beach is working to dredge all three lakes in the borough to improve water quality and prevent an event like that from ever happening again.

"We want to bring the lakes alive again," Councilman Tim Lurie said, "our lakes are dying."

The project includes the dredging of not only Lake of the Lilies, but also Little Silver Lake and Lake Louise.

The borough's lakes receive storm water runoff not only from local roads, but state and county roads as well. Because of this, Councilman Lurie has been in contact with officials from the county to try to obtain funding for the project.

"Since we're in a combined drainage system with the state, the county and the town, they said they would help pay their portion," Councilman Lurie said. He also said he has been talking to state officials to see what type of grants, if any, are available to the borough for the dredging process.

The county health department concluded its investigation back in September into the death of 300 to 500 fish at Lake of the Lilies. Water samples taken then showed a low level of oxygen. At the time, said Edward Rumen, assistant public information officer with the Ocean County Health Department, attributed the low oxygen level to the shallowness of the lake.

The shallow lake bottom allows the water temperature to increase more rapidly, while also trapping carbon dioxide in the bottom sludge. When stirred, this is released, robbing the lake of oxy-

gen. Dredging the lakes to remove some of the excess sediment is the solution to the environmental problem, according to the councilman.

"Dredging does a couple of things for the water quality," Councilman Lurie said. "You need depth to provide enough oxygen layered into the water to keep it clean, which in turn has an effect on keeping the fish alive."

Councilman Lurie said over the years the lakes have become full of "outfall," or dirt and silt carried into the lake by rain and runoff. Currently, he said, the lake is only waist-deep creating the unhealthy environment for wildlife. Dredging would ultimately deepen the lakes and supply more oxygen in the water for fish.

The borough has been moving forward with plans to rejuvenate the lakes ever since the fish kill. According to Councilman Lurie, the county has recently informed Point Pleasant Beach that, "it will pay its fair share of the cost to dredge the lakes." He said this is due to new regulations mandated by the county for storm water management.

Under the new regulations, municipalities must have a clear plan for storm water drainage. This includes street sweeping, regulations on feeding wildlife, and retrofitting storm grates, according to the councilman.

By dredging the lakes, Point Pleasant Beach will not only improve the water quality of the lakes, but also comply with the county's regulations.

There are three possibilities for the dredging plan, each with its own price tag. One plan calls for an island to be created in Lake Louise out of the dredge spoils. Councilman Lurie estimated this plan could

cost between \$1 million and \$2.4 million.

The second plan calls for the dredge spoils to be taken to Gull Island. This option is the least expensive, with an estimated \$900,000 price tag, according to Councilman Lurie.

The third, and most expensive option, requires the material be drained and trucked away to a designated landfill. This option cost at least \$2.4 million according to Councilman Lurie.

According to Councilman Lurie, Bradley Campbell, Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection [DEP] has the information regarding the fish kill, and ensuing studies into the borough's lakes.

"Right now the DEP has all of our information, including the past studies we've conducted," Councilman Lurie said. "Now, we're waiting to hear what kind of monies are available to us for this project."

The councilman said the borough will not hear from the DEP until after the state returns with its budget for 2004.

The councilman also said there is no set date associated with the project because the borough is waiting to hear from the DEP, however he said he would like to see the process implemented "as soon as possible"

Councilman Lurie also said the borough could not be as far along in the dredging process if it wasn't for Councilwoman Monica Walsh, who had initially secured the fund to have the lakes studies two years ago.

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