

Milfoil Meeting Minutes - March 19, 2026

Attendees: Barry Cahoon, Joe Hebert, Joanne Stewart, Jamie Stewart, Sue Yesalonia, Sue Bouchard, Jim Benotas, Rob Stewart, Christy Burns, Pat Rubalcaba. Barry called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm via a Zoom call hosted by Joanne Stewart. The February meeting minutes were accepted by the committee.

Welcome: Barry welcomed our new member, Sue Yesalonia to the committee. She has agreed to be the lead Lake Shore Coordinators (LSC). It was felt that special attention was needed in this area and Jim Bernotas could now just focus on the equipment, material, divers, and snorkelers. Barry talked about his views on this position. The Lake Shore Coordinators need to be monitored, ask for reports, ask the LSC's to keep you informed, be reminded to get out there and survey their assigned area. Be the rah-rah point person. One of Sue's first emails to the LSC's is to be sure they are on board for 2026. Get to know them. Barry said to Sue that this is a key job and do not be worried if you cannot make every committee meeting but you are welcome to all meetings. We need all the voices and comments to better reflect the will of the JPA members.

S.224 Bill: Barry reported that this bill has died in the Vermont Legislature as it did not meet the cross-over deadline. This is in respect to the FOVLAP request for change of wording for boat inspection. This bill got tied up with the intense lobbying group "Save Wake Sports Group". Consequently, there will be no action on boat inspections for 2026,

Equipment Acquisition: Jim Bernotas is still putting together a list of equipment needed for 2026. Soft weights, inflator vests, and adapters. Jim will get the list out next week. There is 6 weeks before any diving/snorkeling begins and the items are easily acquired. Jim is also working on the diver/snorkeler distribution list. Barry reported that he ordered and received new 9" waterski buoys to replace the noodles used in 2025. They are in storage in the milfoil shed. A work detail will be formed in May to put them together. This work will be done before the Spring JPA meeting. Barry is also in contact with Lake Eden for their spare benthic mats. He will get the sizes available and pick them up in May. Jim Bernotas volunteered to help get them. Pat Rubalcaba asked if the greeters could get more comfortable chairs. They are sitting in the hot sun, and Pat would like better accommodations. Maybe an awning, chairs, give them some shade. Pat will ask the greeters for input and report back. Jamie reported that he found nets that float and are extendible. It was suggested that 6 of these be purchased. Jamie will do this in May. Jamie also said he would purchase a 'diver's flag for the support boat.

Permitting: Barry informed the committee that he learned during a zoom call with FOVLAP that Kara Sliwoski, who worked for Solitude in the past, is now employed by the State of

Massachusetts but has a side gig of providing consulting services to lake associations in their permitting for ProcelloCOR. She is knowledgeable on permitting, sampling etc, and could be an alternative to Solitude if we apply ProcelloCOR in 2026. Barry also mentioned that Ready Scout from Albany, NY is licensed to apply the herbicide in Vt lakes and could be another alternative. Barry is waiting for a timeline from Arrowwood for their Spring survey of the lake. This is needed before deciding whether to apply for ProcelloCOR treatment in 2026. Also, the 2nd week of July will be when VtHozerz will be on site to conduct DASH.

Member's vote in Spring Meeting: Barry suggests after the committee distributes and presents the pros and cons of herbicide treatment for control of EWM, that we ask for a vote in May from the members on whether such EWM control measures continue to be acceptable. We would emphasize that it will remain the responsibility of the committee and the BOD to determine if, when, and where it will be applied. where it will be applied.

Barry mentioned he was approached by Hall's Lake in Newbury, Vt about JPA's infrastructure and mapping. They have had milfoil for 30 years and have contained it using DASH. It is only 85 acres in size. Rob said he would be glad to talk to anyone at that lake about the mapping we do.

Support Boat Mobilization: Barry mentioned that with his recent shoulder surgery and recovery he did not feel he could do the mobilization required for the divers and snorkelers during 2026. It is a big job. One has to get the SNUBA rig and spare tanks and put them on the boat, deploy the buoys and operate the GPS units. Also, when on the support boat, one must help the divers/snorkelers put on their fins, hand over the masks, and get the nets. A lot of this is done in conjunction with the support boat driver but that person's focus must be on the divers in the water. Barry asked for suggestions on replacements and this will be a topic for the April meeting.

Barry also expressed frustration with the GPS unit. Any new coordinates entered go in a database that is random with no coordination. Once entered, he could not find the coordinates. He cannot fix the dates unless you go through the entire list. Jim Bernotas mentioned he has the same issues on his GPS unit. Rob said he would look at the issue too.

2026 Goals: Barry started a 'big picture' discussion on what the Committee wants to accomplish as a group for 2026. What are our goals? For sure we are more experienced in 2026 than we were in the beginning of 2025. What is the measure of success?

Last year we thought we could reach eradication of the Eurasian Water milfoil. We now know that this is not likely. Is a goal of having less milfoil in the Fall of 2026 a worthy goal? What do we work on? How do we get better? What should our focus for 2026 be?

Pat suggested we work on more engagement from the members and the need for more education of the members. She is not sure of the members' awareness or the extent and seriousness of the infestation. Many members do not abide by the committee's requests, especially in boating. Sue Bouchard thought we need to focus on boating issues. Boaters are our achilles heel. We cannot stop boating activity and have little control. She felt that many boaters treated the milfoil issue cavalierly. Frustrating. The irony is if we successfully control the proliferation of the milfoil, people will think we have no problem. Joe Hebert felt that the focus in 2026 will be in the 2nd pond and this is a smaller area than in 2025 but there are many camps and boats in that section of the lake. He feels that all camps are visible to one another and when they see the divers in action; they must know we have an issue. In the big pond, a lot of the milfoil action was out of sight of most camps. Jim Bernotas felt that education of the members is paramount. He did not feel we were losing ground and in the 2nd pond there are 3 offenders that make this pond a veritable whirlpool with their boating activity. He commented that there is a deep channel in the center closer to Route 2 and we could make a dual pathway with buoys there to guide the boats and allow a pathway for them to travel. We need to encourage corrective behavior, but he felt we can control the middle pond boaters and others to stay in the marked areas. Jim felt we need to closely monitor the treated areas and keep a vigilant watch. We know that our activities in 2025 (DASH especially) seeded the 1st and 2nd pond. Jamie asked what is downstream from the dam? Barry said Joe's Brook to the Passumpsic River to the Connecticut River. Barry also said we have a moral obligation to not send remnants of milfoil over the dam. Sue Yesalonia felt that members will reluctantly buy in, but we need to do a better job of explaining what we are trying to do. Sue Y. mentioned that those Sunday Cruises are popular and we need to look at how to educate the boaters. How do we ask them to stay away? Rob asked about the boat rentals from Pt. Comfort. Can the renters sign an agreement to stay within the pathways. Jamie felt that the Turners are very receptive to helping out. Also mentioned was that the existing signs used had too small a font to be readable from a distance and boaters had to get up close to read them. Barry suggested the signs and floats be altered to present 3 faces for greater visibility. Sue Bouchard asked about marking a pathway in the 1st pond. Jim mentioned that it is more difficult to do a navigable path in this pond but most of the traffic is cruising and not water skiers. We also need to be sure boaters in the 1st and 2nd Pond do not drag milfoil back into the 3rd pond. Barry felt we can sit down with the Turners and

be collaborators and Jim B said the divers can create a wide path for their boats to get into the 2nd pond.

Pat said that the boat greeters can be a 2nd front in the educational training. Let's give them more training and get them on the pontoon boat to show them what we accomplished. Many of the greeters have never been on the lake. Let's show them what DASH is, SNUBA, SCUBA, and show them how we survey. Have them fully aware of what is going on. Empower the greeters with knowledge.

Sue Yesalonia mentioned that the bulletin board at the beach is down but we still have the shed. Posters can be placed there.

Benchmarks: Barry asked what metrics this committee can use to measure our progress. How can we do better? How can we tell if our committee is effective or not? He mentioned that the Lake Dunmore association has tracked the amount of milfoil removed from their lake for over 30 years. Is this a meaningful metric? Barry asked the members to think of measures to keep. Are we losing ground? Everyone on the committee is in the leadership role. As a committee we need to continue freely sharing our opinions and perspectives.

Sue Yesalonia gave her observations of the milfoil committee work of 2025. She complimented how well everything came together. How we organized and got going on the tasks. She felt we did a great job and doubted we missed a lot. The amount of time given by the committee was incredible. Rob said he appreciated, as a minority opinion on the herbicide, how well he was treated and how open the committee was to different ideas and opinions. Joe Hebert said the committee has a difficult job. Is the big pond milfoil free? Is that a measure of success? Joanne is worried about burn out on the committee. Pat said the number of hours worked by the committee and the costs are a metric. Over 2000 hours were spent by all. Pat also commented that the greeter grant and milfoil grant will arrive in a month or so. Barry also commented that tracking the grants and money is another metric. Jamie felt that total costs need to be stressed to the membership. While 'only' \$20K was spent from the JPA funds the total costs were over \$55K and members need to be reminded of this. Given the economic times and the reduction of federal and state funds, these grants will not always be forthcoming.

Liability Risks: Barry asked what liability insurance does the JPA have? We have volunteers who are diving, snorkeling, driving boats, manhandling tanks, and SNUBA gear. What is our coverage? Joe said he would check into this. Jim Bernotas expressed his concern as the master diver; he is on the hook if anything happens to the people in the water and wants protection. These people are doing work at the behest of the JPA. There is a big exposure here and we cannot ignore the risks. At the minimum a release form needs

to be developed and reviewed by a lawyer and be sure it is legally binding and then signed by all people involved in SCUBA, SNUBA, boat support personnel, and kayakers.

Jim Bernotas mentioned he will not be able to make the JPA Spring Meeting.

Next Meeting: April 14, 2026 at 3:00 pm via Zoom.

Meeting ended at 4:31 pm

Respectively submitted,

Jamie Stewart