

West Harbor Pond Watershed Association

Annual Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2026 — 11:45 AM to 3:00 PM Boothbay Harbor, Maine

1. Opening, Elections, and Meet & Greet

Members gathered informally before the meeting for socializing and board elections.

Board Elections

- **Outgoing Member:**
 - *Valerie Breen* completed her final term and was honored for her service.
- **Elected to 2029:**
 - *Ralph Colby*
 - *Nate Cagle* (reelected)
 - *Marc Fairbrother* (nominated from the floor by Al Harris)

Continuing Board Members

- Sue Harris (term ends 2027)
- Maggie Fairbrother (term ends 2027)
- Merritt Blakeslee (term ends 2028)
- Dave McFarland (term ends 2028)
- Will Anderson (term ends 2028)
- Al Harris (term ends 2028)
- Nate Cagle (term ends 2029)
- Ralph Colby (term ends 2029)

President Merritt Blakeslee thanked the Board of Directors for their service and emphasized their essential role in the Association's operations.

2. Welcome and Introductions

President **Merritt Blakeslee** introduced the Board of Directors:

- Will Anderson – Webmaster
- Valerie Breen – Outgoing Treasurer

- Nate Cagle – Meeting Organizer
- Ralph Colby – Water Sampling & Loon Monitoring
- Maggie Fairbrother – Advisor
- Al Harris – Incoming Treasurer
- Sue Harris – Sampling & Data Analysis
- Dave McFarland – Water Sampling
- Merritt R. Blakeslee – President

3. Treasurer's & Membership Report

Presented by **Valerie Breen**. (*summary filed separately.*)

4. President's Report & Fishing Tournament Update

Presented by **Merritt Blakeslee**.

Board Operations

- The Board meets 2–3 times per year.
- Meetings are hybrid (in-person + Zoom) and open to all members.
- Notices and minutes are distributed in advance; members are welcome to attend.

Association Goals

1. Foster community among watershed residents.
2. Protect pond ecology, especially water quality.

Water Quality Monitoring

- Monthly testing (April–November) at two stations: midpond deep hole and the dam.
- Measurements include temperature, oxygenation, and salinity.
- Persistent saltwater layer at pond bottom continues to negatively affect aquatic life.
- Trout remain a long-term aspirational goal; oxygen depletion in cool bottom waters prevents habitation.

Siphon Operations

- Siphon turned off July 26 due to low water.
- Will resume in October or November after silver eel out-migration.

Additional Monitoring Reports

- **Sue Harris & Ralph Colby**: Brief overview of their sampling and analysis work.

- **Marc Fairbrother:** Summary of Secchi disk testing and its relevance to water clarity.

Equipment Note

- Midpond buoy was found detached in June and will need reinstallation.

Fishing Derby – 5-Year Milestone

- The Great West Harbor Pond Fishing Derby has become a popular annual event.
- Emphasizes community engagement and environmental stewardship.
- Participants are reminded to avoid lead tackle to protect wildlife.
- Derby results and winners are posted on the Association website.

Farewell to Valerie Breen

- Valerie is relocating to Northern Virginia following the passing of her husband, Mike.
- Recognized for her service as treasurer and her generous donation of a 12-foot aluminum launch and outboard motor.
- Presented with a gift certificate to the Thistle Inn as a token of appreciation.

5. Guest Speaker

Merritt introduced **Billy Helprin**, Director of the Somes-Meynell Wildlife Sanctuary (Mount Desert Island).

- Sanctuary protects 250+ acres of forest and wetlands around Somes Pond.
- Offers year-round conservation programming.
- Billy is an expert in loon ecology and behavior.
- His talk: **“Loon Adaptations: It’s Hard to be Expert at Everything.”**

Billy Helprin delivered a presentation on loon adaptations, covering behavioral and ecological traits that shape loon survival strategies. A Q&A session followed.

6. Potluck Social

Members enjoyed a community potluck to conclude the annual meeting.