



HEMLOCK LAKE PROPERTY OWNER'S ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 305, GILBERT, PA 18331 | HEMLOCKLAKEPOA@GMAIL.COM

HLPOA Special Membership Meeting October 23, 2025

A special meeting of the Hemlock Lake Property Owners Association was called to order on October 23, 2025, at 7:00 PM by Danielle Arcuri. The meeting was held at the Pavilion and on Zoom. This special meeting was convened solely to vote on hiring Ecological Solutions to perform hydraulic dredging of Hemlock Lake.

Roll call confirmed 28 members present, establishing a quorum.

Danielle Arcuri introduced Joe Gallagher of Ecological Solutions, who has provided lake treatment services to the association for approximately ten years. Joe presented the proposed dredging project and answered member questions.

Project Overview

- Method: Hydraulic dredging using a Dyno 6 portable dredge (diesel-powered, 6-inch machine).
- Process: The dredge loosens bottom sediment with a rototiller-like mechanism, pumping a mud slurry through the machine into filter bags positioned on the shoreline. A DEP-approved polymer, selected based on sediment testing, is added to accelerate water separation and maintain clear discharge water.
- Scope: Approximately 0.45 acres of the beach area, focused on the left side (near the new bulkhead, where sediment has accumulated from roadway runoff) and the right side (where an incoming stream deposits significant sediment). The sand beach itself will largely be avoided.
- Filter bags: Two 45-ft circumference, 50-ft long bags will be used in rotation to maximize dewatering. A flat, level 50x50 ft area is required. Joe identified the top-left area of the beach as the likely placement site.
- Timeline: Approximately 2 weeks to complete dredging. Filter bags require approximately 2 months to fully dewater before contents can be spread or removed.
- Preferred season: Fall 2026, allowing bags to dry over winter and material to be removed before the following swim season.

Sediment Estimate & Material Removal

- Estimated removal: 750 cubic yards of sediment (based on an assumed average depth of 1 foot, to be confirmed by pre-project probing and depth mapping).
- Residual material: After dewatering, actual dried material in bags is estimated at approximately half the wet volume — roughly 300–375 cubic yards.
- Residual material quality: Comparable to high-quality potting soil and suitable for landscaping, community gardens, or agricultural use.
- Removal options discussed: Spreading on-site; offering free material to local farms or landscapers with their own equipment; or subcontracting removal (costly — Joe noted the City of Harrisburg's removal costs nearly equaled the dredging cost). Road capacity for heavy trucks must also be considered.

Q&A Summary

Fish and Wildlife

- Q: Does the dredger suck up fish and other aquatic life?

- A: Most fish avoid the machine. A small number of smaller fish may be captured, but typically they avoid the dredge. Aquatic life on the bottom, including algae, plankton, and other organisms, will be removed along with the sediment.

Algae and Water Clarity

- Q: Will dredging eliminate the aquatic vegetation and algae?
- A: Dredging should eliminate rooted aquatic vegetation, as it removes both the seed bed and the roots. Joe referenced a nearby 4-acre lake where half was dredged the prior year with no observed change in vegetation — he attributed this to the type of algae present. Hemlock Lake's primary algae issue is planktonic algae (the greenish color and lack of clarity), not rooted bottom vegetation. Planktonic algae forms in the water column, not on the bottom, so dredging alone will not eliminate it.
- Joe noted that approximately 10 years ago, copper sulfate treatments were used and water clarity was excellent — readable text on a can at 15 feet depth. The current aeration system is beneficial for decomposing organic material on the bottom, but it also maintains an oxygenated, nutrient-rich environment in the water column, which sustains algae growth. Clarity issues will persist as long as nutrients remain in the sediment. Dredging will significantly reduce that nutrient source over time.

Polymer Testing

- Q: The polymer is selected based on sediment testing — does the polymer change over time, and is repeat testing included?
- A: Prior to the project, Joe will collect a sediment sample and send it to his polymer supplier for bench testing. The supplier will identify the best DEP-approved polymer for the specific mud composition of the lake. The polymer does not change during the project — once selected, it remains consistent throughout. No repeat testing mid-project is required.

Sediment Removal & Material Disposal

- Q: Will we need to pay for a special disposal site? Does DEP need to be involved in disposal?
- A: The dried material is safe and high quality — comparable to potting soil. It does not require a regulated disposal site. Options include: spreading on-site and seeding over it (least expensive); offering it free to local farmers or landscapers who have equipment to haul it; or subcontracting removal. Joe noted that for the City of Harrisburg's Italian Lake project (~8 acres), the material was donated to a community garden near the Fish and Boat Commission. Members noted that local farms could be offered the material at no cost. The board will need to arrange removal logistics, keeping in mind road weight limitations for heavy trucks.
- Q: What was the cost to dispose of material at Saylor's Lake?
- A: The cost was relatively modest at Saylor's Lake because material was spread on-site. After the community was offered free access to take it, very little remained to be spread. Costs increase significantly if hauling off-site — Joe noted the City of Harrisburg's off-site removal costs nearly equaled the dredging contract itself, depending on haul distance.

Project Duration

- Q: How long will the dredging process take?
- A: Approximately 2 weeks for the active dredging phase, assuming the sediment is loose and pumpable and the bags can be continuously dewatered. The filter bags will then remain on-site for approximately 2 months before the contents are dry enough to be spread or removed. The fall timing is preferred — bags can dry over winter and be removed before the following swim season.

Long-Term Maintenance

- Q: How long until dredging needs to be done again?
- A: With the improvements already made — the new bulkhead, corrected drainage — the primary remaining sediment source is the incoming stream on the right side of the beach. Joe's recommendation is to install a shallow coffer dam: a rock barrier placed approximately 30–40 feet out from the stream mouth, built approximately 6 inches above the normal pool level. During heavy storms, sediment would settle behind the rock barrier rather than washing into the lake. That collected material could then be scooped out periodically (every year or two) as routine maintenance.

- Once the major sediment is removed, ongoing maintenance with a product such as Muck Away or Muck Away Pro can manage the annual accumulation of leaf litter and organic material. Joe cited Whitehaven in the Poconos as an example: they begin Muck Away treatments in early May and by mid-season the beachfront is clear.
- Q: What is the current pricing on Muck Away?
- A: Approximately \$400 for a 25-lb pail, which is sufficient for a standard beachfront for a full year with product remaining for the following season.

Filter Bags

- Q: Are the filter bags included in the price?
- A: Yes, the bags are included in the \$23,700 quote.
- Q: Are the bags reusable?
- A: No, the bags are not reusable.

Scheduling

- Q: What is the earliest the project could begin?
- A: Fall 2026. Joe's schedule is currently committed through the near term.

The board thanked Joe Gallagher for his time and presentation as he exited the meeting.

Danielle Arcuri took a formal roll call and then provided a financial report.

Account	Balance
Checking	\$21,251.73
Savings	\$36,633.80
EAP	\$5,018.29

Special Assessment for Dredging

- Special assessment (2025–2026): \$9,275 collected to date, held in savings.
- 49 owners have paid the 2025 assessment; 39 have pre-paid 2026.
- Total expected special assessment revenue: \$19,025.
- Project cost: \$23,700 (payable in three equal installments of \$7,900).

Vote

The board presented a motion to approve hiring Ecological Solutions to perform lake dredging per the submitted proposal of \$23,700.

Yes	No	Result
20	3	MOTION CARRIED

The motion carried. The board will proceed with hiring Ecological Solutions for this project.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Arcuri, President/Vice President/Treasurer