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Mini-documentary puts Lake Hopatcong in the spotlight

Lake Hopatcong, N.J. (August 7, 2019) On a sunny Monday afternoon in mid July, a single runabout motors its way Lake Hopatcong. Perched on the front deck of the motorboat, Rae Hartwell is taking video of whatever wildlife she can spot—herons, turtles, cormorants, and an eagle soaring overhead. She’s the founder of a fledgling volunteer organization called WildLogica, the mission of which is, “to inspire all generations to pursue curiosity and enrich their lives while making positive changes for all living things.”

Hartwell, a 33-year-old native of Florida, was gathering raw footage for a five-minute documentary on Lake Hopatcong. The video focuses on the human woes associated with the unprecedented lake-wide algal bloom and the subsequent DEP advisory against swimming and watersports, which has been in place for all or most of the lake since late June.

“The algal bloom and the advisory have hit the Lake Hopatcong region businesses and communities hard,” said Marty Kane, chair of the Lake Hopatcong Foundation Board of Trustees. “There has been a lot of frustration that early articles about the advisory characterized the lake as ‘closed,’ which wasn’t the case.”

When a chance mid-air meeting on an airplane brought Kane and Hartwell together, an idea to help the Lake Hopatcong communities was born. Working in partnership, Hartwell, and her organization, WildLogica, along with Kane and numerous volunteers, spent several days creating a short documentary.

“The video carries three main messages,” said Kane, “One, that there is a problem; two, that there are ways to successfully address it, and; three, that there are still plenty of opportunities to enjoy life around the lake.”

The documentary features everything from wildlife to human life on Lake Hopatcong. Hartwell also did spot interviews with mayors from all four lake municipalities, as well as

other spokespeople, including Lake Hopatcong Foundation President Jessica Murphy and Lake Hopatcong Commission Chair Ron Smith. A clip of the most recent meeting of the Lake Hopatcong Commission at Hopatcong High School, attended by an estimated 200 citizens, also made the cut.

“People around the lake care deeply about it and are passionate about its welfare,” said Murphy. “While the recent water-quality problems have presented some very difficult challenges, I’m confident everyone will pull together for Lake Hopatcong, and that its future will shine brighter than ever.”

“It’s our sincere hope that this video is a reminder of the beauty of New Jersey’s largest lake,” said Kane. “We also hope it encourages people to get their boats out on the water and patronize local businesses. There’s still so much here to do and enjoy.”

The video can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOeQ5Nk4dCo or at lakehopatcongfoundation.org.

For more information about WildLogica, visit wildlogica.com.

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to protecting the lake environment and enhancing the lake experience by bringing together public and private resources to encourage a culture of sustainability and stewardship on and around New Jersey’s largest lake, for this and future generations. To learn more, visit lakehopatcongfoundation.org.

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Footage was shot on Lake Hopatcong for a documentary on the lake.