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## What's up, docks? Lake Hopatcong has 2,183 of them

By DIANA GOOVAERTS  
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Lake Hopatcong's seemingly innumerable docks are now a known quantity thanks to a recent survey completed by the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Working with students from Drew University and the Lake Hopatcong Foundation, the DEP completed the first geographic information system survey of docks on the state-owned lake.

The new data shows there are 2,183 docks on Lake Hopatcong and provides breakdowns of dock lengths and other key facts, such as owner information, lots and blocks, and street addresses.

It also provides a breakdown of docks by the four municipalities around Lake Hopatcong — Hopatcong, Jefferson, Mount Arlington and Roxbury — and divides them into residential and commercial structures.

### FILLING A GAP

According to DEP spokesman Larry Ragonese, the survey has filled a critical gap of information.

"We're responsible for issuing permits, but we didn't have a real inventory of what was out there," Ragonese said. "We got hooked up with Drew (University) so we could have a better inventory so we have a modern way to deal with things on Lake Hopatcong."

The data, Ragonese said, will help streamline the DEP's permit process.

"The survey data will do three things for us," Ragonese said. "One, it will allow us to make more informed decisions because we have real data and information. Two, it will allow us to expedite decisions for people because we won't have to reinvent the wheel when we get a request for a dock. Three, we're

looking at tweaking regulations on docks and the size of docks, and this allows us to see what is out on the lake and what changes and what we would need to do.

"All that will help guide us a bit better."

Prior to the survey, Ragonese said DEP employees working on a permit request would have to physically go to the proposed site to see what was there.

The survey work was done by Drew University Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies Lisa Jordan and two of her students, Maxwell Dolphin and Daniel Ratyniak, over the fall 2014 semester. The Lake Hopatcong Foundation coordinated the project under the direction of its grants and project coordinator, Donna Macallesholly.

According to Jordan, Dolphin and Ratyniak identified the docks by hand and with software using aerial imagery from the DEP akin to images seen on Google Earth.

"We used aerial imagery from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection that was photographed in 2012 and 2013, and we used geographic information systems to identify where the boat docks were," Jordan said.

### INTO THE FIELD

"Using the software, they were able to zoom in to see houses and docks. Painstakingly they basically drew in lines where they could see where each of the docks are constructed and calculated how long the docks are."

Though much of the work was completed in a computer lab, Jordan said the students did go into the field to see the physical spaces they were viewing on screen.

"We did get to go to the lake, too, and take a boat around,"



NJ Herald File photo

The state DEP working with students from Drew University, recently completed a survey of docks on Lake Hopatcong. This is one of the 2,183 of them on the lake. This photo, taken in 2009, shows several docks above a lower-than usual lake.

Jordan said. "It was very helpful to see what was on the ground and compare what we saw from up above and get a sense of everything and verify that we were getting the correct measurements."

"The whole point of our course work is to complete

work that would be useful for community organizations, so we're thrilled that it will be useful to them and with the reception we've received from them. It makes the learning experience so much more valuable."

Originally made up of two smaller lakes, Great and Little

Ponds, Lake Hopatcong was constructed as part of the Morris Canal and is New Jersey's largest lake.

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## Frankford BOE to hold public forum on all-day kindergarten

By GREG WATRY  
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**FRANKFORD** — Exploring the viability of full-day kindergarten in the district, the Frankford Township Board of Education will hold a public forum on the issue at 6 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 26, following the regular Board of Education meeting.

"Really we're just going to talk about it," said Superintendent Braden Hirsch, "and go over the total cost of the program."

Hirsch did not offer specific costs and didn't want to speak prematurely on possible impacts on the budget.

Once the budget is set, then the district can determine "whether or not, financially, we can make it happen," he said.

Hirsch said the district was working to finalize the budget this week.

Currently, two full-time staff members are dedicated to the kindergarten program, which includes two sections in the morning and two later in the day. Each section runs 2 1/2 hours long.

### THREE FULL-TIME SECTIONS

According to Hirsch, the salaries for the two teachers are \$51,590 and \$88,220.

"Our goal is to have three full-time sections," Hirsch said. "If feasible, full-time kindergarten — Hirsch hopes — would be implemented by fall 2015."

A kindergarten committee — composed of four Board of Education members, four faculty members, one parent, curriculum coordinator Dr. Genene Pagliaro and Hirsch — was created to explore the potential transition. The committee idea was first broached in March 2014, at the suggestion of former school board President Marjorie Morville.

Exploring full-time kindergarten is part of the school district's 2014-2015 goals. According to the school website, basic plan options are supposed to be presented by June 2015.

"The idea of full-time kindergarten is brought up every couple of years," Pagliaro said.

"As a curriculum person, I look at what the research says about full-time kindergarten," which, she said, is still inconclusive.

### FULL-DAY BENEFITS

However, noted benefits of full-time kindergarten, she said, include early academic achievement, and structured development, both socially and academically.

What it comes down to, she continued, is are the students — who are usually 5 years old — ready for schooling on a full-time basis.

"I honestly believe that it comes down to children," she said, noting that each is an individual and develops differently.

"I don't believe that the program would change very much ... outside that teachers would have more time" with students. Such a move could provide more in-depth learning, she said.

While it's nice to be able to provide children with unstructured play time at home, Pagliaro said that modern society doesn't always allow for parental supervision.

"We live in a different society of working families," she said.

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## First Aid Squad may be revived in Hardyston



NJ Herald File Photo

Hardyston Township officials are looking into bringing back the Hardyston First Aid Squad, which shut down in December.

By ROB JENNINGS  
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**HARDYSTON** — Township officials are exploring the possibility of reviving the Hardyston First Aid Squad, which shut down after 47 years in December.

Mayor Carl Miller, on Monday, said the evaluation involves "reaching out to former members of the squad, to other people that have an interest in it, to try to find out whether there's

an interest in bringing it back."

The squad was down to three active members when it voted to disband Dec. 8, two hours after a four-hour open house apparently failed to draw sufficient interest.

Its final day of operation was Dec. 19.

Miller said the shutdown vote "hit us out of the blue," despite the squad's well-documented troubles.

The squad's former president, Eva

Boswell, and treasurer, Wayne Ross — a longtime councilman — were convicted of theft charges last spring.

The convictions belatedly vindicated 10 former squad members suspended or expelled after raising concerns to the township about squad finances.

Miller acknowledged that the controversy "sort of divided the squad," and contributed to the membership woes.

He added that, despite the shutdown, not much has changed in terms of emergency responses. Squads from Sparta, Milton, Saint Clare's and Hamburg are continuing to provide coverage.

The primary difference, he said, is that residents may be billed for the service, which would not occur under a township squad.

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