

# Echoes from Our Lake

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WALKER LAKESHORES LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION

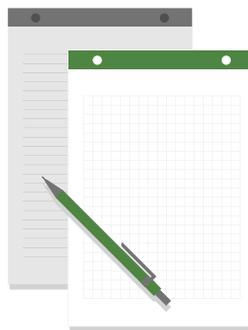
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Photo Credit: George Patton

## A Note from The President

First, I want to thank all those who made the effort to vote in our July election. If you voted by absentee ballot or in-person you were part of the process, and that is the important part. The seventy-four ballots that were cast were the most in many, many years.



I am truly humbled and honored to have been elected to serve as the President of Walker Lakeshores Landowners Association. This year's presidential election was the first contested position in many years. Again, thank you to all who took the time to vote regardless of whom you voted for.

Further, this is the first in several years that we will have all the Board seats filled. In addition to our existing members, we have four very talented new members joining the Board for the first time.

### WHAT'S NEW

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#### ELECTION RESULTS

See how your vote made an impact and find out who was elected to be on the Board. *Page 4*

#### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please take our **anonymous 2-minute survey** and share what is important to you. *Page 6*

#### SUMMER EVENT SUCCESSES

Find out about the fun activities that were held in the community this summer and what's to come. *Page 3*

#### IMPORTANT LAKE NEWS

Things you need to know about the lake, dam, and updates surrounding beach testing. *Page 2*

Next, I want to thank John Weber and Carol Reynolds for serving the community as the president and vice president with great dedication and passion. Both will continue to serve on the board as directors-at-large.

While WLLA has come a long way since December 2017, and is a wonderful place to live and play, there is still much to do to continue to make Walker Lake the great place it can be.

We still have some major issues to tackle including the pipe repair at the dam on which we are waiting for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) to give the go-ahead to proceed. Another is finding an affordable way to improve our roads. These two are big-ticket items with roads seemingly the larger of the two.

Our Program Committee has been doing a great job of trying new things for the community. Some of these items have been becoming increasingly popular while others not so. So just like in a marketing campaign you keep doing what works and eliminate (for now anyway) what doesn't.

With school back in session, I notice at the bus stops how many children are in this community. I would love to see some activities not only for the younger children but also for the older ones. Do you or your children have any ideas? If so, please share them with the office which will send them to the Program Committee for consideration.

And speaking of the office, I would like to give our administrator Kathy a big round of applause. Her efforts are immense and tireless. We are very blessed to have her in that position.

I also want to thank all community members who volunteer to be on the Board and committees. America may "run on Dunkin'," but WLLA runs on volunteers. It is totally understood that some people have more time to volunteer than others, but every little bit helps. So, if you can volunteer your talents - even for an hour or two once a year on one of the volunteer days without making a long-term commitment, it is a great help to the community.

In closing, I want to stress that, as president, I am just one person amongst many on the Board. The goal is to work together with various ideas, opinions, and input from all to continue to improve Walker Lake in the best interests of the community at large.

Until next time!

--Michael DeVita

## Lake News

Lake Committee Report



Meeting held August 7, 2023

### Hazardous Algae

There have been no recent reports of algae on the lake.

### Beach Testing

We were notified on July 12<sup>th</sup> that the results of our weekly beach testing showed high levels of E. coli. Signs were posted that both beaches were closed and an email blast was sent out to all residents. In addition, a notice was posted on the Friends of Walker Lake Facebook page.

Sekula Environmental was contacted to retest and we were informed that all but two of the lakes/beaches that they sampled on Monday July 10<sup>th</sup> had failed and they could not resample right away. In addition, when the Health Department followed up with a phone call to us, we were told that they had approximately 90 beach closings that week.

The beaches remained closed until July 24<sup>th</sup>. Sekula retested the beaches on Monday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, but we did not receive results until July 21<sup>st</sup>. We then received the notice that we could reopen on Monday, July 24<sup>th</sup> from the PA Health Department.

We believe that the high E. coli counts were a result of recent storms in the area with large amounts of rainfall.

# Successful Summer Events

From pickleball to potluck dinners, the Program Committee established and executed a robust schedule of events from April through August. The group planned a range of activities that catered to both children and adults alike. Kids had the opportunity to participate in a fishing contest, adults could join in on the fun for game night, and families were welcome at the first annual summer Olympics.

The **First Friday Potluck Dinners** continue to be the most successful events. We kicked off the series on Cinco de Mayo and have had recurring gatherings on the first Friday of each following month. The incredible food and shared laughter has drawn out some familiar longtime friends and helped to establish wonderful new friendships.



The entertainment continued during **pub trivia** where neighbors could embrace their competitive side for a chance to win bragging rights...at least until the next game night. It's fun to partake in a lively discussion and friendly competition while obtaining (sometimes useless) knowledge!

Speaking of friendly competition, **The Pickleball League** was another hugely successful series of events. It held strong at 14 players with games every Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, as long as the weather allowed. It boasted camaraderie, encouragement, and a little bit of "trash talking - all in good fun." Players improved their game throughout the summer and have had some great laughs, and even better competition.



There is no evidence of any septic issues on any lakefront property at this time and we encourage residents to report any suspicions. We will not be conducting further investigation.

We would like to request that residents continue to clean up after their pets and do not feed or encourage the geese in any way.

Some residents have requested DNA testing be done on the E. coli. This could determine whether the source is human, pets, or avian. The Lake Committee is researching the cost of DNA testing for future consideration.

We would like to recommend that the Rules and Regs Committee require homeowners to provide some sort of documentation of septic pumping and inspection on a regular basis. Septic malfunctions and leaks could lead to E. coli in our lake. Many other communities require proof of septic maintenance.

## More Lake News

### Why Should I Care About Our Dam?

We all enjoy Walker Lake, be it recreational boating, swimming, fishing, or the serenity of sitting by the water's edge. It is what has drawn us to the area. Our dam is what allows our lake to exist. Management of the dam is the responsibility of WLLA, following PA DEP requirements. Responsibility also lies with all residents and their guests.

Fall event planning is underway, and the Program Committee is open to suggestions from the community around the types of activities it would like. Activities under consideration include bus trips to wineries and Manhattan for the holidays, spooky Halloween activities and breakfast with Santa.

**First Friday Potluck Dinners** will continue through winter and be held on **October 6<sup>th</sup>**, **November 3<sup>rd</sup>**, and **December 1<sup>st</sup>**.

## Election Results

### WE WILL HAVE A FULL BOARD IN SEPTEMBER

The July 2023 election had a great turnout with 74 ballots cast. Our new Board will be seated at the September 21<sup>st</sup> General Membership Meeting beginning at 7 p.m. followed by the September Board Meeting. Please note the date and time change for this meeting.

Your vote is as follows:

Officers:

- Michael DeVita, President
- John Rolando, Vice President

Directors-At-Large to a 3-year term:

- Michael DeVita
- Valerie Mitchell
- Carol Reynolds
- Bill Savarese
- James Walter

Directors-At-Large to a 2-year term:

- Maryann Muschlitz
- Alla Piltser

Board Officer Updates:

- President: Michael DeVita
- Vice President: John Rolando
- Treasurer: Carol Gillen
- Secretary: Carolyn Kalinich

At the August Board of Directors meeting, an interim Board member candidate, Daniel Duggan, was presented to, and approved by, the Board. In September, we will have a full Board of 14 directors-at-large with only the Hinkel representative seat vacant. The Hinkel Director is designated by Hinkel Estates.

The Walker Lake dam is an earthen embankment dam, made of soil and rock. It is imperative that we all respect the rules and regulations WLLA has in place to maintain the dam's integrity.

OFF ROAD VEHICLES: ATVs, dirt bikes, bicycles, and any other type of vehicle are prohibited from driving on the dam. This is stipulated in our rules and regs. The only exception to this is service vehicles doing dam maintenance procedures. Damage to earthen embankments by off-road vehicles is a dam safety concern. Tires tear up the grass which can lead to erosion. Erosion can eventually cause the dam to fail. A dam failure is a catastrophic event, affecting downstream residents with life threatening consequences.

ROCK THROWING: The throwing of rocks, logs, or any other type of object in the dam area is strictly forbidden. The rocks that line the dam along the water's edge and the spillway walls are called riprap. This is hard armament that protects the earthen dam from the effects of wave action and prevents erosion. It is a vital component to the dam structure. Riprap is not to be removed, as removal reduces the integrity of the dam structure. Objects thrown into the spillway or in front of the spillway impede water outflows.

Dams are regulated by PA laws. Any damage caused to our dam or interference with its operation, is a punishable offense.

# Seasonal Notes

## Road Maintenance

Maintaining and improving our community roads is a hope and a goal for many of us, including me. Out of all the things here at Walker Lake, this is the most difficult task when it comes to finances. In 2022, we formed a special road committee which looked into ways to improve the roads. Several different ideas were brought forward, researched, and discussed.

The committee consisted of many members with different backgrounds, which was essential to the task. One of the ideas, with awesome help of both Ed Zimmermann and WLLA Treasurer, Carol Gillen, enabled us to obtain a preliminary quote to have the entire lengths of Lake Shore and East Shore paved and improved in certain areas for drainage. The scope of the job would be completed with the aim of getting the most years of new pavement life.

The length of East Shore and Lake Shore together is a little less than a mile. But for this we will call it a mile. The preliminary quote was for \$330,000. Yes, three-hundred-thirty thousand dollars. How does that relate to our yearly road budget?

Well, in 2023, our entire road budget is \$141,920 with 34% going towards snow plowing and winter materials, leaving us about \$93,000 to maintain and improve roads. This past spring, we spent \$31,060 to fill the potholes which existed at that time on the asphalt roads, along with having five small areas totaling 430 feet of roadway paved over.

Then, because we had such a warm 2022-23 winter, the gravel roads never froze solid, so every time we had a relatively small amount of snow and the gravel roads were plowed, more and more of the gravel was scraped up. This is no different than if you try to dig into a dirt pile which has frozen versus one that is not frozen.

The gravel roads are still being worked on as I write this article, and the total cost was \$50,000 plus about \$5,500 for additional stone we purchased to put down in certain areas. I say "about," because we have not yet received all the stone we plan to buy this year. Because of the extra work that had to be done, the cost was more than double what we paid for repair of gravel roads in each of the past four years. The cost for stone is the same, as we have been adding stone every year.

So that is \$86,560 out of the \$93,000 spent in this year's road budget outside of snow operations.

Individuals also face legal liability should a dam failure be caused by their willful actions or negligence. They may be found liable not only to the dam owner (WLLA, in this case), but also to downstream landowners affected by a failure.

Please respect our dam. It is the responsibility of all of us. Explain the importance to your children and guests.

--Ed Zimmermann, Dam Committee Chairman

## Friendly Reminder

**ATVs and minibikes** are not allowed on any Walker Lake roadways.

There have been numerous complaints about ATVs and minibikes using our roadways recently. Walker Lake does not allow these vehicles to be used on our roads. The fines for doing so are high. This is a safety issue, as many of our landowners enjoying walking on our roadways with their children and/or pets.

Our off-road vehicles ban was approved by the Board on July 21, 2018, and states:

*Only vehicles which may be lawfully operated on the public highways of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania may be operated on the roads, streets, drives, and other rights-of-way owned or controlled by Walker Lake Landowners' Association. Such motor vehicles shall only be operated by drivers licensed to operate motor vehicles on the said public highways.*

*Without limitation, off-road vehicles include the use of*

Next, I quickly want to take that preliminary quote of \$330,000 for about a mile of road and multiple it by the approximate 7 ½ miles straight line of developed roads WLLA maintains. It comes out to \$2,475,000. Of course, it could be more or less, depending on what each road needs.

I share this not because it is hopeless, but rather to let you better understand what we are up against. We are no different than any other homeowner's association, town, county, or state which has limited funds for roads. None of these entities has each and every one of its roads in new or perfect condition. For now, we will continue to work to improve what and where we can. We will give 100% of what we got, piece by piece!

--Michael DeVita

### **Bear Prevention**

The bears will continue to wreak havoc on our trash as they prepare for winter hibernation. If they get into your garbage, please pick up all scattered trash in the surrounding areas. An effective deterrent is to soak a rag with ammonia or other strong disinfectant and put it on the top of the trash. This is more effective than dumping it into the can to dissipate.

### **Dog Walking**

Please remember to pick up after your dog when out for a walk. This will help ensure dog waste does not get washed into the lake and raise bacteria levels. Please also refrain from disposing of dog feces into the cans of others or leaving the bags on the ground.

## **Help Us Help You**

Many members of the community have vocalized grievances and concerns on the WLLA Facebook page. However, we kindly ask that this channel be reserved for positive community news and updates. There is a complaint form saved at the top of the page under Files, should you need to submit an issue to the office. With that being said, **we do want to hear from you**. With the new Board going into effect September 21, now is the time to communicate any feedback that you would like to be considered. We'd love to hear what is important to you and if there is anything you feel strongly should change. As such, please **take 2 minutes to complete our anonymous survey and provide any commentary you'd wish you share.**

**[CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE SURVEY](#)**

*all-terrain vehicles, motor drives cycles, dune buggies, pocket bikes, golf carts, trail bikes, snow mobiles, racing carts, motorized skateboards, motorized scooters and hoverboards and vehicles of similar design or nature are specifically prohibited from use on the lake, roads or lands owned, operated, controlled, or maintained by Walker Lake Landowners Association.*

*Violation of all rules relating to this ban shall result in the imposition of a \$100 fine for the first offense, \$200 fine for the second offense and \$500 fine for each subsequent offense.*

No vehicles of any kind other than a vehicle to service the dam are allowed on our dam. If any damage occurs to the dam from someone driving on it, that person will be responsible for all costs incurred to fix the damage in addition to the fines above.

In addition to this, Maple Drive and Lee Road are owned by Shohola Township and it can impose fines as well. The operation of an ATV on a public road or highway is still illegal under Title 75, Section 7721 and 7722. State fines for failure to register your ATV or abide by the rules can be costly. First offenses range from \$50 to \$200 plus the cost of prosecution. Failure to register your vehicle or failure to have liability insurance is an automatic \$300 fine plus the cost of prosecution. Unlicensed vehicles of any kind are not allowed on federal, state, or local roads.

Pike County lists two ATV trails on its website: Maple Run and Burnt Mills. Please see this website for further information about where you can legally ride.

<https://www.trails.dcnr.pa.gov/>



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Vice President: John Rolando

Treasurer: Carol Gillen

Secretary: Carolyn Kalinich

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