

Lake Latonka Property Owner's Association Board Update June 2019

This is a monthly summary of Board activities for our 650 Members. It is a bit late and longer this month due to some recent developments. The nominating committee has started soliciting nominees for the Board for next year. We encourage you to get an application in the Office if you are interested. Thank you to the 50 Members who joined us for the Town Hall meeting that was held June 23. There was an extensive review and discussion of Lake water quality and a more limited discussion on security gates and related topics. The presentation shared at the Town Hall will be sent to Members via email. There were many good suggestions at the Town Hall. One suggestion was to test for E.coli in areas other than the Beach and communicate the results to Members. The first email communication on that subject was sent to Members on July 5. The Board will consider additional security improvements as part of the 2020 budget process.

At the May 27 meeting Tom Rizzo reviewed the four priorities for LLPOA in 2019: 1. Continue the financial rigor of long term Treasurer Glenn Graeves - Jim Hart, the new Treasurer has done an outstanding job of this; 2. Improve Member Communications which include these monthly newsletters and Town Halls; 3. Increase the focus on Lake water quality (see more below); 4. Review the rules and regulations (see more below).

Healthy Lake: Keeping the lake healthy is critical to our community and it is an ongoing challenge because so many factors are involved, and many of these factors change and are beyond our direct control. As stated previously AquaDoc, a water quality company, will continue to monitor and provide weed and algal control applications to our lake. Also, EnviroScience is doing a scientific analysis of the lake during the most biologically active months of June, July, and August. The analysis will include recommendations for future work such as removal of silt and sediment and treatment of algae and weeds to support the long-term health of the lake.

Lake Health was reviewed at the Town Hall Meeting. In addition to E.coli, toxins are also a concern. AquaDoc tests for and treats for these toxins when present. Some cyanobacteria (aka as blue-green algae) produce cyanotoxins after blooming. Some factors that contribute to bloom formation are sunlight, stagnant water, warm water, organic matter availability, and runoff of nutrients and phosphorous (fertilizer) into the body of water. In the second half of June we had ideal conditions for algae blooms with the very heavy rains followed by a few days of sunshine. LLPOA notified and worked with AquaDoc which led to the special treatment to the Lake on June 29. Cyanotoxins are measured in ng per ML. The normal acceptable level for recreational use according to the EPA is 6 ng per ML. The highest reading that has been taken here at the Lake was 2.2 ng per ML in August 2017. Often the reading is non-detectable including a sample taken on May 31, 2019. We are preparing to share some additional data that we have been collecting over the past few years and share it with Members.

At the Town Hall meeting a Member claimed that AquaDoc did not have the proper permits to treat the Lake. The Fish Commission received a call with the same complaint once we announced the special treatment on June 29. The Fish Commission came and checked out AquaDoc, and they did have all of the proper permits. Also, the same Member sent what is called a "grab" sample of green scum from the Lake before the treatment and sent it to the DEP.

The DEP tested the sample which came back as bad. Once the DEP notified us of this, we immediately called them. We had a long discussion and they agreed with our approach including the gathering of samples using professionals and their methods. They also emphasized that we should educate our Members and let them know to avoid the green scum when they see it. Of course Lakes have a lot of living things in them and are not swimming pools. As we said at the Annual Meeting there are not guarantees that the Lake is safe. We are working with professionals to take steps to keep the Lake safe and the testing seems to indicate that it is. While we work with the Fish Commission and DEP as appropriate, we are concerned that contacting the Fish Commission, the DEP and spreading false information about this Lake is not good for our community and diverts LLPOA resources. We invite all that are interested and that want to become part of solutions to work with us. The Lake Manager and Board will continue to focus on and become educated on Lake health, work with outside experts and other organizations, and explore and consider alternatives.

Financial: We are tracking well compared to the budget and the prior year with the exception of Initiation Fees that are lower so far this year. This could change based on more home sales and we are keeping an eye on it.

Systems: The staff is implementing the TOPS (www.topssoft.com) Community Association software system to more effectively and efficiently maintain our infrastructure and to better serve Members. We remind you that the office will be closed on Wednesdays so that the staff may focus on this significant implementation. We will start to see an impact in 2020. If you have an urgent matter, please call in advance for a Wednesday appointment.

Roads, Culverts and Bridges: The Committee has been active weekly with a focus on culverts and storm water management. Improper functioning culverts impact the run-off into and ultimately the health of the Lake, and good storm water management is important to appropriate road maintenance. We have had a number of culvert problems that have been highlighted by the tremendous rainfall so far this year. According to the National Weather Service, during the last 60 days we have had 17.2 inches of rain. This is more than twice as much as the normal 8.3 inches. There are many severe issues on the East side of the lake that is generally steeper, and also on the West side in the Skunk Run area that enters the Lake near Dock #7.

Art Fisher, who has extensive highway construction experience, is a welcome addition to the Committee. The underside of the bridge will be painted soon. Alternatives to chip and tar are being explored.

Rules: We have had a number of discussions and received feedback from some Members about our rules. This process continues with four Board Members and the Lake Manager, who will provide recommendations to the entire Board. This will be followed by a review by an LLPOA attorney, and then presented to Members for their feedback. We may make some tweaks to address some immediate concerns but will wait for Member feedback before implementing more significant changes.

Other: A Golf Cart Safety session was held and only had 9 attendees. The Aquatic Invasive Species Boat Check was also recently held. We encourage Members to take advantage of these opportunities.

Thanks for the role so many of you play in helping to making Lake Latonka special. There are so many examples of this often enumerated in the Latonka News including reports by the Social Club, Fish Club, Women's Club, Latonka Players, Garden Club, etc. Terry Hart did an outstanding job leading the Friendly Frolic that had 464 registered participants, Ted Dunham led the Latonka Players with sponsoring and putting on several nice events and many others volunteered to help make it another great 4th of July Weekend. Overall, generous donors cover most of the costs of this weekend celebration. A big thank you to Member Cecil Smith and Skydive PA who donated the skydiving show! The fireworks delay and slow start were a result of the rain all day. We will be working with Zambelli to improve the timeliness and speed of the Fireworks for our 2020 event. We would also like to thank Greg Sarachine for his quick response after the storm for removing three trees across the nature trail on the very busy afternoon of Saturday, July 6. He and other volunteers have kept snow and leaves off the trail on a volunteer basis since it was built last year.

Please provide suggestions or feedback to us at meetings or when you see us at the Lake.

LLPOA Board of Directors: Chuck Becker, John Chamberlain, Graig Filer, Dick Harper, Jim Hart, Denis Meinert, Tom Rizzo, Justin Safran, and Michael Turton