



# Baldwin Lake Association

Maintain and preserve our lake community for future generations through education, communication, and commitment to Baldwin Lake.

**Thursday, August 16, 2024**

## **Attendees:**

Mary Kowalski  
Barb DeCocq  
Patty Whitmer  
Mike Schirott  
Maribeth Yost

Jenna Labash  
Mike Crofoot  
Dave Whitmer  
Art Ickes  
Nancy Smith

Susan Hughes  
Mary Hansen  
Randy Miller  
Len Morreale

**Mary Kowlaski called the meeting to order: 6:30 pm**

## **Water/Environment**

### **Water Quality**

Mike Schirott reported there is very little oxygen at 55 feet which is to be expected at this time of year. The water temperature is 78 degrees, and the algae is blooming a great deal. Next month will be the final secchi, summer oxygen and phosphate testing. We will start chlorophyll testing next year.

## **Community Affairs**

### **1. Fish Stocking**

Mike Schirott will order perch in September. He will file necessary paperwork in January and the delivery will be in March. He will deliver updates at the September meeting.

### **2. Mute Swan Resolution**

The Mute swan resolution passed at the July Annual Meeting. Mike Schirott will file the paperwork and keep provide updates when available.

### **3. Tree Program**

The grant for the program has been officially funded and the MLSA is waiting for information about moving forward from the USDA Forest Service. This information will be passed on when it becomes available. The goal is to reforest as much of the land around the lakes as possible. There is an article from the MLSA about the importance

of trees around lakes at the end of these minutes. If you have any questions, you can reach out to Mike Schirott.

#### **4. Fall Cleanup**

Neighborhood cleanup will be October 19<sup>th</sup>. More information about the details of this event will be posted on Facebook.

### **Treasurer Report**

Jenna reported that as of July 31<sup>st</sup> there was a balance of \$52,898.30 in checking, but there are outstanding fireworks and mosquito spray bills. There was a discussion about finding an interest-bearing option for some of the funds to save for the impending lake access improvements. Nancy Smith will investigate options. To make transactions easier we will be exploring QR codes linked to Paypal.

### **Social**

#### **1. Apparel Store**

The last store raised \$164.38 for our fireworks fund. We plan on opening another store before the season ends and then another for the holidays. Information will be posted on Facebook.

#### **2. Poker Run**

Nancy and Susan thank everyone who made this year's Poker Run a huge success. Over \$8,600 was given out in prized money and over \$12,000 was made for the association. Next year's event is scheduled for July 19<sup>th</sup>.

#### **3. BLT**

Jenna Labash reported that there was a great turnout for the BLT, and it received many positive reviews! The event raised \$2,000. There was discussion of having a swim clinic next year before the BLT. Andy Scupham and Maribeth Yost expressed interest in helping with this. Options for upgraded goodies bag items were discussed. A motion for the purchase of 200 oval BLT stickers for \$1 apiece was brought by Mary Kowalski. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. Christmas Party**

Nancy Smith and Susan Hughes will be planning this year's Christmas party. It will be held at the Smith's barndominium on Hilltop Drive on December 7<sup>th</sup>. There will be a planning party at Nancy's house at 6:30 pm on September 12<sup>th</sup>. All volunteers are welcome to come. There will be information posted on Facebook about the meeting.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Membership committee**

Mary Hansen reported that membership in the BLA stands at 145 households. Mike Crofoot stated that as of last count there were 253 houses on the lake but is planning to recount. Mary is working with the zone advisors to update the name and house address of everyone in their zone so we can update membership and resident lists.

## **New Business**

### **1. Turkey Trot**

Nancy Smith will be heading up the Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving this year. Please let her know if you'd like to help plan this event. All help is welcome!

### **2. Kids Fishing Tournament**

We are still looking for a new host sight for the 2025 tournament. The plan is for it to be held on the free fishing weekend on June 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **3. Music on the Water**

Paul and Claire Delano will be hosting Music on the Water at their Tiki Bar on August 29<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Whistle Pigs will be playing. Everyone is welcome!

**Next meeting:** Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. Mary and Art Hansen's home on 70029 Hilltop Drive.

**Meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.**

## Article from the MLSA (found in Riparian Magazine)

A farewell to our old-growth trees and an opportunity for recovery By Melissa DeSimone, MLSA Executive Director

Over the years, storms have come through our lake communities and taken away many of our old and beautiful trees. These mighty sentinels around the lake are a testament to history and remind us of those who loved the lake before us. As our lots become taken up by more buildings, grassy areas, and concrete pads, we begin to forget about the important shade, wild habitat, and water quality protection old growth trees can provide to us and to the natural residents with which we share the lake.

In 2023, Gravel Lake along with Birch, Harwood, Round, Eagle, and Baldwin (all right here in Southwest Michigan) were approached by the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association (MLSA) to take part in a grant proposal spearheaded by the Van Buren Conservation District. The grant program is through the USDA Forestry Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The overall goal of this grant program is to provide 6 million dollars for reforestation, ecosystem restoration, and forest health improvement in the Great Lakes Basin. Our project to put trees and shrubs back around our inland lakes was awarded along with 37 other projects across 7 states. These are some of the expected outcomes of which our project is only a small part:

- Planting 107,620 trees, which will provide multiple benefits including reforestation of sites impacted by forest insects and disease, and intercepting stormwater to reduce runoff that can cause flooding and pollute waterbodies.
- Mitigating forest insect and disease impacts with over 3,000 acres of reforestation and protective treatments.
- Supporting local partnerships to treat 1,790 acres for nonnative invasive plants and survey 111,130 acres for new infestations.

Starting this fall, lake residents will be asked to identify locations where we can plant more trees and shrubs on our properties. You will be given some information about the species of trees and shrubs available to plant as well as guidance for which species would work on your property. Then the project team will send contractors out to plant your trees and shrubs. In the end you may be asked to put up a yard sign that proudly states that you planted a tree as part of this grant program. It's really that simple. We just need to put more trees in the ground. Every tree helps to improve the quality and lifespan of our favorite lake and the US Forest Service is going to pay for the trees and the work.

In a recent issue of The Michigan Riparian magazine, Dr. Jennifer Jermalowicz-Jones and Michael Solomon, experienced lake management professionals, had many important things to say in the article entitled, The Connection Between Forests and Inland Waters: An Essential Partnership. Highlights from the article include the following: Trees adjacent to lakes help to protect the shoreline from erosion due to the strong root systems. Trees provide shading that cools the water temperature. As trees fall into the water through erosion or storm events, the wood itself becomes a structure that offers protection as well as an energy source for numerous macroinvertebrate species (essentially fish food) as it decomposes. The authors of the article recommend that we restore the natural features of lakeshores that provide fish habitat, replace some or all lakeside lawns and beaches with trees, native wildflowers, shrubs, grasses, and emergent aquatic plants. A growing number of lakeshore owners are learning that restoring natural vegetation can cut maintenance costs, prevent unwanted pests such as Canada geese, attract butterflies and songbirds, and improve fish spawning habitat in shallow water.

Stay tuned for more information about this project and how you can participate. More information is coming in the fall of 2024 and work will likely take place in spring, summer, and fall of 2025. This project is an exciting opportunity to improve our riparian properties, give back to the lake ecosystem, protect water quality, and so much more. Reach out to Melissa DeSimone, Gravel Lake resident and MLSA Executive Director if you have any questions.