



SAVE LAKE WEIR NEWSLETTER

The Save Lake Weir Association is committed to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the magnificent natural beauty that is Lake Weir.

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Email: savelakeweirclub@gmail.com

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Website: www.savelakeweir.com

Reese Bourgeois, President
Lou Archibald, Vice President

Laura McDonald, Secretary
Bonnie Meyer, Treasurer

Annual Membership Meeting Sunday, February 27, 2022, 2:00 PM

The annual meeting will be held at the Lake Weir Yacht Club, 13830 SE 145th Avenue Rd, East Lake Weir. The Yacht Club is located 2.5 miles east of Ocklawaha. Turn west from CR 25 onto SE 139th Place and drive to the end of the road. Banana Pudding is BACK – come enjoy this wonderful treat! Dessert will be served at 2:00 pm. The meeting will start approximately at 2:30 pm. Board of Directors for the coming year will be elected. Members are encouraged to bring to the Board of Director's attention their concerns and anything they feel the board should address this year.

Membership

Your dues must be current in order to vote at this meeting and receive newsletters. Annual dues are \$10 per person per year and \$100 per person for a life membership. Enclosed for your convenience is a return envelope and membership card to be filled out and returned. Life members should use the membership card only to update email, address, and phone numbers. If you have not received an email from us this year, we need to confirm a correct email address. According to the by-laws, if annual dues are delinquent more than one year, membership is terminated. We need your membership in order to be an effective organization. Our membership reached 482 last year. Thanks to all of the new members. There are still a number of new residents on Lake Weir so invite your neighbors!

Recognition of Board members

Lou Archibald – At Large
Reese Bourgeois - Little Lake Weir
Carol Caruso - East Lake Weir
Cliff Forrester - Sunset Harbor
Bill Trice – At Large

Vic Knoblock - At Large
Bonnie Meyer - Weirsdale
Jane Sands - Ocklawaha
Laura McDonald - At Large

Elections

Three seats on the board shall be filled by election each year as stated in the By- Laws. Current board members that have agreed to serve are Carol Caruso and Cliff Forrester. We thank Vic Knoblock for 20 years of service to the Save Lake Weir Association. Tom Cartwright has been nominated to replace Vic as an At Large representative.

Carol Caruso - Carol is currently serving as a board member on Save Lake Weir. She grew up in Ocala and has spent her whole life around the lake. After a long career in banking in Fort Lauderdale and Tampa, she is enjoying retirement with friends, family and her quilting buddies. She bought a home on the bluffs in Weirsdale in 2013 and moved from Tampa to be a full time resident in 2014. Having personally observed the changes in the lake's condition from clear pristine water in the 50s to the challenging conditions today, she is dedicated to working on any opportunities for improvements.

Cliff Forrester – Cliff is currently serving on the Save Lake Weir board as the Sunset Harbor representative after having served as the Treasurer for 20 years. He and his wife Beth moved here from Michigan 35 years ago. They have owned property in the Southwood subdivision in Sunset Harbor since 1978 and lived there permanently since 1984. Cliff stays busy trimming trees and playing golf. He is concerned about the future of Lake Weir and has agreed to continue serving the cause on the board of directors.

Tom Cartwright - Tom bought a house with his wife Stephanie on Bird Island 35 years ago. Along with their two sons Michael and Brian, they have spent many summers and weekends fishing, boating, and swimming at Lake Weir. Now with their three grandchildren, the whole family continues to enjoy the lake life. Also, Tom's brother and his wife are currently building a house on Lake Weir. Tom recently retired after practicing medicine for over 35 years in Ocala. He previously served on the Marion County Water Quality board and continues to be concerned about the environment and water quality at Lake Weir.

Speaker at Annual Meeting – Amanda Marek

Amanda Marek of the UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service and Florida –Friendly Landscaping will be offering an overview of general best management practices for lawn and landscaping care to protect our water resources and Florida-friendly plants that are good for the shorelines.

Amanda has served in this position since 2017. She was raised in Marion County and is still proud to call it home with her husband and two children. She graduated from Belleview High School and from the University of Florida with a bachelor's and Master's degree in Forest Resources and Conservation. She also worked for a few years with the Florida Park Service and the National Park Service doing natural resources management and environmental education programs.

Amanda Marek, Florida-Friendly Landscaping

UF/IFAS Extension Marion County

Marion County Board of County Commissioners

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Government Staffing Affecting Lake Weir

Our long time Florida Wildlife biologist, Robbie Lovestrand, retired in October, and he has been replaced by **Chris Haggerty**. Chris is the person to call when you see invasive species of water plants or for permits to clear your beach or water access more than 50 feet or 50 percent, and can be reached at 352.726.8622.

If you wish to obtain a permit for dredging or fill on your property, you should call the Florida Department of Environment Protection at 407.897.4100.

Rachel Novak, a Weirsdale resident and frequent Lake Weir boater, has joined Marion County as the Water Resources Liaison. Rachel is extremely and genuinely interested in helping us improve Lake Weir's water quality.

Website Update

Last summer we successfully added a pay online capability to the Save Lake Weir website (www.savelakeweir.com). If you cannot attend the annual meeting, or are not able to send us a check in the mail, please consider using the online payment process. There is an obvious button on the top of every page on the website, right hand side that will guide you through a few simple steps. This process will allow you to use several credit card options to pay.

Invasive Species - Nutria

There have been at least two confirmed sightings of Nutria in Lake Weir. Nutria, also known as River Rats, when observed from a distance, may be confused with the lake's resident Otters. Nutria however have a skinny pointed tail, unlike the Otter's tail which is fatter and flat. Nutria are an invasive species and cause widespread damage to vegetation and destroy the banks of ditches, lakes and other water bodies. The damage they cause can be permanent. If you see a Nutria please report and/or send pictures to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at the FWC site <https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/nonnatives/report/>

Algae Reporting

Have you seen significant algae blooms on or near your lakeshore? Take a minute to record a picture and upload it to <https://floridadep.gov/AlgalBloom>. Reporting the blooms is easy at this site and your diligence will ensure the DEP is aware of the ongoing conditions on Lake Weir. At this site, you can also subscribe to a weekly update delivered to your email for free to follow the testing results for Lake Weir and other Florida area water bodies.

Communication Plan

The Board of Directors has developed a robust communications and marketing plan for Save Lake Weir membership. In the coming weeks you will see informational flyers, lawn signs, bumper stickers (available at the annual meeting) and other media reminding, promoting and educating Lake Weir residents on overall responsible, safe and healthy lake management practices.

Current Projects

Septic to Sewer Conversion Project

Save Lake Weir met with Jeff Gold, Alan Jones, Jody Kirkman, and Angel Roussel to determine the feasibility of having sewer systems brought to Lake Weir to help stop the degradation of the lake. The Marion County team presented a feasible solution that will have a phase one approach focusing on the north side of the lake, where population density is the highest. We have circulated a mailer with more information regarding the plan which will include a petition to north shore residents to gain the support we need to keep this initiative moving in the right direction. If you live on the north shore, between Carney Island and Hampton Beach, you should have received, or soon will receive this informational mailer. We will be happy to address questions at the annual meeting scheduled for February 27th, 2021.

Septic Grant Money

The Marion County Office of the County Engineer (OCE) provides a program to award grants to any unincorporated Marion County resident or business that utilizes a septic system to handle onsite treatment and storage of sewage. The purpose of the grant is to assist owners of such systems with routine maintenance pump-out and inspection costs, as well as relief from permit fees.

Additional details and links to the applications are on the Save Lake Weir website (www.savelakeweir.com) under the Current Initiatives page.

This program is funded by an annual Run For The Springs 5K. This year the event will be held at the Baseline Trailhead on the Cross Florida Greenway. The run will begin at 7AM on Saturday, April 30, 2022. The more participation in this event, the more residents can be reimburse for their septic maintenance expenses. There are still funds available from last years' event.

Grant Summary:

There are two (2) types of grants:

- Routine Maintenance Pump-Out and Inspection Reimbursement
 - Reimbursement of up to 80% of total cost will be provided to home or business owners that have their septic system pumped out and inspected by a septic service professional.
- Repair Permit Reimbursement
 - Reimbursement of up to \$250 each towards the cost of the permit required for repair to the septic system. (a copy of permit must be provided)

For Questions or additional information, email Stormwater@marionfl.org or call 352-671-8686.