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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February 2024

Reese Bourgeois, President
Bill Trice, Vice President

Laura McDonald, Secretary
Bonnie Meyer, Treasurer

Annual Membership Meeting

Sunday, March 3, 2024, 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. 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. You are able to join or renew your membership online. Go to www.savelakeweir.com and click Pay Online (top right). Thanks to all of the new members that joined throughout the year in 2023. There are still a number of new residents on Lake Weir so invite your neighbors!

Recognition of Board members

Greg Wiley – At Large
Reese Bourgeois - Little Lake Weir
Carol Caruso - East Lake Weir
Cliff Forrester - Sunset Harbor
Bill Trice – At Large
Tom Cartwright - 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 Jane Sands, Laura McDonald and Reese Bourgeois have agreed to continue to serve.

Jane Sands - Jane is a native of Marion County, she graduated from the University of Florida, and taught Biology at Forest High School for 22 years. She has been active in Save Lake Weir since moving to Lake Weir in 1989. She is concerned with the water quality of Lake Weir and is involved in informing property owners what needs to be done to improve the current situation.

Reese Bourgeois – Reese moved to Little Lake Weir 15 years ago with his wife, Shan. He has grown to love the lake and his motto is "in or on the water every day," with a kayak, a canoe, a sailboat, a windsurfer, a paddle board, a pontoon, or a ski boat. The attraction to come to the lake is the result of Shan's family having owned a small little place called the "Shack" on the north shore of Little Lake Weir for over 70 years. He wants the lake to remain a wonderful source of entertainment for all and is amazed that more people are not enjoying these beautiful lakes. Reese is an engineer, ran a small consulting firm called Flow Consulting, and traveled extensively.

Laura McDonald – Laura McDonald was born and raised in Marion County and spent every childhood summer on Lake Weir. She and her husband Bartow, with their three sons, made a permanent move to the North Shore in 2004. She is currently working as an Administrative Assistant with SVN McDonald and Company and as a host for their rental property. Laura is eager to help in the preservation of our beautiful lake.

Speaker at Annual Meeting – Jason "Mo" Bennett is a Regional Coordinator for Florida LAKEWATCH, and is responsible for the North Florida and Panhandle regions. Mo works to train and support new and existing volunteers. He has been with LAKEWATCH since 2006.

Mo is from Missouri (hence the nickname), but has lived in Florida since 2003. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Missouri – Kansas City, and his Master of Science degree in Fisheries from the University of Florida.

Current Projects and Updates

Lake Weir Duck Box Project

Boy Scout Jonah Emerson with Troop 113 out of Weirsdale is working toward constructing and installing wood duck boxes along the shore of Lake Weir as his Eagle Scout project. Jonah's fellow scouts are working along with him and expect to have the houses installed by the end of the year. The project's purpose is to attract more wood ducks to the area as the species seems to be in decline. The project is sponsored by Save Lake Weir Association and will be monitored annually to gauge the success.

State, County and Federal Governmental Departments, their function and contact information

There are multiple agencies responsible for various aspects of managing the health and well-being of Lake Weir. This table is a basic guide to each agency and their responsibilities – of course you can always reach out to Save Lake Weir via email or phone if you have questions about contact information for specific issues and concerns. www.savelakeweir.com.

Agency	Description	Contact Name/Function	Email/Phone
Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC)	Managing fish and wildlife resources aquatic vegetation, fish, wildlife, law enforcement, permitting.	Chris Haggerty *Aquatic Plant issues and Beach clearing violations*	Christopher.Haggerty@MyFWC.com 352-726-8622 352-732-1225
St. Johns Water Management District	The St. Johns River Water Management District is an environmental regulatory agency of the state of Florida whose work is focused on ensuring a long-term supply of drinking water, and to protect and restore the health of water bodies in the district's 18 counties in northeast and east-central Florida. Permitting	Jian Di Bureau of Environment Science St. Johns River Water Management District Palatka, Florida *Reports to Florida DEP on central Florida lake water quality data including Lake Weir*	jdi@sjrwmd.com 386-329-4500
Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)	The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state's lead agency for environmental management and stewardship, protecting our air, water and land. Water quality, algae bloom, wetlands & dock permitting, permitting Report Algae Blooms	Jessica Fetgatter *Basin Management Action Plans (BMAP)including the Upper Ocklawaha basin and Silver Springs which Lake Weir is part of* www.FloridaDEP.gov/Algabloom	Jessica.Fetgatter@FloridaDEP.gov 407-897-4100 855-305-3903
Marion County	Bird Island Causeway, weir in Ocklawaha Carney Island Park, Hope Boat Ramp, Hampton Beach, Kiwanis Beach, Willoughby Park, Little Lake Canal Emergency and non-emergency, law enforcement	Office of County Engineer Parks & Recreation Sheriff's Office	352-671-8686 352-671-8560 911 Emergency 352-732-9111
Environmental Protection Agency	The mission of EPA is to protect human health and the environment.	https://mywaterway.epa.gov/waterbody-report/21FL303D/FL2790A/2020	

Sewer Update

The Save Lake Weir initiated effort to form a Municipal Services Business Unit was soundly defeated. Quick summary – SLW paid $500 to have Marion County send out a petition to gauge interest in moving forward to have a sewer system installed on the north shore of Lake Weir (from Carney Island to Hampton Beach). We had been told that the per plot cost was ~$34,000 and that the state would pay for half of that, and that the remaining half would be paid for over a twenty-year period at low interest. The actual petition came out at a ~$50,000 cost, with no mention of state grant funding, and vague promises on long term payment plans. Needless to say, the wording on the petition guaranteed

failure and the nays beat the yeas by an 80/20 ratio. SLW would not have initiated the petition had we known the per plot cost and the lack of commitment to help fund the project.

SLW was then told that the county was fairly certain they could at least get a grant to fund the planning and design phase of the project - ~$2,000,000, but we found out in December that our project was too low a priority, probably linked to the vote outcome.

In conclusion, we have come to realize that having any sewer systems on Lake Weir are at least a decade out, and will only occur if the state fully funds most of the project, as our county commissioners clearly do not want to fund this effort. Any further petitions initiated by SLW will be reviewed for wording BEFORE we fund the petition – lesson learned.

2024 Communication Plan

In order to keep homeowners informed of Lake Weir's water quality, there will be a letter with the data from UF's Lake Watch samples sent to everyone around the lake, not just Save Lake Weir members. This letter will also briefly outline actions that we can all take to not only prevent further deterioration, but also help make improvements to the water quality of the lake we love. To follow up, quarterly mailings will be sent with detailed descriptions focusing on one of these action points per quarter in order to help homeowners contribute to the health of Lake Weir. So be on the lookout!

Top 10 Ways to be a Good Septic Owner

- ✓ Have your system inspected every three years by a qualified professional or according to your state/ local health department's recommendations
- ✓ Have your septic tank pumped, when necessary, generally every three to five years
- ✓ Avoid pouring harsh products (e.g., oils, grease, chemicals, paint, medications) down the drain
- ✓ Discard non-degradable products in the trash (e.g., floss, disposable wipes, cat litter) instead of flushing them Keep cars and heavy vehicles parked away from the drainfield and tank
- ✓ Follow the system manufacturer's directions when using septic tank cleaners and additives
- ✓ Repair leaks and use water efficient fixtures to avoid overloading the system
- ✓ Maintain plants and vegetation near the system to ensure roots do not block drains
- ✓ Use soaps and detergents that are low-suds, biodegradable, and low- or phosphate-free
- ✓ Prevent system freezing during cold weather by inspecting and insulating vulnerable system parts (e.g., the inspection pipe and soil treatment area)
- ✓ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency TM For more Septic Smart tips, visit www.epa.gov/septicsmart

Check out the EPA's Waterbody report at: https://mywaterway.epa.gov/waterbody-report/21FL303D/FL2790A/2020