

# SYLVAN & OTTER LAKES

[www.sylvanotter.org](http://www.sylvanotter.org)

## ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

### 2023

#### Mission statement:

The Sylvan Otter Lake Association (SOLA) is a non-profit organization, comprised of volunteers to improve our lake community and protect the quality of our lakes for its safe recreational use. SOLA's main focus is to provide the best quality lake environment for all who use both Sylvan Lake and Otter Lake by managing weeds and wildlife.

**40 years.** This year marks my 40<sup>th</sup> year as president of SOLA. We have come a long way from the days of meeting at Gino's Restaurant stapling mimeographed newsletters together and finding volunteers that would hand deliver the newsletter and collect donations. With the help of technology we have stream-lined the process, introduced a website and are able to contribute more funds to our main goal of weed control. In the 40 years, we have only raised dues once as it has been our goal to get more people to donate vs raising the dues. Working closely with our weed control company (Aqua Weed Control), we have been able to minimize the invasion of weeds by getting an early start treating the lakes while also controlling costs. Working closely with the City of Sylvan and enlisting their strong financial support for SOLA has really helped. Over the years we have done our best to keep our lakes, beaches, and lawns as free of geese droppings as possible. It has been our goal to not introduce rules or laws as we continue to manage our lakes despite the introduction of wake boats, jet skis, kayaks, and paddleboards. Your donations have been critical in keeping our lakes as beautiful as possible and for that, we thank you.

**SOLA now has a Facebook page!** Follow us at **Sylvan/Otter Lake Association**. Please feel free to add pictures, fun comments, lake events or happenings. Let's use this page to promote SOLA. If you have questions, concerns, or issues you want answers to, please use my email address and I will get back to you as soon as I can. If your question or concern warrants posting we will do that.

**Are you the great friend that lets a friend dock a boat at your house?** Great, please ask them to also donate to SOLA!

**Use the right fertilizer on your lawn to protect our lakes.** Help minimize the weeds and algae in our lakes. If you apply your own fertilizer, only use fertilizer that has no or very low phosphorus. The amount of phosphorus is the second number on a bag of fertilizer i.e. 15-0-15. All fertilizer labels have three bold numbers. The first number is the amount of nitrogen (N), the second number is the amount of phosphorus (P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>) and the third number is the amount of potash (K<sub>2</sub>O). If you have your lawn treated by a company, ask if they have a phosphorus free application for waterfront users. **Please see a list of Earth-Friendly Fertilizers on our website**

**Weed treatment in 2023.** As of the printing of this newsletter, we have already treated for weeds three times this season. The state still will not allow our lakes to use Copper Sulfate to control algae any longer, therefore, SOLA is trying a more expensive alternative to control algae. If you are having a problem with weeds in your area, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**Our lakes are busier and more congested.** When mooring by the volleyball net, please don't anchor out so far that you restrict the opening and free passage between "Big and Little Sylvan". Anchor your boats more to the west.

**Artificially enhanced wakes created by boats.** Sylvan and Otter Lakes have historically and continue to be in the category of an "all sports lake". Therefore, they are to be enjoyed for all recreational use, with consideration of safety issues and courtesy to your fellow boaters. I have learned that the activity behind some of these boats is best done in deeper waters. We ask that boats that create large wakes, please contain their activity to these areas. Besides the large wakes that are eroding our shore line, the thrust of wake boats can stir up the bottom of the lake in 20 feet of water and less. This is causing disruption to our lakes ecosystem costing more money to maintain lake clarity. That being said, the deeper parts of the lakes are in Little Sylvan and Otter Lakes. See a map of lake depths on our web site at <http://www.sylvanotter.org> .

**What is causing the large break-a-way floating islands** depends on who you ask. There are several reasons that contribute to these islands breaking away and floating across the lakes: boat wakes, the very high water levels this summer, high winds, fast moving water released from the Cass Lake Dam, and normal erosion all contribute. Thankfully, there continues to be growth of the plants in the wet lands.

**Everyone needs to follow the basic rules for safe boating:**

**\*All boat traffic must go in a counter clockwise direction.**

**\*All boaters are responsible for their wake.**

**\*All boating within 100 feet of docks and shore is "no wake".**

**\* You must be 100 feet away from other boats, even if they are anchored.**

**\* PWC must stay 200 feet from shore and no closer than 150 feet behind another boat.**

**Turn the music down!** What use to be predominantly a problem with wake boats has now expanded to pontoons and jet skis. Music and voices carry across water and should not be louder than 90 dB 3 feet away or 75 dB measured from shore per city ordinance. If you think the music is too loud, download a Decibel Meter app to your smart phone to determine how loud the music really is. A courteous one-to-one conversation between lake neighbors should solve the problem. Please make sure your music is appropriate and does not blast offensive language.

**Boat operator age restrictions.** If you have any questions as to what age a person needs to be to operate a boat in Michigan go to <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/boating/rules-and-regs/age-restrictions>

**Those messy geese.** As in years past we are doing our best to manage the geese population. Between egg collection and the goose round up this year we collected approximately 80 eggs and rounded up 177 geese and we still have a lot of geese on our lakes. I have been told that even though we do our best to control the geese population, we will never be able to control the population as geese are wild animals they will continue to fly to and from area lakes and make that lake their new home.

**SOLA is totally funded by your donations. Please don't forget to mail in your donations.**

**Donation Schedule for Sylvan and Otter Lake Association - if you are a:**

**LAKEFRONT, CANAL FRONT, OR BOAT OWNER      Due: Minimum of \$75.00**  
**RESIDENT WITH BEACH PRIVILEGES              Due: Minimum of \$25.00**

**Treasurer's 2022 Report:**

<b>Beginning balance</b>	<b>\$ 17,482</b>	
<b>Donations</b>	<b>\$ 29,805</b>	
<b>Weed control and permits</b>		<b>\$ 24,308</b>
<b>Postage costs and printing fees</b>		<b>\$ 1,539</b>
<b>Wildlife management programs</b>		<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>Web site host, misc. fees</b>		<b>\$ 535</b>
<b>Bank fees</b>		<b>\$ 26</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>\$ 26,409</b>
<b>Ending balance</b>	<b>\$ 20,878</b>	

**Please mail your \$75.00 minimum donation today. Make checks payable to:**

**Sylvan / Otter Lake Association  
P.O. Box 136  
Keego Harbor, MI 48320**

**SOLA does not issue beach tags or boat ramp keys anywhere around the lakes. Contact your homeowners or beach association as to how you can get beach tags and ramp keys.**

**Thank you to the following lake residents who have volunteered their time to improve our lakes:** We welcome a new volunteer to assist SOLA. Kim Yeip will be handling the treasurer responsibilities. Thank you Kim for your help.

- Greg Rademacher – Vice President of SOLA.
- Toddy Eddy – Vice President of SOLA
- Luke Cassar - Wildlife Management of SOLA
- Kim Yeip –Treasurer of SOLA.
- Jeff Ignatowski –Web-site Design and Maintenance for SOLA.

**Sylvan Otter Lakes Association web site - [www.sylvanotter.org](http://www.sylvanotter.org).** Keep up on all of the latest lake information or read past newsletters. Get access to links on key topics regarding our lakes community. List of chemicals used and the risk/benefit information.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at:  
[phillip.russell.thomas@gmail.com](mailto:phillip.russell.thomas@gmail.com) or call me at 248-961-3903.

Thank you.  
Phil Thomas  
Sylvan Otter Lakes Association President