



Twin Lakes Owners' Association  
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# Twin Lakes Newsletter

## Spring 2013



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# Twin Lakes Homeowners' Association

*Corporately known as Twin Lakes Owners' Association (TLOA)*

## From the Editor

The week or so before publishing the newsletter, I came across the website *Topix*, which had a thread from February 6<sup>th</sup> related to the recent Lake Shenandoah dam event. The very first comment posted was from a self-proclaimed Twin Lakes resident, in which he/she exclaimed *"Drain the dams! ... the TLOA spends inordinate amount of money in keeping the dam in check!"* This was echoed in another comment, also presumably from a Twin Lakes resident, *"I agree 110%....all they do is worry about those dams.....while everything else is going to heck in twin lakes.....the board worries about dumb stuff as always."*

My question for both is - do either actually know the amount that has been spent on the dams in the past 5 years? Or how this amount pales in comparison to the amount spent in the same timeframe on trying to maintain, repair, and finally blacktop the 10+ miles of road in our subdivision (which apparently could have been done several years ago at less overall cost to the HOA had a TL resident not spoken rashly)? Are either aware that permanently draining and abandoning the lakes (because an earthen dam can't be 'drained') isn't just that simple - it requires involvement of the US Environmental Protection Agency and/or the VA Department of Environmental Quality, and all the associated fees and backfill work would cost significantly more than repairing/rehabilitating all three dams and lakes. Of course, I would wager neither individual have lake front property - I would wager even more that the 85+ residents

with lake front property do not share the same sentiment.

Besides a sharp decrease in property values (and don't kid yourselves thinking it will impact just those with lake front property) should the lakes be abandoned, the area would become a marsh, a haven for mosquitos. One *Topix* poster, an excavating/landscaping contractor, casually stated we'd be better off, even have increased property values, if we turned all the lakes into soccer fields - well, those would be either be three extremely large soccer fields or we'd have a dozen of them! Of course, we're not talking about a small, 1-acre farm pond in a field with no stream in sight; our lakes are in an active waterway (Quarter Creek) - to simply remark they'd be great soccer fields ignores not only the year round water flow, but also the storm water runoff management our lake provide for the community. What good is a 3-10 acre soccer field if it's always flooded and soggy after every rain (even minor rains due to the collective surface area)? See again previous comment about mosquitos.

I find it mildly amusing, but simultaneously pathetic, that the commenter quipped the Board always worries about dumb stuff. As if thinking about, planning, and attempting to prevent flooding of Twin Lakes residents' properties, as well as damage to the natural gas pipeline and Amicus road that bisect the subdivision, is trivial - I guess we should just tell the county and state

to go pound sand. What really amuses me though, is that I can't recall "Sassy" attending a board meeting or emailing us in the past year about what his/her concerns are or what exactly the Board should be worrying about.

When I hear or read such comments, I remind myself, that everyone is of course, entitled to their own opinion; I'm also just as quickly remind of the oft quoted expression (at least in the military), that "opinions are like buttholes: everyone has one and they usually stink" - including mine, *sometimes!* My intent isn't that residents shouldn't voice their opinions, quite the opposite. Nor am I suggesting these individuals should abandoned their position. In fact, I strongly encourage all to attend a board meeting, send an email, or call and leave a message to politely and tactfully express their concerns, opinions, and/or suggestions. Of course, it should be done in a composed and collected manner that seeks to inform and facilitate constructive debate, rather than accuse and debase with no real solution. Rather, my point is that before opening one's mouth, he/she should first educate themselves on the issue that is of contention and fill the space between the ears; else, one risks expelling only hot air, leading to light headedness and cause one to float away, while the rest of us remain grounded in reality.

Although it is painfully and sadly obvious to the Twin Lakes community that we had to drain Lake Shenandoah due to a compromise to its dam, what may not be so clear to many members is what exactly happened, the succession of events, and all that has been, and is being done, to restore Lake Shenandoah. Although the Board has posted updates to the website, and emailed those who've signed up to receive updates/alerts, undoubtedly, many of you still have several unanswered questions - what will happen next, how is the HOA is going to pay for these repair costs (i.e. levying of a special assessment), how is this going to affect property values? Therefore, much of this Spring Newsletter is dedicated to answering these questions.

While the sudden erosion of a section of Lake Shenandoah's dam was unexpected, the damage to the pipe underneath should be of no surprise to the Twin Lakes community, expect those who just recently moved into the neighborhood. A significant portion of last year's Summer Newsletter was devoted to informing the HOA membership about the current state of all three of our dams. The article clearly articulated the extent of repairs and modifications needed to not only bring our

dams into compliance with recent changes to state laws, but to ensure continued safe operation and avoid failure. While the recent incident with the Lake Shenandoah dam was unfortunate, the Board was already actively developing a plan to conduct these repairs/modifications, beginning with Lake Greene/Dam #1 and had previously been in conversation with our professional engineer, specialized dam contractors, and researching funding options. Therefore, rather than completely starting from scratch, the Board is simply shifting focus from the Lake Greene dam to the Lake Shenandoah dam.

I would like to emphasize that the Lake Shenandoah dam did not fail; the heavy rains/flash flood at the end of January undoubtedly contributed to the sudden erosion of the section of dam above the spillway pipe, which lead to the discovery of the compromise to the pipe underneath the dam. While the situation was critical, and thus the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) implemented, the attentiveness of a Twin Lakes resident and his prompt notification to the Board, and the Board's rapid response to immediately lower the lake level prevented further damage and catastrophic failure of the dam.

The attentiveness of Mr. Clemmons is to be commended and underlines the importance of the contributions HOA members make to the safety and benefit of the Twin Lakes community. Likewise, Mr. James Hayslett's notification of the culvert issue on Jonquil road last year allowed the HOA to execute quick repairs and prevented personal injury or vehicle damage. Please never assume the Board knows of every issue; while Board members attempt to periodically examine our neighborhood, there simply is not enough time or personnel to canvas the entire neighborhood on a routine basis. Therefore, we rely heavily on the eyes and input of the community.

## **Questions? Comments?**

You can contact the HOA via the following email addresses.

Don't forget to visit [www.twinlakeshoa.org](http://www.twinlakeshoa.org)

General: [twinlakeshoa@twinlakeshoa.org](mailto:twinlakeshoa@twinlakeshoa.org)

### **Committees:**

Roads: [roads@twinlakeshoa.org](mailto:roads@twinlakeshoa.org)

Architectural: [arch@twinlakeshoa.org](mailto:arch@twinlakeshoa.org)

Lakes & Dams: [lakesanddams@twinlakeshoa.org](mailto:lakesanddams@twinlakeshoa.org)

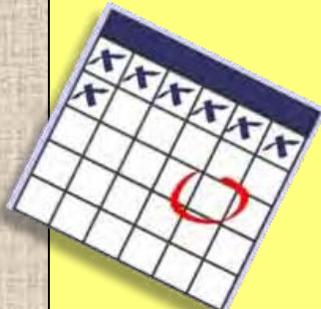
Newsletter/Web: [newsletter@twinlakeshoa.org](mailto:newsletter@twinlakeshoa.org)

## Lake Shenandoah Timeline Recap

- Feb 4<sup>th</sup> ; 8am – TL resident sends emails HOA
- Feb 4<sup>th</sup> ; 7pm – Board member investigates site of collapse
- Feb 4<sup>th</sup> ; 8pm – Profession Engineer notified;
- Feb 4<sup>th</sup> ; 11am – PE inspects area with State Dam Safety Rep; Jonquil culvert noted to be damaged
- Feb 5<sup>th</sup> ; 1pm – Greene County Emergency Services notified; decision made to implement EAP as precautionary measure (decision made to notify all of Twin Lakes vice just those on EAP)
- Feb 5<sup>th</sup> ; 6pm – CodeRed issued, however, glitch at CenturyLink prevents some intended recipients from being notified
- Feb 5<sup>th</sup> ; 7pm – Twin Lakes send email to those who registered on HOA website to receive such alerts and updates; additionally, updates posted to website
- Feb 6<sup>th</sup> – Contractors contacted to solicit options and bids for lowering lake; Jonquil culvert modified to handle additional water flow and prevent road washout
- Feb 7<sup>th</sup> – BanderSmith contracted to lower lake level
- Feb 8<sup>th</sup> – Lake draw-down begin in a controlled manner aimed to immediately lower lake, reducing potential for critical dam failure and damage to Amicus and downstream properties; professional engineers contacted to evaluate to identify repair solutions and options
- Feb 21<sup>st</sup> – After identifying that any repair will entail completely draining lake, Board votes to open low-level drain
- Mar 11<sup>th</sup> – BanderSmith contracted to open valve, after an initial attempt on Wed, March 13<sup>th</sup>, successfully opened on Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup> / Lake Shenandoah is completely drained by afternoon of Sat, March 16<sup>th</sup>

### Special Assessment Meeting Notice:

The Board is proposing that a special HOA meeting be held in early summer (date to be determined) as a forum for HOA property owners to engage in purposeful discussion with the Board concerning levying a special assessment to offset the cost of repairs to Lake Shenandoah and its dam. All HOA members are highly encouraged to attend, especially those with property bordering Lake Shenandoah, and participate in shaping a potential special assessment (i.e. amount, duration, application).



By holding this forum in early summer, the Board will be afforded time to gather more accurate cost estimates, as well as time to identify, determine eligibility, and apply for outside funds and amount we could receive. Thus, the Board and HOA membership can engage in a more constructive and focused discussion.

## Dredging & Boat Ramp

From the moment the drawn-down of Lake Shenandoah began, several residents have inquired about dredging the lake, as well as repairing the Lake Shenandoah boat launch area, while the lake is empty. The Board agrees that with the lake drained, it would be the most cost effective and practical time to conduct these activities. However, beyond costs, dredging activities incorporate additional factors that must be taken into consideration. For example, dredging typically requires a permit from the state, coordination with and inclusion of the Army Corps of Engineers, and the exhumed sediment subject to certain handling and disposal restrictions.

To date, investigation by the Board into the possibility of dredging has yielded more questions than answer as we learn more about the process and state requirements. While we continue to dig up answers, this is what the Board has learned so far: The first step is to request the Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate Lake Shenandoah and the potential dredging project; this is reportedly at no cost to the HOA. We must also coordinate with the VA Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), whose policies will dictate our options for disposing of the removed sediment. This of course, will determine cost of hauling away of the sediment, which will be in addition to the cost of actually dredging.

Lake sediment can be considered toxic by the VA DEQ as a result of agricultural and residential runoff (chemical fertilizers, animal waste, septic leakage, etc) that accumulates at the bottom of the lake, in the sediment we desire to remove. These toxins can be introduced to Lake Shenandoah from miles around via the local watershed that supplies our lakes, as well as lake front properties not only in Twin Lakes, but Wildwood Valley to the north. Therefore, we must have the sediment tested; if results determine the sediment to be non-toxic, and thus an excellent source of organic soil amendment, we may be able to contract with local soil suppliers to haul it away at little to no cost. However, if the sediment is determined to be toxic, then cost will increase significantly, as it must be handle and disposed of as such.

Another factor in assessing the feasibility of dredging is whether we actually have to conduct "dredging" vice potentially excavating the sediment if it is dry enough. Consequently, if we can excavate, this increases the potential number of qualified contractors who may be able to

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bid on the project, and consequently, offer us a better rate.

While one Board member has started researching the various requirements that will influence whether we can dredge or not, as mentioned earlier, the initial investigation yielded many new questions. If you are one of those who would strongly desire to see Lake Shenandoah dredged, we need your help! Please email us at [lakesanddams@twinlakeshoa.org](mailto:lakesanddams@twinlakeshoa.org) if you can lend a hand.

Concerning the Lake Shenandoah boat launch area, the Board does not currently have the personnel or time to actively research our options and associated costs with this project. One resident has suggested clearing the debris (tree stumps, large rocks) in the launch area, as well as dredging the launch and adding appropriate sized gravel to reduce the threat of damaging vehicles and boats. I am no boat ramp construction or concrete expert, but I would posit that within our community, we have the expertise and manpower to form, pour, and finish a concrete boat ramp without the need to hire outside contractors, except for a concrete mixing truck to supply the concrete, which would make this project financially feasible. Therefore, if you would enjoy seeing a real boat ramp (and not just a "launch area") and have either the knowledge and/or willingness to provide labor, or help research what we need to complete such as project, please let us know at [lakesanddams@twinlakeshoa.org](mailto:lakesanddams@twinlakeshoa.org).

## Funding

The Board has been actively researching various grant opportunities, at the federal and state level, to help cover the cost of the repairs to Lake Shenandoah, as well as rehabilitation of our other two lakes. One of these grants was the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program, available through the US Department of Agriculture's National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), which provides funding up to 75% of cost to repair dams and watershed features affected by natural disasters. However, while private organizations can be eligible to receive the grant money, they must be sponsored by a government entity. The Board contacted the Greene County Board of Supervisors (BoS) and attended the March BoS meeting to make a formal request for Greene County to sponsor TLOA in applying for the EWP grant. Under the grant program, the sponsor must provide the matching 25% funds to the EWP's 75%; the TLOA conveyed to the BoS that we would provide those funds and coordinate all the repair work. While all on the BoS supported us and 4 of 5 tentatively agreed to sponsor, legal review of the sponsor's requirements and obligations under EWP discouraged the BoS from ultimately signing as our sponsor due to concerns of various liability issues that could be forced upon the County since it would have been the ultimate responsible party, even though the TLOA would be

acting as the principal.

Just last week, the VA Department of Conservation and Resources announced that the 2013 Dam Safety, Flood Management and Protection Assistance Fund application process was open. Last year, we submitted four applications and ultimately received \$18,000. We will be submitting another application this year for both the repairs/rehabilitation to Lake Shenandoah and Lake Greene dams. The assistance fund provides both 50% reimbursement grants and low-interest loans. In addition to the normal application, we preparing a letter to our state representatives in Richmond appealing for their help with hopes they can lobby the General Assembly on our behalf and allocate a larger portion of the assistance fund towards our projects, upwards of 75%. This has been successfully accomplished in the past for another lake community and we think we can replicate that success.

We will complete this letter in the next month and we need the voice of Twin Lakes residents to strengthen the cause – we will post the letter, along with template letter you can sign and send to our representatives asking them to support us, to the website shortly after the April Board meeting. For those who signed up for email updates, we will notify you when it has been posted. If we can secure a significant portion of this grant money, it will dramatically reduce the amount and/or duration of any special assessment.

## CONTRACT BID OPPORTUNITY

The Twin Lakes Owners Association (TLOA) is now accepting bids through April 16<sup>th</sup> for two separate contracts:

- 1) Mowing and maintenance services (term period for services: May 2013 – April 2014)
- 2) Brush/tree clearing and disposal (one-time service)

***To be officially considered, prospective bidders must have their bids/contracts for TLOA signatures in writing, or via email ([lakesa.nddams@twinlakeshoa.org](mailto:lakesa.nddams@twinlakeshoa.org)), along with the TLOA contract agreement signed by the contractor, with receipt by TLOA no later than 16 April 2013.***

Contractors who wish to bid on both services must submit separate bids for each contract. The complete Statement of Work and contract agreement for each contract opportunity is available on the TLOA website ([www.twinlakeshoa.org/contractdocs](http://www.twinlakeshoa.org/contractdocs)).

## Summary Statement of Work

### *Mowing and Maintenance:*

- a) **Maintain landscaping at five entranceways** six times a year
- b) **Mow dams, spillways, and common areas:** six times a year
- c) **Clear lake overflow pipe rakes of all debris** on a monthly basis on each of the three lakes' primary spillway pipes.
- d) **Pick-up and trash removal:** On monthly basis (pick-up and remove trash from designated trash receptacles. Removal and disposal of animal carcasses from Twin Lakes' areas roadways/common only as requested/needed.

### *Brush Cutting and Clearing:*

- a) **Cutting & clearing of brush along Lake Skyline Auxiliary Spillway embankment**
- b) **Cutting/Clearing of brush/trees 25-ft from toe of dam**

# ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE NEWS

*By Anita Jwanouskos*

## Unkempt and Unsightly Areas

The HOA has been trying to inform home owners and/or renters about this bylaw and are asking them to please keep their property from becoming unkempt or unsightly. We've written letters and even had to threaten fines. We will again be going around and trying to address this with home owner's who have this "issue". Please do what you can to keep your property in order and appealing for both you and your neighbors to look at.

*Section 2.C. of the Architectural/Environmental Rules & Regulations in the TLOA Bylaws states:*

*"It shall be the responsibility of each property owner to prevent the development of any unclean, unsightly, or unkempt conditions of building or grounds on such lot which shall tend to decrease the beauty of the neighborhood as a whole or in a specific area. No building material shall be stored on any lot, except temporarily during continuous construction of a building, unless stored out of view."*

One major problem we have had for some of the unkempt/unsightly properties in our subdivision is foreclosed property. We are trying to deal with the banks who currently hold the title on the foreclosed home and we've been getting the run around. We attempt to find out who is responsible for the property and its up-keep. When we contact the bank, they say it's still the previous home owner's to take care of. We know it is the bank. We promise you, we are trying to keep all the lots within our subdivision looking good so that our real estate values remain as strong as they possibly can be. If you know of a home that is unoccupied and has become run down, please feel free to contact the Architectural Committee at arch@twinlakeshoa.org. If you know which bank owns the property, or who the real estate agent is trying to sell the property, it would GREATLY help.

## Shed Color

Under Section 2.G. of the Architectural/Environmental Rules & Regulations of the TLOA Bylaws, in the last sentence, there is language which guides the Architectural about the color of storage sheds on each home owner's lot. *The storage shed on each lot must match the exterior color of the residence.* We are asking for you to make sure this is case on your own lot. Thank you.

## CONSIDERING BYLAW CHANGES

The TLOA is considering some bylaw changes.

**Potential bylaw change:** We are researching restrictions on how many cars can be parked on one lot.

**Reason:** There appear to be some homes within our subdivision which have as many as 6-8 cars parking on the lot on a regular basis. Every once in a while, such as for a birthday party or other family event, many cars on a lot is not an issue for the TLOA or the neighbors. It is when it is happening over and over again or when the cars are parking off the lot and on the street.

**Potential bylaw change:** Allowing political signs

**Reason:** At this time NO signs are allowed within our subdivision, except "For Sale" or "For Rent" signs, (Section 1.E.). This includes political signs. We would like to see some modification to this bylaw with political signs (with size restrictions) being allowed for at least a short amount of time around elections.

The HOA will be working on these bylaw ideas and will, hopefully, have them ready for your vote at the annual meeting in October. If you have any other bylaw changes you would like to see considered, please contact the Bylaws Committee attwinlakeshoa@twinlakeshoa.org. Also, if you have any feedback on the above bylaw changes, please let the committee know too.

## Website Gets a Facelift!

Chad Denby, who owns and operates Web Weaving with his wife Cat, volunteered to become our website administrator, bringing over 16 years of web-design experience to upgrade and improve our website, from boring to professional. Chad's elegant design helps project a more serene look and feel of Twin Lakes, especially to potential buyers.

Chad and Cat Denby have resided in Twin Lakes for over 10 years; they chose Twin Lakes because of its beauty and the quiet neighborhood - the perfect place to walk, bike, run, and live. They spend most of their free time with their two pugs, Cody and Cheyenne, who are well known on Jonquil Road by neighbors who pass the couple on their daily walks. Neighbors also know how much Chad and Cat enjoy decorating for the holidays (a few of the children even call them "The Christmas Light House").



Cat likes to spend her free time creating pet portraits in graphite and chalk, while Chad is a big kid, enjoying video games whenever he gets a free moment. During the day, they use these artistic and technical skills in to design web sites. The two started Web Weaving in 1996 and since that time, they have built web sites of all shapes and sizes, including sites for the Greene County EDA and

The screenshot shows the website for the Twin Lakes Owners' Association. At the top is a logo with a sun and mountains, and the text "Twin Lakes Owners' Association". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links: Home, Announcements, Newsletters, Meeting Minutes, Registration, Disclosure Packet, Advertise, Bylaws, Contact Us. The main content area has a welcome message, a scenic photo of mountains, and three boxes: "IN THE KNOW..." with a "NEWS" tag, "SHARE YOUR MESSAGE..." with an "Advertise in Twin Lakes!" sub-header, and "HAVE A QUESTION?" with a "Contact Us!" sub-header. The footer includes a Twitter link and copyright information: "Copyright © 2013 TLOA. All Rights Reserved. Site Donated by Web Weaving."

Tourism sites, the Greene Hills Club, and the Greene Sheriff's Department. They have also worked with several other local businesses, churches, and community programs, and look forward to helping their neighbors in Twin Lakes.

A special thanks to Chad and Cat for donating their time and skills to improve the Twin Lakes neighborhood!



As part of the new website design, we are holding a Twin Lakes photo contest to populate our picture inventory that will be displayed in rotational fashion on the front page. The photo contest will occur in four phases, one for each season of the year and photos must be of, or directly related to, Twin Lakes (e.g. ducks/geese on the lakes [at least those still full of water!], Blue Ridge skyline, etc). Photos will be judged at approximately the end of each season and the seasonal winner announced in following newsletter. Submit your spring photos now to [newsleter@twinlakeshoa.org](mailto:newsleter@twinlakeshoa.org); summer photo can be submitted beginning Memorial Day weekend.