



"If people destroy something replaceable made by mankind, they are called vandals. If they destroy something irreplaceable made by God, they are called de-velopers."

Joseph Wood Krutch, American writer, critic and naturalist

There is little doubt that ever-increasing development in and around Rehoboth Beach has resulted in fewer open spaces, destruction of trees that absorb and filter polluted runoff, and pollution of Silver Lake and Lake Gerar, with runoff from construction sites and impervious surfaces coming from the many Rehoboth storm drains that flow into these lakes.

In late June, SOLA3 learned of a program sponsored by Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) through its Coastal Programs Division. This program provides technical assistance to coastal towns to address coastal flooding as the result of impervious surfaces, as well as drafting ordinances that may address other issues relating to improving the water quality.

SOLA3 sent a letter to the Coastal Programs Division to support Rehoboth's application to lead the Coastal Programs Resilient Communities Partnership with the towns of Dewey, Lewes and Fenwick Island, to be coordinated by the Delaware Center for Inland Bays. The application was approved, which led to our meeting with Mayor Kuhns, City Manager Sharon Lynn, and key staff to discuss how this program can benefit the lakes.

Our understanding is that it will provide resources to the partnership to mitigate the negative effects of development and improve infrastructure, which will benefit the lakes. We also discussed the need to install filtering devices on existing and new storm drains entering the lakes and we provided a list of grants that could help fund the cost of these devices. We look forward to a continuing dialogue as the program is

developed by the partnership with a goal "to protect the water quality of nearby natural resources..."

We thank the Rehoboth Board of Commissioners for approving funds in the City's 2019-20 budget (originally planned for 2018-19) to restore the southwest prong of Lake Gerar, and to "study the health needs of the entire lake..." as reported in Vice Mayor Stan Mills' article on p. 4. And for approving a five-year capital improvement plan that includes funding of projects related to improving and maintaining storm water infrastructure.

Also on the "good news front" we discovered a positive sign that the quality of the water at the west end of Silver Lake may be improving as the result of the DNREC dredging project (reported on p. 6.) The fifth grade students participating in our annual workshop to assess water quality in Silver Lake found damselfly nymphs in their water samples. These flies have not appeared in prior year's samples, so this is a good sign that this species is returning to a healthier lake environment.

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We were pleased to have the opportunity to meet with DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin and key staff last January. A report on that meeting and our follow-up questions follows. It is disappointing to learn that no funds have been found to pay for the management plan for Silver Lake and Lake Comegys over the last five years. But we are encouraged by their commitment to meet “with all potential parties involved” to determine a plan and strategy for funding.

I want to extend my gratitude to our board, our volunteers and our generous donors for their support, that has led to another year of progress but, as Marie Curie said, “I was taught that the way of progress was neither swift nor easy.”

We want to thank Mike Boyd for serving as our Vice President since SOLA3 was founded in 2004. Mike decided not to seek another term because of his work responsibilities that include international travel. Mike has contributed in so many ways to our success over these past 14 years - most notably developing our by-laws and being a key participant in our programs. We are most grateful that Mike has agreed to serve as an advisor to our board, so he will continue to share his many talents and years of experience with us.



Silver Lake in Winter of 2018

SAVING OUR NATURAL TREASURES

Only through vital support from our generous community can SOLA3 be successful in accomplishing its mission. Please consider your tax deductible contribution as an investment that pays dividends through environmental improvements to our treasured lakes that will be enjoyed by current and future generations.

You may give with a check or a gift of stock.

MEETING WITH DNREC SECRETARY SHAWN GARVIN

In January, 2018, SOLA3 Board members met with DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin, who was nominated by Governor John Carney and confirmed by the Delaware State Senate in March, 2017. The Secretary was joined by several DNREC department heads.

Among our discussion points was the status of the pending proposal for the development of a management plan for Silver Lake and Lake Comegys. Following are subsequent responses from the Secretary to the questions we raised:

1. Have there been any changes to the plan?

The plan is almost three years old, and was submitted during prior administrations for the State and the City of Rehoboth Beach. However, the plan does have some useful information that may be considered in the future as discussions regarding the lakes continue to evolve.

2. Is the cost still \$50,000?

The plan and proposed budgeted costs submitted by AECOM Technical Services was based on their 2015 billing rates, therefore, the cost has likely changed. In addition, if a decision is made to solicit new requests for proposals, the project scope may likely be different resulting in new costs estimates.

3. Have any funds been secured to pay for the management plan - from the State, County, local jurisdictions?

No funding commitments in regard to the management plan submitted in 2015 have carried forward from State, County, or local jurisdictions.

4. If so, what are those amounts?

5. What is the plan/strategy/timetable going forward to secure full funding?

Future discussions regarding the restoration of the lakes with all potential parties involved may help to determine a plan and strategy for funding.

Other discussion points included:

DNREC regulations and environmental protections pertaining to the proposed Beach Walk development and the need for a storm water management plan by the City of Rehoboth Beach to protect Silver Lake and Lake Gerar.

We also asked for (and received) a list of potential grant opportunities available for upgrading storm drains, installing devices in the drains that will filter out pollutants before they enter the lakes, and other lakes' improvements, which we have shared with Rehoboth officials.



SOLA3 BOARD MEETS WITH DNREC SECRETARY SHAWN GARVIN

Did you know that SOLA3 has received two Governor's OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER organization Awards and was listed among Delaware's top 50 eco-activists in *Delaware Today*.



LAKE GERAR IMPROVEMENTS DEFERRED FOR ADDITIONAL PLANNING

Stan Mills, Vice Chair, Rehoboth Beach Board of Commissioners

Last year it seemed that improvements to Lake Gerar might be on the horizon. However, after further discussion by the Rehoboth Beach Commissioners the authorization to initiate remediation of the southwest finger of Lake Gerar is on hold to allow for a more holistic “health screening” of the entire lake.

As a reminder, the original focus solely was on the SW finger of the lake – the section paralleling Olive Avenue and terminating at Cranberry Park (at Second Street). Observations that initiated investigation included diminished water depth; perceived change in water quality; questioned bank stability and perceived decreasing of the lake footprint.

Investigation by Envirotech found that organics are layered up to 52” in depth in this SW finger when last checked and the resultant bog was filling in this portion of the lake. Envirotech indicated that the organics were accumulating via vegetation falling into the lake from the surrounding tree canopy and via actions of some abutting property owners dumping organic materials lakeside or into the lake. Also unfiltered storm water pipes discharging silt from construction sites into the lake are contributors to this condition.

Envirotech’s recommended remediation is a two-step process. First, mechanically remove vegetation as well as the layered organics. Then dredge approximately 6,100 square feet of lake bottom to yield an estimated 800 cubic yards of sediment with such work to include reconstructing the lake shelf. The pricing estimate offered by Envirotech in June 2017 was in the neighborhood of \$50,000 plus a yet-to-be-determined cost for dewatering and disposal of the dredged spoils.

At this year’s City budget sessions it was questioned whether or not addressing only a small portion of Lake Gerar was doing justice to the entire lake. It was decided it would be prudent to postpone remediation of the SW finger until after a full study of the health needs of the entire lake is conducted.

But even with the deferment there is good news! The Commissioners initiated a line item specific to Lake Gerar health needs in the City’s 5-year capital improvement plan with anticipated funding in the 2019-2020 budget of \$53,000. The intention by the Commissioners is to build onto the original funding in future years to ensure sufficient funds for Lake Gerar improvements when ready.



Deplorable Conditions at West End of Lake Gerar

UPDATE ON BEACH WALK DEVELOPMENT

Sallie Forman

SOLA3's interest in this development is to assure that the strictest regulations are imposed on the developer to protect Silver Lake, the public, and the natural environment from potential environmental harm. Our joint letter with the Rehoboth Beach Home Owners Association stating this position was published in the *Cape Gazette* in November, 2016. (<http://www.capegazette.com/article/serious-concerns-raised-over-beach-walk/118931>.)

The developer of Beach Walk submitted to the Rehoboth Beach Planning Commission a site plan for a proposed 63 unit condominium complex, on 7.78 acres, adjoining route 1. (It is currently operated as Rehoboth Beach Plaza.) When asked by the Commission to submit it as subdivision site plan, he refused.

He then appealed the Planning Commission's position to the Rehoboth Board of Commissioners (BOC). In October, 2017, by a 3-2 vote, the BOC denied a motion by the Planning Commission to dismiss the appeal. In January, 2018, I organized a meeting with the leaders of the Rehoboth Citizens for Responsible Growth (RCRG) organization and The *Cape Gazette* Editorial Board to express community and environmental concerns about Beach



Walk. That meeting resulted in an editorial that said "The commissioners should heed public testimony, a petition with hundreds of signatures [over 1,000] and the views of safety officials, and stand behind their planning commission. Sending any other signal - particularly in light of the serious traffic and fire safety issues raised would be an irresponsible disservice to all the residents and property owners of the city."

The BOC held its meeting on the appeal January 26, 2018, with a standing room only crowd. I representing SOLA3, was among the many residents and RCRG leaders who spoke in opposition to the current site plan and asked that the BOC uphold the Planning Commission's decision. By a vote of 4-2, the BOC denied the developer's appeal and found that the development meets the subdivision code, and, in effect, upheld the Planning Commission's decision.

Subsequently the developer filed two lawsuits in the Delaware Superior Court, one against the Planning Commission (which was dismissed) and the other against the BOC on the basis that an ordinance passed by the BOC cannot be applied to Beach Walk retroactively.

Residents most affected by this development filed for intervener status, but it was denied by the presiding judge. If you would like more information about this development or would like to join RCRG efforts, please contact: pamcranston@gmail.com or neverett999@gmail.com.





SILVER LAKE DREDGING UPDATE

Charles E. Williams, DNREC Environmental Program Manager

The Sussex Conservation District completed the additional excavation work in Silver Lake the week of February 26. The work was designed to remove material along the upper east bank of the lake that was displaced during the initial dredging project. The displaced material was preventing several adjacent property owners from accessing the lake from their respective properties. All excavated material was placed in the previously constructed containment cell at the north end of Rehoboth's Stockley Street Park.

Staff from the Shoreline and Waterway Management Section will continue to monitor the containment cells for vegetation. Last year a healthy population of Bulrush had become established in both cells. If the Bulrush continues to flourish, no additional wetland vegetation will be planted in the cells. However, monitoring will continue to ensure any unwanted vegetation, such as Phragmites, does not become established in the containment areas.



New Shoreline and Dredged Chanel at West end of Silver Lake



KEEPING THE WILDLIFE WILD

Tom Childers, SOLA3 Board, Vice President

The lake was teeming. Turtles, who must have failed physics, were trying to occupy the same space at the same time, to grab the popcorn that several human children and their adults were tossing at them. A couple of carp joined the fray, under the footbridge at the west end of Silver Lake. About 10 feet away was a little sign that stated that feeding was not permitted.

I brought the story back to the SOLA3 Board, and we began a campaign to get serious signage about the dangers of feeding fauna posted around the City's lakes.

Campaigns can be endless, but this one didn't have much of a life span. I emailed City Manager Sharon Lynn in June about our interest. Before I knew it, I was sitting with Krys Johnson, the City's formidable communications director and learned that she was only days away from sending copy for a do-not-feed sign off to the sign makers. She shared all her thoughts and wisdom and drafts with me, and I shared SOLA3's interests with her.

By the end of December, **Keep Wildlife Wild** signs were going up. Currently, there are ten signs, on the shores of Lake Gerar, at the Silver Lake Wildlife Refuge, and at the footbridge over Silver Lake. They are of the "interpretive center" type. Wordy, they sketch out the perils of feeding wildlife and what the dominant wildlife—turtles, fish, waterfowl—like to feed on in nature—enough information to offer learnable/ teachable moments for parents and kids. Perhaps it will persuade them to keep their popcorn to themselves.

Ten signs have been installed so far. Through happy coincidence and happy collaboration, the Do Not Feed signs came to fruition in six months. The City and SOLA3 were both primed to get it done and just ... did it. SOLA3 paid for the signs; the City paid for installation. And on May 4, the City and SOLA3, in the presence of City and State officials and staff, the press, and SOLA3 board members, dedicated the signs.

Here's to longer, happier wild lives for our lakes' natural fauna!



Members of SOLA3 Board, joined by Speaker Schwartzkopf, Mayor Paul Kuhns, Commissioner Kathy McGuiness, Rehoboth Beach Staff and SOLA3 supporters for dedication

TOM CHILDERS BECOMES SOLA3 VICE PRESIDENT

The SOLA3 Board unanimously elected Tom Childers as their Vice President. He has served on the board for 8 years as a Director. In his professional life, Tom was a faculty member of Drexel University for 40 years, and sometime dean and associate dean of the College of Information, Science and Technology.

Tom and his spouse, John Hall, are residents of Rehoboth Beach, and own a lovely home adjoining Silver Lake. They were the first recipients of SOLA3's conservation award in 2009. Tom has led such successful SOLA3 projects as developing its strategic plan, partnering on behalf of SOLA3 with the City of Rehoboth on the "Do Not Feed Wildlife" sign, creating a data base to keep track of SOLA3's progress on activities and projects, and participating in the Rehoboth Elementary School workshops.

Tom stated that "involvement in the SOLA3 mission has always been rewarding, as we work with citizens and leaders of the region and state to improve three iconic lakes that are part of the essential landscape of the area."

Sallie Forman, President of SOLA3, said "Tom has been a vital and active board member. He will continue to be an important part of the board's collegial MO as we continue to advance SOLA3's mission. And, we are grateful that we will continue to enjoy his sharp wit and generous hospitality. Congratulations, Tom! "



Tom Childers

SOLA3 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sallie Forman, Founder/President (2016-19)

Tom Childers, Vice President (2018-21)

Diane Hanson, Secretary (2017-20)

Dan Payne, Treasurer (2015-18)

Charlie Browne, Director (2016-18)

Susan Gay, Director (2016-19)

Director (Vacant) - (2018-21)

Appointed Advisor - Mabel Granke

Appointed Advisor - Mike Boyd

SOLA3 is grateful for its partnership with the following organizations:

Rehoboth Beach HOA

Draper Subdivision

Lake Comegys HOA

2018 SOLA3 Newsletter

Edited and Produced by

Sallie Forman, Diane Hanson and Charlie Browne



THE PERFECT OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Jacque Kisiel, 5th grade science teacher, Rehoboth Beach Elementary School

Silver Lake is the perfect outdoor classroom for our budding young limnologists! Having just completed and presented their individual science fair projects, the 5th grade students of Rehoboth Elementary were ready for their next research question: Is Silver Lake's water quality healthy enough to support a large amount of macroinvertebrates?

Thanks to continued support from SOLA3 and under the direction of Todd Fritchman, president of Envirotech Environmental Consulting, Inc., a licensed, certified State of Delaware teacher of biological sciences, the students examined and compared macroinvertebrate samples from Silver Lake and compared those to a controlled sample from a Delaware state park.

Our students used their macroinvertebrate identification sheets and indicator lists to make informal assessments about the quality of their two freshwater samples. Overall, Silver Lake was lacking in large amounts of good water and fair water quality macroinvertebrates. On the other hand, the students concluded that the control sample from the other lake was more biodiverse, with numerous types and large amounts of macroinvertebrates that were intolerant to pollution. Therefore, the control sample had good water quality as compared to Silver Lake.

Our 5th grade students remarked at the end of the lesson that they feel honored to be stewards of Silver Lake. They have recorded their findings and are actively trying to find ways to maintain larger amounts of macroinvertebrates in this freshwater ecosystem by increasing buffer zones with native plants and finding ways to decrease the amount of sediment that flows into the waterway. Our students' mission going forward is to safeguard this outdoor classroom for the future classes at Rehoboth Elementary.

Editor's Note: SOLA3 thanks Ms. Kisiel, Mr. Fritchman, and the many volunteers who worked with the amazing students on this project. This program is designed to prepare our next generation of "EcoLeaders."



5th grade Rehoboth Elementary School class who participated in class, along with volunteers

SOLA3 GRANTS FOR LAKES IMPROVEMENT

Save Our Lakes Alliance 3 (SOLA3) will continue its lake improvement initiative announced last year into 2018 and 2019. Homeowners who have property bordering Lake Gerar, Silver Lake or Lake Comegys are eligible to apply for a cost-sharing grant to assist in making improvements that will benefit one or more of the lakes. Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Providing soil and sediment erosion control
- Improving overall water quality
- Improving the biological diversity of the lake ecosystem
- Using indigenous vegetation that is characteristic of the lakeside micro-climate
- Improving habitat
- Controlling and or eradication of exotic invasive species
- Controlling runoff
- Installing pervious surfaces
- Promoting environmental stewardship

Maybe you have been considering removing the reedy phragmites that are spreading along the edge of the lake or working with a professional to add an environmentally engineered riparian buffer. Or perhaps you would like to replace a paved driveway with a surface that allows water to percolate through instead of running off into the lake. Such projects may be eligible for a SOLA3 grant.

We are making a total of \$3000 available annually to support one or more cost-sharing lake improvement projects. If an application is accepted for funding by SOLA3, then, at the successful completion of the project, we will reimburse the recipients 50% of their documented out-of-pocket costs. For example, if the total cost of the project is \$6,000 or more, SOLA3 will award \$3,000; or if the total cost of the project is \$1,500, SOLA3 will award \$750.

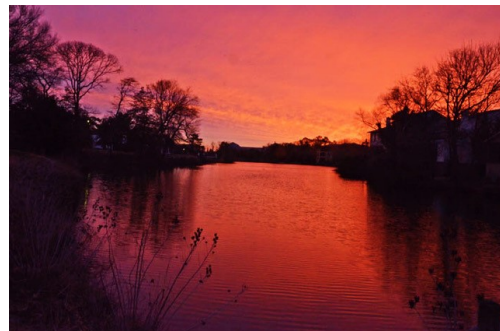
For 2018, applications must be received by September 30, 2018. Winners will be notified no later than October 31, and sooner, where feasible. Projects are required to be completed by December 31, 2018. For grants in 2019, the deadline for submitting applications is March 31. Winners will be notified no later than April 30 and the project must be completed by October 31.

If you would like to apply for the 2018 or 2019 grants, go to our Website at www.SOLA3.org and download the application under the Grant tab, and indicate for which year you are applying. You may mail it to the address on the form or email to Saveourlakes3@aol.com.

This is a unique opportunity to receive financial assistance to improve your property and also improve the health of the lakes. So don't wait – ACT NOW!



A beautiful shoreline created with a riparian buffer at Lake Comegys



The lake at dusk

HELP SOLVE THIS MYSTERY

John H. Fillmore

The photograph below was digitally reproduced from an old glass negative. Scrawled into the emulsion of the negative left of center at the bottom are the words "Lily Lake," while to the right can be seen "S. Rehoboth." Could this be the body of water we know today as Silver Lake?

Warren H. MacDonald's "History of Rehoboth's Freshwater Lakes" notes that Silver Lake went through a variety of names since Europeans settled the area around Rehoboth, but oddly, the name Lily Lake was not among them.

Back in the early 1990's I purchased a box of glass plate negatives at auction. Their condition was such that it would have been nearly impossible to get good print using traditional photographic printing methods and the digitizing equipment I had at the time would scarcely have yielded better results. I set the plates aside for another day.

When I finally retired from teaching last year I realized I had the time to revisit many projects I had put away years before, and the glass plate negatives again piqued my interest. The paper sleeves protecting the plates date the images as having been taken on July 20th, 1891. State archives has identified the photographer as Clarence D. Sypherd of Dover (1864-1926). He was a Dover pharmacist, state representative, and First Lieutenant/Paymaster in the First Delaware Regiment during the Spanish-American War.

If you are able to provide any information about this photo, please send an email to SaveOurLakes3@aol.com, who will forward it to me.



Editor's Note: Mr. Fillmore, a native Delawarean, has had a lifelong fascination with history. He has contributed a number of articles on Delaware history for *Delaware Today* magazine and currently operates a photo restoration service utilizing digital imaging technologies.



IN APPRECIATION OF STEVE ELKINS

Sallie Forman

Save Our Lakes Alliance 3 joins the community in mourning the passing of Steve Elkins, co-founder of Camp Rehoboth. As many know, Steve's interests and involvement with the Rehoboth community went beyond the doors of Camp Rehoboth. On first meeting with Steve, he gave great advice about how to create and run a non-profit in a small community, very different from our respective high-level careers in Washington and New York.

We talked about how he started Camp Rehoboth, its initial challenges, and how he overcame those by acceptance, inclusiveness and reaching out to so many segments of the community, interspersed with personal stories and his robust sense of humor.

Subsequently, when SOLA3 needed a space to host an event, on very short notice, Steve showed his big heart and generosity by allowing us to use Camp Rehoboth, free of charge.

The very best tribute to a life well lived was the Celebration of Steve's life, on April 9, with hundreds of people, from all walks of life, overflowing into rooms adjoining the sanctuary at Epworth United Methodist Church. Friends, family and dignitaries expressed their great love, admiration, memories and sense of loss. There were standing ovations throughout the speaking and beautiful choir music, and they were all for Steve.

I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to know Steve and to benefit from his infinite wisdom and caring. The John Archibald quote in the celebration program... "He could make it better because he had been there..." is so true.



NEW SOLA3 WEBSITE COMING SOON!

Susan Gay

SOLA3 will have a new Website! We are redesigning our site so we can bring you more news in a more timely fashion. This newsletter and past newsletters will be online, along with detailed information about our programs and initiatives, complete with photos of SOLA3 at work. Each of us can play a vital role in saving the lakes that are so important to the Rehoboth and Dewey Beach area and we'll include information on all the ways you can do that on the new site. The site will be updated throughout the year to bring you breaking news concerning the lakes as it happens. Our domain name won't change – the site will still be www.sola3.org. Look for it later this fall.