

TENTH
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE

SOLA3

S A V E O U R L A K E S

Founded in 2004 to Preserve, Protect and Maintain Silver Lake, Lake Gerar and Lake Comegys in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

**“Perhaps the
truth depends
on a walk
around the lake.**

WallaceStevens —
American poet



This year, Save Our Lakes Alliance3 (SOLA3) will proudly celebrate its 10th anniversary. Much has been accomplished in these ten years. If you walked around our “Rehoboth Lakes” ten years ago, even unskilled eyes would see three lakes suffering from benign neglect and environmental damage. Now, if you took that walk, you would see that Lake Comegy’s shoreline has a new conservation easement to protect it from development and run off. Lake Gerar has a beautiful, natural riparian buffer, and geese no longer pollute the water. Silver Lake has benefited from extensive shoreline restoration. And you’ll see that private property owners, who value their environment, have also constructed natural riparian buffers to protect the shoreline and create natural habitat for wildlife. But this is only part of the truth on the real condition of the lakes.

When SOLA3 organized in 2004, its first big activity was a rally in May, attended by more than 100 citizens, along with state and local officials, concerned about the lakes’ condition and over development. My comments are as true today as they were then: “We want to be advocates for the lakes and work hand in hand with the government. We want to make this a very citizens-oriented group. We want you to be a partner with us...”

That partnership over the last ten years has been critical to what we have achieved together (highlighted on page 2-3). Key players in that partnership are: House Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf and retired Senator George Bunting, Delaware’s Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and Department of Transportation, officials of The City of Rehoboth Beach, area homeowners’ associations, the media, and the individuals who have provided financial support as well as volunteering their time. Thank you all for working with SOLA3 toward our shared responsibility to improve our lakes. (See President’s Letter page 2.)

SAVE THE DATE!

SOLA TENTH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION

Governor Jack Markell and
Mrs. Markell Honorary Chairs

Mark your calendar for Saturday, August 16, 5:30 - 7:30 pm for our amazing celebration at a beautiful ocean front home in Rehoboth, featuring food from the area’s top restaurants. Invitations will be sent by mid-July, and the event is limited to the first 100 people who respond. This will be our first BIG fundraiser so we ask you to be generous in your response. Questions can be directed to saveourlakes3@aol.com. See other special 10th anniversary activities page 4.

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President's letter continued:

Because of SOLA3's efforts, in 2012 the Solicitor for the State of Delaware declared that the State owns Silver Lake and Lake Comegys, which brings us to a new phase of activity with DNREC, the agency responsible for managing these lakes.

In your walk around Silver Lake today, the full truth reveals an environment that has been neglected for decades. Urban runoff from throughout the City of Rehoboth's watershed is the major source of pollution flowing into the lake from many storm drains. Erosion is a major concern. Finding a satisfactory and affordable method to remove sediment from the west end of the lake is a priority. Removing sediment that comes from the large storm drain at the corner of Queen Street and King Charles Ave., where the water level is barely a couple inches deep, is added to the list.

Testy McTesterson, an American author, said "People protect what they love." I think its safe to say we love our iconic lakes, but that is not enough. We must have the will and find the resources to manage and protect them as well.

Now, on to our exciting anniversary celebrations. Governor Jack Markell and Mrs. Markell will be the honorary chairs for our August 16 party, which you won't want to miss. When you receive the invitation, sign up early, as attendance is limited to 100. Our board and celebration committee are hard at work to make this a memorable event, as well as focusing on special tributes to the lakes. (See "Special 10th Anniversary Activities" at right.)

My final but most heartfelt comment is directed to all who have served on our board and our advisors. Everything we have done can be attributed to your hard work and commitment. It has been my pleasure and honor to work with you and I thank you for your time and talent given to SOLA3. We look forward to beginning our next decade with the promise that we, along with our partners and supporters, will leave an environmental legacy that will be appreciated by future generations in their walks around the lakes.



Delaware Chief Deputy Atty. General Ian McConnell, 3rd from left, who wrote the decision on state ownership of the lakes, with SOLA attorney Gene Lawson, Sallie Forman and SOLA Director Toni Sharp.

Special 10th Anniversary Activities

We would like to thank the following restaurants for providing the food for our August 16 celebration: @Muse, Back Porch Cafe, Baywood, Bethany Blues, Blue Moon, Cafe Azafran, Cultured Pearl, Dos Locos, Eden, Hobos, Mariachi, Nage and Saketumi.



This new sign has been installed designating Silver Lake as a "State Bird Refuge." This designation was made by a law passed in 1934 by Delaware's General Assembly.

In conjunction with our 10th anniversary, we have been working with the Delaware Public Archives on a historical marker commemorating the importance of Silver Lake and Lake Comegys to the state. The marker is being sponsored by Speaker of the House Pete Schwartzkopf. It will be placed close to the State sign above. The dedication will take place at a special ceremony to include state and local officials, "Friends of SOLA3" and the public.

We are partnering with DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife and the Sussex Bird Club to create an interpretive bird ID sign at Silver Lake, similar to the one that has been installed at Gordon's Pond. Residents and visitors alike stop year-round to view the variety of birds that are either native or migratory. The sign will be a great resource in identifying the birds.

We are in discussions with the Rehoboth Beach Historical Society to create an exhibit focusing on Rehoboth's three lakes. Warren MacDonald left a great resource to the Society in the many files he created from his research on the history and significance of the lakes. Rehoboth lakes are unique, and we believe there is great public interest in showcasing them in a special exhibit.

Highlights of SOLA's Achievements

2004 Ten Years of Service

- Organized as a 501 (c) 3.
- Created alliances with other organizations.
- Overturned Sussex County rezoning that would have allowed building into Lake Comegys.
- Delaware Assembly adopted concurrent resolution recognizing the lakes as "natural treasures," important to the character, history and ambiance of the community.

2005

- Multi-faceted environmental improvement project begun at Lake Gerar.
- New spillway installed by DNREC at Silver Lake.
- DNREC begins regular testing of lakes' water.

2006

- First SOLA annual lakes' clean-up.
- Dale Sheldon created new SOLA3 logo and Web site goes up.
- Sponsored first community educational workshop.
- Sen. Bunting & Rep. Schwartzkopf receive SOLA3 awards.
- Co-sponsored Upward Bound students' project to use GPS system to locate discharge points in Silver Lake and Lake Gerar.

2007

- DELDOT agreed to convert a former right-of-way around Lake Comegys to a conservation easement.
- Provided environmental expertise to protect Silver Lake from a development along its shoreline, which became a condition for approval by the Rehoboth Planning Commission.

2008

- Received Governor's Award as the environmental organization for outstanding volunteer service .
- Contributed to the cost of DNREC testing water for toxins at the finger of Silver Lake.
- Sponsored forum for Silver Lake homeowners to enlist their help to improve ecology of the lake.

2009

- Presented first Conservation Award to Tom Childers and John Hall.
- SOLA3 named one of Delaware's Top 50 "Eco Activists" "by *Delaware Today*.
- Underwrote first annual environmental educational program for 5th grade students at Rehoboth Elementary School.



Clockwise from above: left: Robin Tyler, DNREC, and Mayor Sam Cooper testing Silver Lake water; SOLA's first annual lakes' clean-up; Shwartzkopf and Bunting accept SOLA awards in 2006; first Conservation Award winners Tom Childers and John Hall; Rehoboth Elementary 5th graders at SOLA workshop; Lake Gerar shows off her restored shoreline; Upward Bound students on Silver Lake.

Highlights of ten years continued:

2010

- Meeting with SOLA3, DNREC Secretary Collin O'Mara promised the sediment removal project at the west end of Silver Lake would be a DNREC priority.
- City of Rehoboth installed two stormceptors in storm drains at Stockley and Laurel Streets that flow into Silver Lake.
- Identified 425 feet of highly eroded shoreline and roadway along Silver Lake, owned by the City of Rehoboth, which was then restored.
- Recruited Rehoboth Brownie Troop to participate in fifth annual lakes' clean up.
- Granted City of Rehoboth the 2010 Conservation Award.



Left: Storm drain at Stockley Street where one of two stormceptors was installed.



Right: 425 feet of restored shoreline and roadway along Silver Lake.

2011

- Led year-long opposition to home constructed on Silver Lake's shoreline with no set back from the lake.
- Granted 2011 Conservation Award to Gaspards.



Above: The house on Silver Lane which SOLA3 tried to curtail.

2012

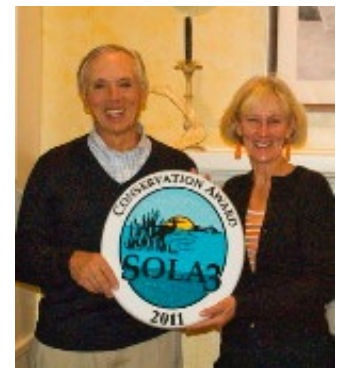
- Based on research provided by SOLA3, Delaware's Solicitor declared that the State of Delaware owns Silver Lake and Lake Comegys and that DNREC is the agency responsible for managing these lakes.
- Sallie Forman, Founder and President of SOLA3, received the Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Leadership Award for the Environment.
- Conservation Award granted to Lake Comegys Association of Owners.



Left: Sallie Forman accepts Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Award 2012.

2013

- Rehoboth adopted ordinance that establishes a 10 foot (SOLA3 had advocated 15 feet) no-build buffer for lakefront properties within the city.
- Sponsored successful public workshop with Speaker of the House Pete Schwartzkopf delivering keynote and DNREC's David Small and Frank Piorko addressing lakes' management plan.



Above left to right: DNREC's Frank Piorko at SOLA workshop; Mayor Sam Cooper accepts 2010 Conservation Award for the City of Rehoboth Beach; Tom and Mary Ellen Gaspard accept the 2011 Conservation Award.

SOLA3 Holds Workshop on Lakes

On June 8, 2013, SOLA3 sponsored a well-attended workshop on the Rehoboth lakes - the perils and promise of their future. Rep. Pete Schwartzkopf, who represents the Rehoboth area and is speaker of the Delaware House, was the keynote speaker. He thanked SOLA3 for its hard work over the last decade to save the lakes, and he recognized that the organization has accomplished much in providing the research that led the State of Delaware to agree that they did indeed own Silver Lake and Lake Comegys.

Todd Fritchman, President of Envirotech gave an ecological report card on the health of the lakes. Rehoboth Beach Commissioner Patrick Gossett talked about actions the city has taken or will take to protect Silver Lake. Sally Boswell, Education Outreach Coordinator for the Inland Bays, discussed practical steps we all can take to improve the lakes.



Representative Pete Schwartzkopf keynotes SOLA workshop.

David Small, DNREC Deputy Secretary, and Frank Piorko, Director, Division of Watershed Stewardship confirmed that the State owns Silver Lake and Lake Comegys. They announced they would conduct a workshop in August for lake front property owners to review claims of ownership, lake access and DELDOT right-of-way. DNREC's Fish and Wildlife division will likely assume responsibility for lakes.

Silver Lake Sediment Removal Project

Frank M. Piorko, Division Director DNREC Division of Watershed Stewardship, provided the following update:

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) is investigating an alternative project to resolve sediment deposition issues at Silver Lake Rehoboth at the westerly finger of the lake. Originally designed as a dredging project with upland disposal temporarily taking place on school property, the project was bid last year. Only one bid was submitted, and it greatly exceeded the project estimate and budget.



Sediment at west end of Silver Lake.

DNREC began exploring alternates over the winter to more effectively manage the sediments in the finger of the lake as a littoral bench or shelf, moving sediment around the unpopulated portion of the lake edge as a means to build a wetland feature to the lake. We have had a scoping meeting on-site with ecological consultants Biohabitats, and they are preparing to have a geotechnical subcontractor explore the feasibility of the sediment for this beneficial use.

Call for Conservation Award Entries

In 2009 SOLA3 inaugurated a Conservation Award to recognize individuals, civic organizations, governments or government agencies that have been exemplary in enhancing the health of Lake Gerar, Silver Lake and Lake Comegys. The deadline for applications for the 2014 award is August 1, 2014. Criteria, application form and other information can be found at www.sola3.org

Tenth Anniversary Tributes to SOLA3

Save Our Lakes Alliance 3 has been a tremendous asset to our community and our environment. We need groups like SOLA3 as a voice in the community educating the public about the importance of preserving our freshwater lakes and the dangers of not taking action. Your advocacy and hard work were instrumental in getting the State of Delaware to take ownership of Silver Lake and Lake Comegys, which is a huge accomplishment. Congratulations on your 10th anniversary, and my best wishes for another successful 10 years. **House Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf, 14th District**

Save Our Lakes Alliance 3 is an amazing organization, made up of caring and capable people who, over the course of the last decade, have done so much to protect the natural beauty and health of Lake Comegys, Lake Gerar and Silver Lake. On behalf of my colleagues in the Delaware State Senate, I am honored to congratulate this wonderful group as they celebrate this tremendous milestone. Warm regards as always, **Dr. Ernesto B. "Ernie" Lopez, Delaware State Senate**

Congratulations to SOLA3 on its tenth anniversary and for its commitment to the preservation and enhancement of the Rehoboth lakes. Engaged citizens such as the leadership and members of SOLA3 are often the foundation of and catalyst for real and lasting change. The organization has raised awareness of the challenges facing these unique waterways and has prompted our agency to begin planning for more active management of Silver Lake. We applaud your efforts and look forward to a continuing and successful partnership. **David Small, Deputy Director DE Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control**

[Editor's note: Small has been nominated by Gov. Markell to succeed Collin O'Mara as Secretary of DNREC, a Cabinet post]

On behalf of the City of Rehoboth Beach I congratulate Save Our Lakes Alliance 3 on this, your tenth anniversary. SOLA3 has more than proven to be an effective advocate for the areas three lakes, Silver Lake, Lake Comegys and Lake Gerar. Your continued vigilance and involvement is important to the health of these lakes, which are such an important feature of our local, natural environment.

Sam Cooper, Mayor, Rehoboth Beach

I've been a supporter of Save our Lakes Alliance 3 because they have helped preserve and maintain our fresh water lakes that are prized jewels in our area. They have provided environmental education and research through water testing, workshops, exhibits, and a website and newsletter. Their annual clean-up has helped remove all sorts of debris from the lakes, improving the appearance and water quality. They have

now survived the test of time. I congratulate them on their 10 years of accomplishments. **Diane Hanson, Mayor of Dewey Beach**

Congratulations and thank you to SOLA3 on your ten years of stewardship of Rehoboth's lakes! You can be proud of your pioneering efforts that provided leadership sorely needed to assure and maintain the conditions of these freshwater lakes. Draper Subdivision Association residents have the honor and privilege of living on Silver Lake and taking advantage of its beauty. We have benefitted from all that SOLA3 has done over ten years. Your success in bringing the lakes to the attention of our public officials has been much needed and appreciated. Without your leadership and outreach the future of these treasured resources would not be as promising as it is today. **Bryn Burke President Draper Subdivision Association** [editor's note: Bryn was SOLA3's first secretary]

The Lake Comegys Association of Owners was proud to partner with SOLA3 to convince the Delaware Department of Transportation to convert its former right-of-way around Lake Comegys to a conservation easement. The easement will protect the lake's shoreline from development, runoff and provide a habitat for wildlife. Our association gratefully received SOLA3's 2012 Conservation Award for creating our own natural riparian buffer along our Lake Comegys shoreline. We offer our sincerest congratulations to SOLA3 on its tenth anniversary for its dedication to improving our three Rehoboth Lakes and we wish them every success in the coming years. **Tony Burns, President, Lake Comegys Association of Owners**

Joan O'Toole, project manager, and Lake Comegys HOA President Tony Burns accept 2012 Conservation Award



The Rehoboth Beach Homeowners' Association is delighted to congratulate SOLA3 on its 10th anniversary. SOLA3 with its unique mission of protecting and promoting our lakes is one of Rehoboth's great assets. Our lakes, SOLA3's raison d'être, are delightful gems, enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. RBHA is pleased to have both worked with and financially supported SOLA3 in its mission as we share a common goal of preserving our town's watery gems. We look forward to continuing our great partnership with SOLA3 for the next 10 years. **Charlie Brown, President, Rehoboth Beach Homeowners' Association**

What SOLA Means to Us – Tributes from the Board of Directors

“As an original Board member of SOLA3, I have seen many of our early objectives realized and others now well within striking distance. I am grateful for the ongoing support of the Friends of SOLA3, who make our work possible, and pledge to you, our supporters, that we will continue to work for the improvement of Silver Lake, Lake Comegys, and Lake Gerar, our three ‘natural treasures.’” Mike Boyle, Vice President

“Our community – residents and visitors alike – recognize our “Rehoboth Lakes” as special and unique features to our environment. Under the direction of Founder and President Sallie Forman, SOLA3 has provided the leadership to improve the lakes and educate the public on best environmental practices.” Toni Sharp, Secretary

“Being part of a collaborative effort to restore and protect these very unique lakes has been rewarding. The energies of homeowners, state and city officials and our fine board have been very gratifying.” Dr. Dan Payne, Treasurer

“SOLA3’s key achievement has been to usher Rehoboth’s lakes out of decades of confused management into a new era of avowed governmental stewardship.” Dr. Tom Childers, Director

“Working with our board on SOLA3 means smiling every time I see Silver Lake and knowing that it will be there shining for all of us for many years to come.” Nancy Cullen, Director



SOLA3 Board of Directors

Left to right: Toni Sharp, secretary, Tom Childers, director and webmaster, Sallie H. Forman, founder and president, Nancy Cullen, director and newsletter editor, Mike Boyd, vice president and Dan Payne, treasurer.

SOLA Works with Rehoboth Elementary Students on Water Quality

For the past five years, SOLA3 has sponsored a hands-on, inquiry-based water quality workshop for the two 5th grade classes at Rehoboth Beach Elementary School.



The school is located on the banks of Silver Lake, where the workshop takes place each fall. It is supervised by fifth grade teacher Jacquie Kissiel under the direction of environmental scientist Todd Fritchman. Students count organisms sampled from an unidentified healthy lake and Silver Lake, assess their data and determine which water body is the most healthy and why. Silver Lake has continued to show poor water quality over the years.

Birds and Birding at Silver Lake

By Christopher Bennett - Vice President - Sussex Bird Club

Along Delaware's Atlantic coast there are several birding hotspots that draw flocks of birders. The point at Cape Henlopen and Indian River Inlet are two of the better known. But Silver Lake is legendary among birders from Delaware and beyond as the site to see wintering Canvasbacks in the mid-Atlantic. (See photo).

From spring through fall the birdlife that can be seen at Silver Lake is somewhat limited. A few resident Mallards and Canada Geese can be found just about any time. Laughing, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls often visit the lake to get a drink of freshwater or to bathe. A few Double-crested Cormorants, large dark birds with hooked bills, may also loaf around the lake's edge on snags and docks or be seen swimming and diving in the lake. In and around the woody vegetation on the lake's edges you may see a variety of common song birds including American Robins, Gray Catbirds, Common Grackles and with luck, a tiny black-masked yellow-breasted bird called a Common Yellowthroat.



Great Black-backed Gull, left and Common Yellowthroat.

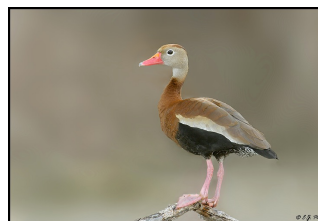
When November rolls around bird activity on Silver Lake picks up appreciably. The flocks of Mallards and Canada Geese grow exponentially with the arrival of additional local birds and migrants from Canada. It is not unusual to find hundreds of mallards loafing around the northern end of the lake. Mixed in, birders often also find a variety of other ducks including American Black Duck, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon and Green-winged Teal.

But the star of the winter show at Silver Lake is the Canvasback, a large stately-looking diving duck. Males have a reddish neck and head, black breast, white flanks and a relatively large, gently sloped black bill. The female's plumage is a pale imitation of the male. It is not unusual for the Canvasback flock on the lake to exceed 800 individuals.



Canvasbacks are nocturnal feeders. They do not feed at Silver Lake. At or around dusk they leave the lake and head to the Inland Bays to feed on submerged aquatic vegetation by diving to the bottom. Tiny, stiff-tailed Ruddy Ducks can also usually be seen in numbers rivaling the Canvasbacks. By scanning through the rafts of "Cans" and Ruddys birders will often spot other diving ducks including Greater and Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers. The Redhead is another sought after diving duck that can sometimes be spotted among the Canvasbacks. Male Redheads also have red heads, but their bills are blue with a black tip and the flanks are gray rather than white.

Really lucky birders may find an unexpected gem among the throngs of ducks and geese on the lake. The Cackling Goose, a mallard-sized version of the Canada Goose, occasionally associates with its larger cousin. Several years ago, birders flocked to Silver Lake to see the Black-bellied Whistling Duck, a striking rare southern species, which spent most of the winter hanging out with the large flock of Mallards.



Black-bellied Whistling Duck

In the late 1990s a male Tufted Duck, a Eurasian diving duck with a large feather tuft on the top of its head also spent a few weeks on the lake. When the ice has melted and temperatures begin to warm in March and early April the ducks head back north, the attraction to birders wanes and the Lake once again is left to the locals, both avian and human.

**Thank You Former
Board of Directors
Members and
Advisors!!**

**Former SOLA3 Board
Members**

Ernie Sando, Treasurer
Mark Aguirre, Director
Bryn Burke, Secretary
Pricilla Smith, Treasurer
Joan LeLacheur, Director
Tom Zellers, Director
Peggy Paterson, Treasurer
Peggy Douglas, Secretary
Barry Brandt, Director
Peggy Waltersdorf, Director

Advisors

Mable Granke
Mary Campbell
Barry Brandt
Joan LeLecheur

**Thanks to our Alliance
Members**

Rehoboth Beach Home
Owners' Association
Lake Comegys Home
Owners' Association
Draper Subdivision Home
Owners' Association



Lake Comegys at sunrise and a very large turtle who makes its home there. Photos by Peggy Douglas.



Look for our Lakes Clean Up scheduling announcement for a date in September, and come out for some good, clean fun. Meanwhile - here is a link to an article on our SOLA3 web site on how to use environmentally sound practices on your yard.

<http://www.sola3.org/join-us/how-you-can-help.html>

Join Our 10th Birthday Celebration with a Special Gift

You've seen highlights of our impressive list of accomplishments over the past ten years (page 3/4) that were only possible through the generosity of "Friends of SOLA3" and our dedicated volunteers. SOLA3 is the only organization with a mission to maintain and protect our irreplaceable Rehoboth Lakes. As we begin our next decade, we ask that you upgrade your gift this year as a special way of recognizing and celebrating our 10th birthday. In return, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that your renewed commitment will provide the necessary resources to assure an improved lakes' environment for the next generation.

As a Friend of SOLA3, you receive our newsletters, reminders of activities and volunteer opportunities, and invitations to special events. Thank you for your valued and continuing support.

Use the form on the back of this page to become a new SOLA3 Friend or to renew. SOLA3 is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization. Your contribution is tax-deductible according to IRS regulations.

FRIEND OF SAVE OUR LAKES ALLIANCE3**www.SOLA3.org**

SOLA3 is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization incorporated in Delaware. Please help ensure that Rehoboth's three unique, cherished lakes will be preserved and protected for future generations by becoming a Friend of SOLA3 at one of the following tax-deductible levels:



<u>Level</u>	<u>Contribution</u>
Eagle	\$ 500 and above
Heron	300 to 499
Osprey	101 to 299
Mallard	50 to 100
Plover	25 to 49
Sandpiper	10 to 24

Please make your check payable to SOLA3, complete the form below, and send to **PO Box 1504, Rehoboth Beach, DE, 19971**. Thank you for your generous support.

Name _____ Phone No. _____

Address _____

Beach address if different than mailing address _____

Email _____

Send Newsletter and other announcements to my email address _____

Contact me about volunteering on a committee:

Lake Clean Up _____ Coast Day _____ Outreach _____

Fundraising _____ Membership _____ Newsletter _____

Water testing _____ Communications _____ Other interests _____

Please provide your current email address. We promise not to overwhelm you with messages and will only use when there is time-sensitive, important information.