



Photo by Peggy Douglas

Note from the President

Rick Hardy, President



SOLA3 is launching into 2025 with energy and purpose, setting the stage for a dynamic and impactful year ahead! We have been taking the opportunity to meet and develop relationships with our newly elected officials and other partners. We wanted to make them aware of SOLA3’s mission and some of our current challenges so that we can start working together quickly. But I must say as the new President of SOLA3, I have some big shoes to fill in replacing our previous president, Sallie Forman. With her 20 years of experience and connections, there is a lot to

learn and many things to focus on. But I can honestly say that the Board and SOLA3 Friends are focused on continuing our mission.... **Dedicated to protecting, preserving and maintaining three freshwater lakes -- Silver Lake, Lake Comegys and Lake Gerar.** I would like to thank you for your support as we continue to deliver on our mission. It’s not possible without you!!

Here’s what we’ve been focused on so far in 2025.



Silver Lake Property —You may remember this was the site where the owner added fill dirt along the southwestern edge of Silver Lake. SOLA3 and neighbors took an active role in bringing county and state officials together to address this issue. Sussex County later required the removal of the fill and the regrading of the area. However, the destruction of the habitat and environment still remains. We are currently working with State Officials to address ownership of the property

Silver Lake Shoreline Restoration – SOLA3 collaborated with the City of Rehoboth to address shoreline erosion near the Silver Lake bridge, where the shoreline was encroaching into the lake. Special thanks go to Henry Matlosz, Public Works Director, for leading efforts to repair the shoreline and mitigate erosion. Shoreline erosion remains a significant concern, as it can gradually fill the lake and lead to severe environmental challenges



Storm drains from Route 1

Restoration of Lake Comegys - The western end of Lake Comegys is gradually filling in due to two large storm drains depositing silt and debris from Route 1 and the surrounding neighborhood. Over the years, the water depth has decreased dramatically, resulting in the formation of islands along the shorelines. Last year, we identified Lake Comegys as having some of the lowest dissolved oxygen levels among all the lakes, which poses significant risks to fish and vegetation. This issue may stem from the shallower water and rising temperatures. Additionally, we've observed an increase in algae blooms in this part of the lake. SOLA3 has been actively engaging with State and Local officials to address these challenges and improve the lake's health, with meetings finally scheduled for May!



Vegetation growing in sediment deposits



Children's Fishing Pier – We have been evaluating the plans for the new VIA Children's Fishing Pier and shared our concerns at the January City Commissioner meeting. The initial design featured a 42-foot-wide octagon located at the center of Lake Gerar near the bridge—so large that two Hummers could fit end-to-end without reaching the edges. Following this meeting, we met with the VIA to discuss our concerns, and they presented several scaled-down proposals at the City Commissioners meeting on April 7, 2025. We remain committed to collaborating with the City and VIA to address environmental impacts and preserve the natural beauty of Lake Gerar. Click below to explore the latest VIA Children's Fishing Pier proposals and the news coverage:

[Pier at Rehoboth's Lake Gerar staying rectangular](#)

[Concerns raised over fixing Lake Gerar's fishing pier](#)

Dark Skies - The Dark Skies initiative is a global effort to combat light pollution and its harmful effects on wildlife, ecosystems, and human health. By reducing artificial light at night, this initiative aims to preserve the natural darkness of the night sky, which is essential for many species and ecological processes.

For migrating birds, natural darkness is critical, as they rely on celestial cues like the moon and stars for navigation. Artificial light can disorient them, leading to collisions with buildings or exhaustion from circling illuminated areas. The initiative also benefits other nocturnal wildlife, such as sea turtles, whose hatchlings can be misled by artificial lights, and amphibians, whose behaviors are disrupted by excessive lighting.

Organizations like the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) work to raise awareness, promote responsible outdoor lighting, and advocate for policies that protect dark skies. Efforts include encouraging communities to use shielded lighting, reducing unnecessary outdoor illumination, and adopting warmer-toned lights that minimize skyglow.

Beyond wildlife, the initiative also enhances human experiences by restoring the beauty of star-filled skies and supporting activities like stargazing and astronomy. It even contributes to energy conservation by reducing excessive lighting.

Our Board member, Jan Konesey, is working with a group of Rehoboth residents who have been trying to implement a Dark Sky initiative in the City of Rehoboth Beach for a few years. They will be making a presentation to the Mayor and Commissioners at the June 9th workshop on the benefits of Rehoboth Beach becoming a Dark Sky Compliant town. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Jan at jkonesey@gmail.com.

Freshwater Turtles

by Taralee Morgan

Silver Lake is well known as a bird sanctuary. Several avian species make their homes in the area, including ducks, owls, herons, and gulls. The lake is also home to numerous types of turtles. If you haven't been to Turtle Foot Bridge, a footbridge that connects the Rehoboth Beach Elementary School area to Stockley Street Park, it is a great place to observe many of the lake's turtle inhabitants. In 2018, SOLA donated signs around the lakes requesting that visitors refrain from feeding the turtles and birds and lists their natural diets. According to the signs, turtles prefer eating macroinvertebrates, smaller animals, and water plants.

The Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife is currently developing the first-ever Delaware Amphibian and Reptile Atlas. Residents and visitors can help by submitting photographs and locations of the reptiles and amphibians (a.k.a. "herps") they encounter in the state to herpmapper.org. Experts will review the photographs and identify the species. Below are the freshwater turtles you might see around Silver Lake.

Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta*)

The painted turtle lives among slow-moving fresh waters. As the most widespread turtle in North America, its territory stretches throughout the continental United States, from southern Canada to northern Mexico and from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans. It is one of the few turtle species that can withstand temperatures below freezing due to special chemicals in its blood that prevent its cells from freezing. The painted turtle is 5-9 inches long with a smooth dark shell. Its skin ranges from olive to black and has red, orange, or yellow stripes on its arms and legs.



Spotted Turtle (*Clemmys guttata*)



The spotted turtle is small, growing to only 3-5 inches long in adulthood. Its dark shell and skull are covered with tiny yellow round spots. Mature males have dark irises while females have yellow or orange irises. They can be found in freshwater areas from southern Canada to the eastern United States and from the eastern Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. Spotted turtles burrow in summer and winter. Spotted turtles can live 65 to 110 years. They are omnivores that eat insects, amphibians, and fish as well as plants and algae.

FRESHWATER Turtles- Continued

Northern Red-Bellied Cooter (*Pseudemys rubriventris*)



At 12-15 inches in length and nearly 7 pounds, the northern red-bellied turtle is the largest basking turtle along the Chesapeake Bay. It makes its home along the coastal areas of the United States, from New Jersey to North Carolina. Although the species is considered endangered, it is making a comeback in some areas. Its shell ranges in color from olive-brown to nearly black and has a forked red vertical line. The shell's mottling can be red, yellow, or dark olive. Its limbs are black with yellow stripes. They are omnivores as juveniles and herbivores in adulthood.

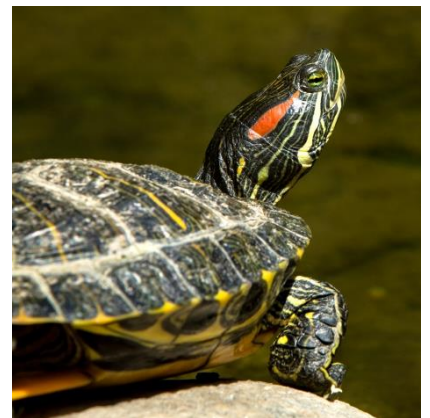
Common Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)



The common snapping turtle is found from southeastern Canada to Florida and east of the Rocky Mountains. At nearly 20 inches long and weighing over 30 pounds, this turtle holds the title of Delaware's largest freshwater species. Its ridged shell varies in color from tan, brown, and black. The turtle has a powerful beak-like jaw that is complemented by an aggressive disposition. They are omnivores whose diet includes plants, fruits, fish, insects, frogs, snakes, small mammals, and birds.

Red Eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*)

The red eared slider is the most popular pet turtle in the United States. It is also the most traded and most invasive turtle in the world. A native of the Midwest and northern Mexico, its territory has expanded throughout the United States because of pet release. The turtle is named for the red patch on both sides of its head. Its skin and shell are dark green, olive, or brown with yellow and black lines. The bottom of its shell is yellow with black splotches. Adults measure 5 to 12 inches in length with females larger than the males. They prefer to live in freshwater environments containing soft bottoms where they can feed on aquatic vegetation, small fish, and decaying materials.





Volunteering is far more than a feel-good endeavor—it is the cornerstone of community growth and transformation. It fosters a profound sense of unity, belonging, and shared responsibility. When individuals join forces, they pool their talents, resources, and collective vision, creating a powerful synergy. This collaborative spirit not only strengthens the community but also drives meaningful and lasting progress toward positive change.

SOLA3 is calling on you to join us in our mission to improve the environment around Rehoboth's lakes. We're actively seeking volunteers to contribute their time and skills across multiple areas, including:

Water Quality Testing Continues....

Our weekly water quality testing for Silver Lake, Lake Comegys, and Lake Gerar is about to begin. Testing occurs every Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. and typically takes around 1.5 hours to complete.

Lake Clean Up Day

We're gearing up for a Lakes Clean Up Day this June 14th! The event will focus on collecting trash and debris in and around Lake Comegys and Silver Lake. We're seeking enthusiastic organizers and volunteers to help make this effort a success—Please join us for so good **clean** fun!

Click [Here](#) to check out our volunteer webpage for more details on volunteer opportunities and how to sign up!! Or email saveourlake@sola3.org to let us know how you would like to get involved.

WE RELY ON YOUR SUPPORT TO SAVE OUR ICONIC LAKES

Your support is essential to our mission. SOLA3 stands as the only volunteer-run environmental organization devoted to improving the Rehoboth Lakes. It is through the generosity of our community that we can succeed in advancing this important work. From hosting the 2022 “Water, Water, Everywhere” workshop and conducting science programs with 5th graders at Rehoboth Elementary School, to opposing harmful developments on Silver Lake, gifting bird identification signs at the Silver Lake Bird Refuge, and maintaining our website and database—every project depends on funding.

There are various ways you can contribute to SOLA3 and help sustain our efforts. Donations can be made through your minimum distribution from an IRA, stock contributions, by check or credit card. For guidance, please consult with your financial or tax advisor to determine the best way to give. Together, we can continue making a difference

Click [here](#) to **Donate** via check or credit card!!

WELCOME

Dennis Shine Joins SOLA3's Board



Dennis Shine will serve as SOLA3 treasurer. While Dennis resides in Washington DC, he also has a house in Rehoboth, not too far from Silver Lake. He is managing director of CBIZ within the Client Accounting and Advisory Services Group, where he provides consulting and advisory services such as assessing business processes for effectiveness and efficiency, developing long-range business plans, producing financial modeling and forecasting, providing financial statement and budget tools and templates, implementing various accounting systems, and preparing board of directors' presentations.

His professional affiliations include the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and he serves as board treasurer for Sons and Daughters in Touch.



DID YOU KNOW??

The temperature of the environment determines the sex of turtle hatchlings. Warmer temperatures lead to the development of females, while cooler temperatures result in males.

SOLA3 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
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Draper Subdivision

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