

FLPOA NEWSLETTER

September, 2024

From the office of the President, Vito Manzella

Hello Forest Lake, this is the first of three newsletters that the FLPOA board plans to put together to keep all members aware of pertinent board activity within the community. I invite you to join the Forest Lake BOD Facebook page and attend the next open meeting which will be on October 19th at 9:00 AM at the clubhouse.

SPILLWAY - If you have driven by the Spillway, you will see the huge progress Fisher is making on the construction. The weather has been favorable and has helped to keep the overall project on schedule and even a little ahead. There have been minor work change orders for minimal amounts, we are on budget without using the \$1.6 million contingency built in. I will continue to post/update pictures & videos on the two main Facebook pages.

SWOT Analysis- One of the first activities we did as a new board was to host a Forest Lake HOA SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). The benefit of doing this is to hear every board member's thoughts on how they feel we measure up as an association. New Board Members were exposed to the issues early versus having to learn of them on their own and existing board members got to hear a fresh perspective of the new members. The first step has been accomplished, the next step is to rank each thought on importance and then create goals using an action plan to correct the issue or create a process to head off an issue to minimize the impact. The board walked away with a better understanding of the challenges our community faces along with a better understanding of knowing each other. I am willing to share the listing if you would like to receive it. Send me an email vito-man7468@gmail.com with the request and I will forward. There were a couple glaring issues that we are in the process of working on now with an approved solution. (cont'd on page 2)



Calendar of upcoming events:

OCTOBER

- 8- Left, Right, Center (6:30) clubhouse
- 12-Trick or Treat in the campground (5:00-6:00)
- 19- **Public Board Mtg.** (9:00 a.m.)
- 26- Hot Dogs & chili In the clubhouse (12:00)

Pickleball every M,T,Th (10:00-12:00) pavilion

(continued from page 1)

A top strength is our assets—including the actual lake. Our number one goal as an HOA is to maintain our assets and help to grow in value. One of the outside threats found impacting our lake the invasive species currently attacking our lake including the Eurasian Milfoil outbreak. It has spread to both ends of the lake Ecology and fending off the invasive species attacking our lake, including the Eurasian Mitfoil outbreak. It has spread to both ends of the lake covering at least 50% due to no treatment for the past 4 years, and with the lake being drawn down during the summer seasons, allowing the plants to grow unchecked. We met with our Lake Ecology partner, Savin Lake Services, and they proposed a full treatment of the lake to knock the outbreak down. The original proposal spot treated fifty acres of the lake for \$32,000.00, versus treating 100% of the lake for \$64,000.00. The board unanimously approved the treatment and the 100% payment, which will help with lake quality for the reopening of the lake next June and for near future years. Without this treatment, the lake would continue to choke out like other lakes in Michigan.

Dues proposal- I find it extremely hard to believe that FLPOA has not had a dues increase approved since 2002. Imagine having the same income from 2002 and trying to survive in 2025. We have a beautiful community and as a board we are committed to managing our assets wisely, but it is a fact that we are currently operating in a negative cash flow each year. We have savings, but if we keep down this path we will eventually run out of money, plain and simple. I am asking that when you receive the dues increase ballot, you reach out to a board member with any questions, especially if voting no. I challenge you to talk with your neighbors about why the dues increase is overdue and the potential impact to the community if an increase fails. An interesting fact that I learned while researching the dues is that according to the US Census Bureau, the average homeowner living within a homeowners association pays \$191.00 per month which is \$2292.00 per year. We are currently at \$170.00 per year, which is \$14.16 per month. [HOA Fees: What They Are and How They Work \(usatoday.com\)](#)

Boater Safety- At the public meeting in July, I updated the group that I was looking into becoming a DNR Boater Safety instructor. I have since applied for and was approved to go through the course. I have taken and passed the online portions and will be attending a 2-day hands-on session in Novi in January. My plan is to bring a couple DNR classes to the clubhouse this spring, offering residents the opportunity to receive a boater safety certificate, which I feel is important to maintain safety on our lake. Please note, there have been updates to the age restrictions to legally operate a vessel, especially jet skis.

New Trash contract- I have renegotiated the trash contract at the dump and Campground with a new cap on increases. The net result is that the costs will be reduced by 35%, which will allow us to operate in the black, versus in the red at least for the next 3 years. No service changes for you, but our call-in flexibility needs to be reduced to take advantage of the savings and will be monitored closely.

Gene Ross, Vice President

As VP on the FLPOA Board of Directors, I have been working on a variety of projects here at Forest Lake. As we all know, we have had to deal with many issues lately, with most of them the result of the storm and flood of May 2020. Through the fault of no one but mother nature, we have a financial crunch on our hands. It is imperative that we get a positive vote to increase the yearly dues, or face devastating cuts. We have worked hard to reduce the special assessment we all incurred and it is much less than the special assessment that the four lakes task force has presented to the residents there. Please remember this fact when it comes time to vote.

Here is a list of some of the projects I have been working on that will benefit all of us;

1. Retention Ponds - After 4 years, they all need to be cleaned out and spoils taken to the holding area for dewatering. Current estimate is 25,000, but we are getting bids to lower the amount. It looks like that will happen.
2. Ringneck Park boat launch - The road going down to the launch area is in desperate need of repair. Working on quotes for this to be done before next spring. Our maintenance department will also be involved.
3. FLPOA Insurance - working with Farm Bureau Insurance to reduce our insurance costs. Its a process.
4. Turtle Park Culvert - Working with our maintenance director, as well as the DNR officer, Patrick Ertel, to repair the damage from the May 2020 storm. Also working with Moffat Township and Arenac County to help cover costs. Its an ongoing struggle, but we are getting there.
5. Fish Stocking - its so nice to finally be thinking about this, because we finally will have our lake back next year.

A few years ago we started to look into a forestry plan here at Forest Lake due to our mature forest. With the Board of Director's permission, we met with several forestry officials and all said the same thing, "something should have been done 20 years ago!" Our trees were over mature, ripe for disease and are falling down.

We worked with the foresters and came up with a logging plan which would help with some of the worst spots in our common grounds. We could make some money from the sale of our timber and improve our properties at the same time. A long-term plan was implemented and select cutting began. I might add the timber was high at the time, so we could maximize our financial gain (which we sorely needed here at FLPOA) The result was we have installed a forestry plan now and in the future, and put some much needed capital into our treasury! It helped sustain us, but now we have to look at other ways to keep the association afloat. We ask all of you to consider voting YES for the dues increase, which we haven't had in almost 20 years.

Tracy L. Reitzloff, Secretary (Parks/Docks)

Parks:

Thank you to all of those who filled out the Parks Survey! It has been a great help in determining what the opinions are of our parks and what property owners would like to see in the future. As everyone knows, we are experiencing lean times and additions are simply not possible right now. However, one of the biggest requests does not require any money! The request was to have a park area allowing dogs and access to the water. We will simply remove the "no dogs" restrictions at one of our park areas as there are currently no parks allowing dogs (it will not be the main beach/dam area). Of course, there will be signage requiring the animal to be under immediate control and/or leashed. There will be no nuisance behavior allowed and clean-up is of course, mandatory.

We are also exploring fundraising/donation opportunities to make additions to our parks in the future. The other top Parks Survey requests have been pickleball courts and permanent corn hole platforms. If anyone is interested in heading up a fundraising/donation initiative for those additions/purposes or any other additions, please contact a Board member for consideration/approval.

I also want to thank the Garden Club who continue keeping our parks looking so beautiful and a big THANK YOU to all of the volunteers who made our first Parks Clean Up Volunteer Day such a great success!

Docks:

We are in the process of revising the Dock Rental Agreement. We are also in the process of renumbering the docks and will be updating the dock rental and assignment records. All rental/wait/move lists have been preserved. We have 9 new construction dock permits remaining. Unfortunately, due to financial constraints and no money in the dock fund, we are unable to have these docks constructed. Therefore, we are thinking outside the box and are discussing alternatives. We are drafting a New Dock Construction Agreement. Simplified, we will contact property owners on the Dock Wait List and see if they would have interest in paying upfront for a new dock to be constructed. Thereafter, the dock will be constructed and as-



Ilene Smith, Treasurer (Activities)

Hello, as your new treasurer, I thought I would give a little background so you know what I am thinking about when I am dealing with finances. I am a speech language pathologist and we are not known for our number sense. (It is the only program I know of that you can go all the way through a Master's degree without any math requirements!) So while I don't really enjoy numbers, I do like statistics...and money.

I have owned three homes in my life and it has always been important to me to maintain them for both my family to enjoy and for them to keep their value. That is how I plan to approach my role as Treasurer. I would like to make sure our money is used to keep the fun in Forest Lake (things like a beautiful beach, fun community activities and a safe haven for us all to be proud of) as well as keep the value of our community (through upkeep, maintenance and financial planning) not for a resale value, but for future generations of our families to enjoy.

I am, however, concerned. Looking at the books, they indicate a budget that runs approximately \$40,000 a year in the red. That is no way to run a household, nor is it a good way to run Forest Lake. There have been suggestions to make cuts. Cuts to staff, cuts to equipment and maintenance, cuts to security. While these cuts might help move the negative number slightly, it is not enough. Our POA fees have not increased in a very long time.... If we were still all living on the wage we made when we these dues were in place, there would be deficits in our personal lives, as well as our community. As a speech therapist, every year I earned a cost of living adjustment and that helped me put food on the table and gas in my car as prices consistently rose. That is what I am asking you to consider.

I know Forest Lake is important to all of us. I see it when people wave as they drive past me on their golf carts. I see people smiling with pride at the Ox Roast. I see people show up for long meetings about the state of our lake dam project. We all care about Forest Lake. We need a dues increase to help maintain our beautiful community. Please vote yes when the next dues increase vote comes around. If you do not feel you can support the increase, or have doubts about why money is needed, speak with a board member and ask for facts. If you have ideas on savings, share those too. We are all invested in this community. Let's leave it in at least as good a condition as it was when we came here.

Don Whitmire, Director (Maintenance, Forestry, Parks and Recreation)

I want to share with property owners a list of just 'some' of the work our maintenance crew recently performed for our association, so you can better understand this service which is provided by your dues:

Trash pick up at all parks	DNR has not yet granted a permit to fix the sink-hole at Turtle Park, so we installed snow fence for safety.
Grass cutting all community areas	
Weed whacking	Stained, patched, sealed and repaired siding at campground bathhouse.
Grade the beach	Repaired hot water heater at bathhouse.
Repaired campground generator	Repair to sanitation station.
Repaired John Deer tractor	Repaired office toilet
Sprayed clubhouse and bathhouse for insects	Gas pump repaired and operational
Replaced some pipes at clubhouse	Repair to Forest Lake trailer
Stained the west pavilions (4 coats)	Docks and boat wells will need to be cleaned of growth before the lake level returns.
Repaired clubhouse storm door	Currently repairing bbq bricks & top stones
Repaired bathhouse wall & painted fascia	
Fixed washouts and rain ruts on our roads	
Reflective tape on picnic tables to prevent trip and fall	

In addition, much of our equipment is past the life expectancy and the bath house roof will need replacing soon; The clubhouse needs paint and will also need a new roof within 10 years, and the maintenance building is also needing to be painted; We plan to address the office building woodpecker issue; depending on weather, plan to paint the bbq pavilions and stain the main pavilion; The campground bath house needs a paint job, as well as the bathrooms at the beach; Leaves will fall soon, which will take up a lot of time/money.

Matthew Winberg, Director (Campground, Liens/Foreclosures)

Liens and foreclosures update:

Second notices have been sent to 59 members that have not paid this year's dues. This is resulting in payments that would have been missed until next year, as many of these members didn't realize they forgot to send in the payment. Northern Legal has been working hard for our association. As of August 23, 2024, we have received \$8,893.00 in payments from members that were sent to collection.

Campground update:

October 12th will be trick or treating in the campground from 5:00-6:00 p.m. The road to the campground will be open, but the road in the campground will be closed to traffic to keep everyone safe.

Phil Cole, Director, Security

Dear Forest Lake Residents,

We hope this message finds you well and enjoying the beautiful surroundings of our community. As always, our top priority is ensuring the safety and well-being of all our residents. This month, we have some incredible news to share that highlights the vital role our Security Department plays in keeping Forest Lake a safe and secure place to live.

Why We Need Our Security Department

Our Security Department is more than just a team of professionals; they are our neighbors, friends, and guardians. Their presence provides peace of mind, knowing that someone is always looking out for us. Here are a few reasons why their work is so essential:

1. Our security team is on duty ensuring that our community is protected day and night.
2. **Rapid Response:** In emergencies, every second counts. Our security officers are trained to respond quickly and efficiently to any situation, including being trained in CPR and carry an AEC.
3. **Community Engagement:** They are not just enforcers of rules but also active members of our community, participating in events and getting to know residents personally.
4. **Crime Prevention:** Their visible presence deters potential criminal activity, making our neighborhood a safer place for everyone.

Heroic Acts: Saving Lives

This month, our Security Department has gone above and beyond, facilitating with the Emergency Medical Response (EMR) team to save two lives within our community. Their quick thinking and decisive actions in critical moments have made a profound impact. These incidents are a testament to the dedication and bravery of our security personnel. Their actions have not only saved lives but also reinforced the importance of having a reliable and responsive security team.

Join Us in Appreciating Our Security Team

We encourage all residents to take a moment to thank our security officers for their hard work and commitment. A simple gesture of appreciation can go a long way in boosting their morale and showing them that their efforts do not go unnoticed.

Stay Safe and Informed

As always, we urge everyone to stay vigilant and report any suspicious activities to our Security Department. Together, we can continue to make Forest Lake a safe and welcoming community for all. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Warm regards,

Your Safety, Our Priority

Mike Woloson, Director (Lake Ecology)

September 2024 Lake Ecology Update:

As a result of the full lake survey Savin Lake Services was contracted to perform, they identified the need to treat for multiple invasive non-native weeds. On September 14, 2024 Savin mapped out the lake and created a plan. The targeted weeds are Eurasian Watermilfoil and Coontail. These are very invasive non-native that if left untreated, they can cause such a nuisance they will clog up motorboat propellers.

As of September 20, all contracted treatments were complete. Treatment methods were by airboat, regular boat, backpacks, four-wheeler and drone. Costs associated with this treatment were \$875.00 for the permit through EGLE and \$64,125.00 to treat the entire lake. No mechanical harvesting is required due to simply cutting the weeds is like cutting grass. It will just come back if it is cut. These invasive weeds need to be eradicated by means of chemical treatment to kill them at the root.

Savin also treated the shoreline bottomland vegetation that was growing on the exposed areas around the lake. This vegetation includes poplar trees, phragmites and other invasive weeds. These weeds and small trees have become a nuisance, due to the lake being drawn down for 5 summers. Costs associated with this treatment was \$24,000 and \$875 for the permit.

Swimming and lake activities returned to normal on September 21, 2024. The reason for staying off the lake was to not disturb the chemicals as they were absorbed into the plants. Swimming and kayaks could stir up the water causing the treatment to be less effective. Guy Savin said that in about two weeks, the targeted weeds will die and sink to the lake bed where they will decompose. According to EGLE and our permit to treat the lake, there will be no harm to the aquatic life. These chemicals do not kill the fish.

From Savin:

“By utilizing these types of herbicides, we can treat the entire plant of an undesirable targeted invasive species and leave the non-targeted indigenous species unharmed. Plants treated systemically will not regrow, and by utilizing selective herbicides, desired indigenous plants are given the opportunity to thrive and outcompete the invasive plants. This method will reduce densities or areas invasive plants can exist and reduces the risk of new infestations or re-infestations of invasive plants.” This is not vegetation killer. The selective systemic herbicides kill only the targeted invasive species.

Pat Gordon, Director (Office, Clubhouse, Storage, Merchandise)

Office:

Thank you to Tammy, Jeri and Eleanor for efficiently running the Forest Lake office each week. Just 'some' of their duties include: processing and assisting camping reservations; bookkeeping and paying Forest Lake's bills; running bi-weekly payroll; updating the website and community bulletin board; maintaining current and historic property files; reconciling Forest Lake bank accounts; notary services; processing deeds; and most importantly, assisting property owners by responding to phone calls, voice mails and emails. This is not a complete list of what they do for us, as most of us all well know.

Clubhouse:

Besides a source of revenue as a rental facility, our clubhouse has been opened to property owners in need of a haven during the many power outages we have experienced. To date, the clubhouse has been rented thirteen times this year. Thank you to the Garden Club for the beautiful flowers adorning the entrances to both the clubhouse and office - they are fantastic! Janet Wallace has been doing a great job as housekeeper maintaining the cleanliness of our buildings :) A big thank you to Jim Young for making and donating the fabulous picnic tables for the clubhouse patio!

Storage:

The best deal you'll find around is to utilize the Forest Lake storage area located by the trash area for only \$75 a year. The cost for similar storage in neighboring Gladwin is \$30 per month, or \$240 per year.

Merchandise:

We have Forest Lake items for purchase in the office. Just to name a few: denim button shirts, long sleeved t-shirts, golf shirts, golf towels, t-shirts, hoodie and pullover sweatshirts, fleece blankets, wine bottle holders, can coosies, beach towels, sm. thermal cooler, tote bags, garden flags, Christmas ornaments, baby onesies, baseball and stocking hats. **We are discounting many of these items 20% during the month of October - just in time for Christmas!** We hope to have some new items before year's end. Notice will be placed on the Forest Lake website: www.forestlakemi.com.



