

GSLA Year End Letter – 2016

Dear Association Members,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Great Sand Lakes Association I am pleased to provide you with a report on the activities and accomplishments of the Association during 2016.

Our primary focus and responsibility as Board Members is to keep the ponds, the beaches and the surrounding land of the GSLA healthy for the enjoyment of homeowners and their guests. To this end, the Board is committed to doing whatever is necessary, within our financial means, to maintain the water quality at the highest levels, to keep the beaches clean and to preserve the lands surrounding the ponds.

Keeping the ponds and the surrounding property healthy requires continued vigilance by all of us to do our part to minimize nitrogen and phosphorus entering the ponds. These chemicals come from the use of fertilizers near the pond as well as driveway and road run-off. Each of us can play a part in this important mission and I encourage you to help out by limiting your use of lawn chemicals and by paying careful attention to the types of plants and products you choose for landscaping.

We are always looking for new people who share our passion for the preservation of the ponds and surrounding properties to join the Board or to volunteer to help with activities that occur throughout the year such as spring & fall beach clean-up, summer water quality testing, beach committee, website maintenance, and the summer picnic. If you would like to help out please let us know. You can contact us by accessing the www.gsla-harwich.org website and clicking on the "Volunteer" tab to let us know what how you would like to help.

Among the activities undertaken this year are the following:

- Erosion control: For those of you that happen to drive by Association Beach in December you may have noticed a new addition on the beach. In an effort to control sand erosion on the beach from the strong northeast winds, we installed a temporary fence in the middle of the beach. We are hopeful that this fencing will help to keep the sand on the beach versus in the road.
- More erosion control: In an effort to minimize erosion, hold the soil and improve the beauty of the wooded area next to the parking area at Association Beach, we re-excavated a drainage culvert along the road, created a berm to direct water overflow and planted grass to stabilize the soil.
- Maintenance: We repaired and replaced many sections of fencing around the association property as well as repaired stone walls that had been damaged by snowplows at the flagpole circle.
- Beautification: We planted some new perennials at the Freshwater/Rte 39 flagpole. We have planned for additional plantings in the spring.
- Safety: We continue to enforce the watercraft policy (see <http://www.gsla-harwich.org/policies-and-forms-downloads/>) that has been on the Association books for many years. I am happy to report that the number of un-registered and un-authorized boats on the beaches has declined significantly. We continue to monitor the number of boats on the beaches on a monthly basis.
- Communication: We continue to make information available to you via the website to make you aware of all the events that occur during the year as well as news of interest for all members. It also provides you with a way to communicate directly to the board on matters that interest you. I encourage you to log on to www.gsla-harwich.org and let us know your thoughts.
- Beach clean-up: This year, as always, some members volunteered to clean up the beaches in both the spring and fall. This minimizes the overall cost of landscaping services and allows us to redirect our

funds to other areas. We invite you to join the annual spring and fall cleanups with other volunteers. The dates are posted on the website.

- Water quality: Volunteers test the water quality during the summer to provide data to the Harwich Water Quality Task Force. Please let us know if you would be interested in participating in this activity. It requires a couple of early morning hours in a boat five times a year.
- Water quality 2: We continue to pay Barnstable County to test the water quality at the Association beaches for bacterial levels. We are happy to report that all tested well within the state established safe level for bathing beaches.
- Insurance: We continue to provide liability insurance against injuries on the ponds & beaches.

Two social activities are organized by the Association: the annual picnic and the annual holiday luncheon.

- Summer picnic: We had a successful summer picnic in August. The weather was beautiful; we had a good turnout as well as very competitive kayak and sunfish races. Those who came to that event enjoyed hamburgers and hot dogs supplied by the Association as well as delicious side dishes and desserts brought by members.
- Holiday luncheon: In December, forty-four old and new members of the Association came to celebrate the season. We had the event at The Riverway Lobster House in Yarmouth. The food and service were excellent and everyone enjoyed the table favors as well as the chance to win some nice door prizes.

We have big plans ahead for 2017. For example, we will

- create a walk way on the southwest side of Association Beach
- re-nourish Association (Clearwater), Pleasant Park and Vacation Lane beaches with sand
- add plantings on several of the beach areas to hold the soil and sand to minimize erosion
- continue to work with the Conservation Agent to monitor the weed growth around the ponds
- continue to work with Harwich DPW on our options to prevent rain water run-off into the ponds and work with them to inspect and possibly install catch basins where needed

We made great progress on many of the initiatives that we set out to do in 2016 and we will continue to protect and improve the beaches and surrounding Association land in 2017.

Please help us continue the work of the Association by paying your **annual dues** promptly, by letting us know your ideas for doing things better, by volunteering your time or talent, and by getting the word out to your neighbors who may not be current members. I am proud of what we accomplish with the limited funds at our disposal to preserve the ponds and the beaches for your enjoyment and to maintain a strong Great Sand Lakes Community.

Yours respectfully,

Jim Robichaud
President, GSLA Board of Directors