

## GSLA Year End Letter – 2023

Dear Great Sand Lakes Owners,

It seems that 2022 was the year when we finally breathed just a bit easier. As we head into the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2023, the tornado of 2019 seems a distant memory, Covid appears to be under control, water levels in the ponds have risen, and spring is just around the corner. I am ready to put winter behind me and start welcoming our neighbors back for a fantastic spring, summer, and fall. Let's make 2023 a year when we can take a needed breath and be thankful for this wonderful community we enjoy.

Annual membership forms were sent on March 1. If you have not sent your dues yet, please find your membership form in your mail or your email inbox. Note any changes to your information, then drop your form and check in the mail to GSLA at P.O. Box 119, Harwich, MA 02645. If you need assistance, please contact Margaret Fallon at [Margaret@RedDoorAssociates.com](mailto:Margaret@RedDoorAssociates.com) or (508) 945-7253.

The primary focus and responsibility of the GSLA Board of Directors 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. With water levels expected to be even higher in coming months, the Board will do a thorough assessment of all the beaches and property of the Association and make recommendations for enhancements or improvements.

We are always looking for 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, and the summer picnic. If you would like to help, please let us know. A Volunteer Form was included with your March 1 mailing. It can be filled out and included when you return your dues payment. You can also contact us by accessing the [www.gsla-harwich.org](http://www.gsla-harwich.org) website and clicking on "Volunteer" under the "Contact Us" tab to let us know how you would like to get involved.

Among the projects and activities undertaken in 2022 are the following:

- Maintenance: With the help of volunteers, we removed dead trees and tree limbs and replaced sections of fencing around the Association property.
- 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.
- Communication: We continue to improve our website [www.gsla-harwich.org](http://www.gsla-harwich.org) to make it a viable resource for our community. Election of board members and voting on bylaw changes were successfully moved online after the 2022 annual meeting. An initiative is currently underway to revamp the content and automate the membership process. The website also allows you to send messages directly to the Board on matters that interest you. We invite you to log on from time to time to see the progress.
- Beach clean-up: Some members volunteer to clean up the beaches in both the spring and fall. This minimizes the cost of landscaping services and allows us to redirect our funds to other areas.
- Water quality: Volunteers test the water quality in the ponds during the summer and provide data to the Harwich Water Quality Task Force. Please let us know if you would

be interested in participating in this activity. Training, equipment, and a rowboat are provided.

- Beach bacterial testing: We continue to pay Barnstable County to test for bacterial levels at the Association beaches. We are happy to report that all results were within the state established safe level for bathing beaches.
- Insurance: We continue to provide liability insurance against injuries on the GSLA beaches.
- Two social activities are organized by the Association each year:
  - **Summer picnic:** We had another successful picnic in August. Thanks to all who helped and those whose participation made the event a highlight of the summer. It was an unusually hot and humid day, but we had great turnout as well as some very competitive kayak and sunfish races. We enjoyed refreshing drinks as well as grilled burgers and hot dogs supplied by the Association, and delicious side dishes and desserts brought by participants. We look forward to seeing you at this year's picnic on August 5.
  - **Holiday luncheon:** In December, after a two-year hiatus due to Covid, 60 members of the Association, including some new homeowners, came together to celebrate the season at the DiParma Italian Restaurant in Yarmouth. We look forward to seeing even more of you at this event in December.
- Social Committee: This is a new venture for this year. We will be looking for social and fun-loving folks who may want to assist with coordinating neighborhood activities and events. Our goal is to build upon the wonderful sense of community that we enjoy here in the GSLA.

In the coming months we will continue to move forward with several initiatives...

- Website content reorganization.
- Expansion of our water quality testing beyond the current seasonal timeframes
- Investigating ways to offer electronic dues payment, membership renewal, and boat sticker requests.
- Assessing additional plantings on GSLA property.

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 and talent, and by getting the word out to your neighbors who may not be current members. I am pleased to say we had 215 paid members in 2022. I hope that with your help in getting the word out to your neighbors, we will have even more members in 2023.

Yours respectfully,

Chris

Chris Briggs

President, GSLA Board of Directors